January 2026

Blue Cap News

New Year, Renewed Service

As we turn the calendar to a new year, the Sons of the American Legion Detachment of Arizona begins January with renewed purpose, momentum, and pride in our mission. The start of 2026 is more than just a fresh chapter—it's an opportunity to reflect on our service, recommit to our values, and set the pace for the months ahead.

Across Arizona, Squadrons continue to demonstrate what it means to live the ideals of the American Legion Family:

Supporting Veterans
Investing in Youth Programs
Strengthening Our Communities

From community service projects and youth activities to fundraising efforts that fuel scholarships, camps, and meaningful outreach, our Blue Cap members remain a visible and dependable force for good.

January is also a time to plan and prepare. With major events, training opportunities, and programs on the horizon, now is the moment for every member—new and seasoned alike—to get involved. Your participation, ideas, and leadership are what keep this Detachment strong and relevant at every level.

As you read this month's *Blue Cap News*, you'll find:
Detachment-wide updates
Highlights of recent accomplishments
A look ahead at what's coming next

Thank you for your continued dedication to the Sons of the American Legion and for honoring the legacy of those who served before us.

Here's to a productive, impactful, and united year ahead for the **Detachment of Arizona**!

Detachment Conference Call at 7 P.M. on Tuesday, February 10, 2026

For the lastest information about Sons of the American Legion, Detachment of Arizona visit

azsal.org

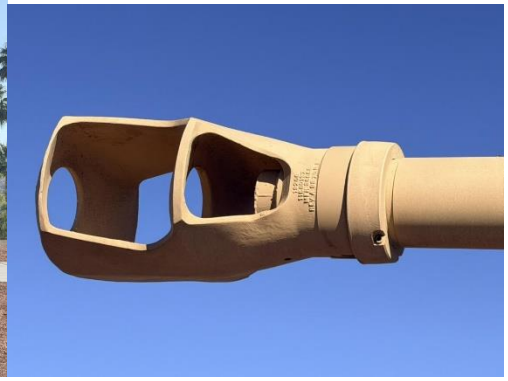
Pearl Harbor Remembrance

On **December 6th**, Commander Manwell and Adjutant Vandez joined our American Legion and Auxiliary family at **Wesley Bolin Park in Phoenix** to honor our nation's Veterans during the **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony**. The ceremony served as a solemn and powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by those who answered the call to defend our freedoms. It was a moving tribute that brought together members in shared respect, remembrance, and gratitude.

👉 Detachment Leadership Visits Bullhead City Post 87

On December 12th, Commander Manwell and Adjutant Vandez traveled to **Bullhead City Post 87**, where they enjoyed a great evening meeting members and experiencing the warm hospitality of Ray Miller and the entire Post 87 team.

The following morning, December 13th, they returned for the Post's General Meeting. Afterward, they had the humbling opportunity to tour a true hidden gem—the Arizona Veterans Memorial, a meaningful tribute honoring the service and sacrifice of Arizona's veterans.



They were truly amazed to discover a memorial previously unknown to them. As home to the **only Eternal Flame west of the Mississippi River**, it stands as a remarkable and inspiring tribute that leaves a lasting impression on all who visit.

👉 Fellowship and Fun at Kingman Post 14

The visit wrapped up with a stop at Kingman Post 14, where Commander Manwell and Adjutant Vandez enjoyed an evening with Area C Vice Commander Donnie Whalen, PDC Pederson, the Post 14 crew—and even two members who made the trip from Post 39 in Gilbert. The night was filled with great fellowship, a delicious meal, and fundraising in support of COTA.

Rumor has it that the winning Side-By-Side ticket may have been purchased by someone in attendance… only time will tell! Most importantly, the hospitality and camaraderie were outstanding. It was a great visit, and the Detachment looks forward to returning soon.

🎄 Holiday Fun and Community Spirit at Post 27 🎄

On Sunday, December 21st, Commander Manwell joined his home Post 27 Holiday Party in Apache Junction. The event featured a special visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, and the recently refurbished 40 et 8 train, provided by Squadron 27, offered rides with the Grinch! With a fantastic turnout and strong community support, the event was a wonderful way to bring holiday cheer to local children—a true example of what makes us #SALStrong.

Holiday Fun and Community Spirit at Post 27 (cont)

Americanism

Americanism – Merry Christmas to all!!

There are so many parties and celebrations in December, it is most always very chaotic, but I do have a couple of items that need to be mentioned that we should not lose sight of.

Pearl Harbor remembrance is always December 7 th . If you ever could be in Hawaii at that time, that is most definitely a remembrance you will not forget; go for it if you can! I was blessed with the opportunity to be there and received a hand calligraphed invitation with seating on Kilo pier for my wife and I for the 75 th anniversary in 2016. Seating, and even SRO is limited, so if you can see yourself being there, get your request in early. Even if you can't gain access to the program on Kilo pier, just being there in that time frame is well worth the time. Directly across from Kilo pier is the Arizona memorial, a very moving experience you won't soon forget.

And then, there's the parade afterward, The American Legion always has a large presence in the parade. That was the absolute largest parade I have ever been a part of and well worth the time spent, and the sore feet afterward! I was privileged to have walked with the SAL NVCs and the SAL National Commander, our own Jeff Frain, who led the way!

Many of the auxiliary units find ways to reach out to our veterans, both on active duty and those retired. They may send cards and gifts to VA Homes, VA Hospitals, or near by bases to the enlisted men and women and their families. See how you can get involved and show your support, and if your unit doesn't currently have such programs, investigate starting one! This can be a very lonely time of year for veterans, get involved and help them celebrate the season.

