

Melvin Roads Squadron
Sons of The American Legion
40th Anniversary Picnic
June 3rd 2017 -- 2 to 6pm

In 1977 my friend Tony Rossello and I were approached by our fathers and given membership cards to something called the Sons of The American Legion and basically told to be at the Melvin Roads Post on Tuesday for the first meeting. There were a number of "sons" attending and post member Ernie Hotaling explained to us what a squadron was and did and that he was the advisor. The Melvin Roads Squadron of Sons of The American Legion was chartered in 1961 and was active for several years before closing. The Post wanted to reactivate the squadron and so a number of post members recruited their sons and grandsons. There are over thirty members names on the reactivated Charter.

We held elections and Billy Fisher was elected Commander, I was first vice commander and Tony was second Vice. Once we filled all the officer positions, we approved a constitution and bylaws and opened a bank account. I was elected commander in 1979 & 80 and Tony was in 1981 & 82.

Over the four decades we assisted the post by putting out the flags in the cemetery for Memorial Day and Marching in the parade. We attend many Veterans Day, Legion Birthday, Installation and State Officer Visitation Dinners and other projects. We raised money by various activities including spaghetti dinners, pancake breakfasts, Halloween parties and dances with live music. At some point the legion gave us the annual ham raffle, we read hundreds of trivial pursuit questions over the years.

We've made numerous donations to all kinds of projects including, American Legion Boys State, Camp Good Days and Special Times, the Albany VA, Fischer House, a 6' projector screen TV for the post lounge, AT disease foundation, American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, clothes for homeless vets, various state commanders projects, equipment for the post and others.

Since about 1980, numerous members also represent our squadron on the county, district, state & national levels of the Sons and state American Legion Press Association and one who has positions on the National ALPA.

A short time after our reactivating, Tom Thibault and Paul Rossello joined. Both were commander (1986-88 and 1988-90) and held several other positions for many years. I think Paul & I have been Adjutant for about 30 of the 40 years. Tom was Treasurer for many years, and he and I made countless trips to state meetings when I was state commander and adjutant and he was vice commander and historian.

We have awarded honorary life membership to six members and an honorary squadron mom, Anne Harrington, for their many years of valuable service to our Squadron. We have made special presentations to recognize our longtime advisor, Ernest Hotaling for 25 and 35 years. We believe he was the longest serving squadron advisor in the nation with 35 years when he passed away in 2012 at age 90. Many of our fathers have also passed, including Robert Thibault, Herman Harrington and Anthony Rossello.

Our current squadron leadership includes, Adjutant Paul Rossello, Vice Commanders Dominic Indelicato and Jack Cain. Our Treasurer, immediate Past Commander William Baker is currently Sons Third District Commander and Vice President of our Riders Chapter.

Thank you for reading my recollection of some of the history of our squadron on our 40th anniversary of continuous active service with our American Legion Post, Auxiliary Unit and Riders Chapter. For more information, please visit our website: www.melvinroads1231.org/Sons.html ;.

Kevin Harrington,
Commander 2016 & 17, 1979 & 80