Most importantly, remember the reason for the season and be thankful for all the blessings in your life, and once again, Merry Christmas to all.

Jim Borgman
Americanism Chairman

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Merry Christmas to all!!

With 4200 different religions in the world, there are some that celebrate Christmas, and others who have their own wintertime celebrations. Different faiths celebrate the season in many various ways.

By name, Christmas is a holiday for Christians, however, the holiday is celebrated by other religions and even atheists. This may be because as a holiday it has grown to focus on gift-giving and spending time with people you care about. And this is something many people can celebrate and enjoy.

Another group of people who celebrate Christmas are Buddhists. Many still celebrate the holiday as they see Jesus as a man and a teacher, rather than the Christian viewing of him as a messiah.

Rather than celebrating Christmas, Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah in the wintertime. The holiday begins on the 25th of the Hebrew month of Kislev, which is around November – December. is an 8-day event, and the name translates to the festival of lights.

Many Hindu families celebrate Diwali which is before Christmas in either October or November depending on the Lunar Calendar. Diwali is the festival of lights.

Muslims do not celebrate Christmas. Their major religious celebration in is Eid, which indicates the end of Ramadan.

The gifts and festivities of the season can be fun and enchanting, but we can also long for a simpler celebration that focuses on Christ. He is the reason for the season, not the items wrapped in pretty paper.

So, when we feel tired of the consumerism and hectic schedules of Christmas, we can simplify our celebrations. The following points are ideas to reduce the stress of the holiday, and instead, spend time with our Savior, who came to rescue us and who is coming again.

1. Reduce the Number of Gifts - I find myself aware of the hazard of accumulating items I do not need. Especially since we live in a society of abundance and excess, reducing the number of presents we give to family and friends during Christmas can help us refocus on the true meaning of Christmas.
2. Help those in need - Another way to simplify the Christmas season and not feel drowned in the commercialism promoted by the world is to consider what we can give away to help others in need. Jesus told his disciples that "life does not consist in an abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15)
3. Ask if a Tradition Draws You Closer to Christ - One of the reasons the Christmas season leaves so many people feeling worn out instead of refreshed and hopeful, because they try to fit too many things into their schedules. Maybe we do not have to go to every holiday party we are invited to or spend an elaborate amount of time preparing and cooking a feast for each event.
4. Celebrate Advent - When we celebrate Advent, we intentionally shift our focus away from the hustle and bustle to instead reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

Jim Borgman,
Detachment Chaplain

AREA "A"

Hello Detachment! Happy Holidays! This is a great time of year to take care and do buddy checks on our veterans! Invite them to the post, don't let them be alone.

I attended Our Round table event that had great turnout and lively discussions. Look for more of these events in the near future, Can't attend look for it online so you can still participate. Also remember you are always invited to our monthly Teams call.

I attended numerous Holiday parties and am amazed at the generosity of our family members. The joy on the kids faces is contagious!

I also attended a few events during our American Legion National Commander Dan Wileys' visit to Southern Arizona. It was an honor to attend and meet the Commander. He visited the Ok Corral shoot out, the border, The Titan Missile Museum, and the Tucson VA Hospital.

Have a great holiday and lets have a great 2026!

For God and Country,
Lance Bymers
Detachment of Arizona

Editor's Desk

📣 From the Editor's Desk – Blue Cap News

As we close out the year and reflect on the month of **December**, we are reminded of the true meaning of **service, sacrifice, and fellowship** ⭐. Across the **Sons of the American Legion Detachment of Arizona**, Sons have stepped up once again—honoring our **Veterans** 🎖️, supporting our **communities** 🤝, and sharing in the **spirit of the season** 🎄.

This issue highlights the dedication and heart shown by our Squadrons—from **Pearl Harbor remembrance ceremonies** us, to **Detachment leadership visits** 🧭, and **holiday events** 🎁 that brought smiles to families and children throughout Arizona. Each story reflects who we are and why we serve—*because of their service* 💙.

🙏 **Thank you** to all who submitted articles, photos 📸, and updates, and to every Son who continues to make a difference through volunteerism and commitment. As we prepare to welcome a **new year** 🎆, may we move forward united in purpose, proud of our legacy, and ready to serve.

Together, we keep the spirit of the Sons of the American Legion strong.

Got an event or something to promote? Submit an advertisement for the Blue Cap News with just a $5 (per month) donation to the Commander's charity — COTA (Children's Organ Transplant Association).

Send donations (made payable to SAL COTA FUND) to:

Detachment Adjutant
4701 North 19th Avenue, Suite #200
Phoenix, Arizona 85015
(make sure you put your Squadron on the memo)

Submit your stories or ad info to:
✉️ bluecap@azlegion.org

Let's keep the SAL spirit strong and share your stories with the whole Detachment!

Stay blue-capped and proud,
John "Radar" Meyer
— The Editor
The Blue Cap News

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
DETACHMENT OF ARIZONA
SAL CAMPOUT
2026
COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA
APRIL 10-12, 2026
DEAD HORSE RANCH STATE PARK
For information or reservations, contact:
saladjutant@azlegion.org

RIDING SIDE BY SIDE WITH COTA

Children's Organ Transplant Association

2025 POLARIS RZR 1000 WITH TRAILER

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Join the Son's of the American Legion Arizona in supporting COTA to help remove the financial barriers to life-saving transplants for children in Arizona

APRIL 12, 2026 DRAWING

$30 TICKET OR 4/$100

PURCHASE HERE