



J. RICHARD "JR" STILLWELL

02/06/35 - 07/31/26

J. Richard "JR" Stillwell, born February 6, 1935 was transferred to Post/Squadron Everlasting on Friday, July 31, 2026. A member of The American Legion for 52 years. A member of The Sons of The American Legion for 72 years. This is not an official obituary, just my own feelings on JR. The official obituary will come soon.

A Past National Commander for the SAL. JR **was** the SAL. He helped organize it to what it is today and has been involved with it since those early days. On the Detachment level, he has held pretty much every position imaginable. He was very involved with TAL, especially in the 4th Division and 19th District.

JR was the epitome of The American Legion Family. He devoted his life to it. He often said, "the SAL is the best kept secret in the American Legion."

I, along with PDC Wayne Madson, visited JR last week in his "new" home located in Breese, Illinois. He didn't like the mattress of his bed; however, he mostly slept in his chair even before arriving at that place. He couldn't see out the windows very well, having to look "up" from his chair, with trees and shrubs blocking his view across the highway. He gave me a list of tasks to make sure were to be completed. He said, "I am telling you because I know you will make sure it gets done." On this day, JR was JR. The person we all adored. The one who rambled on and on about a story, not losing track of the timeline, details, etc. He looked good, probably better than he had in the past couple of years. He was the same old JR.

I have been the Detachment Adjutant for over 15 years. The role has changed dramatically with technology, the importance of Legion Family, etc. I know at times it frustrated him, but he also knew that the direction we were on was justified and needed. He never really questioned me on things. He was always there if I needed advice or direction. When he did bring something up, you knew "it needed to be done this way" and you didn't question it.

JR knew he was slowly going downhill. In Milwaukee, he asked Jeff Trout and me if he could talk to us. He realized it was time to "turn the reigns" of our Detachment Judge Advocate over and he wanted Jeff to become that person. When JR wanted something, he had his reasons and we made sure they went that way. Jeff told me recently that JR said one of the reasons why he wanted him to be the JA was to "keep an eye" on me. JR alluded to me over the past few years but never came out and directly said it. I am not speaking for Trout, but I truly feel that he was honored that JR held him so highly in his thoughts.

So, I ask each of you to not feel sadness but instead remember the 91 years of the life JR Stillwell led. His "devotion to mutual helpfulness" has not only inspired but influenced many people.

I will miss JR Stillwell. I will always be grateful for his legacy and leadership.

JR will be laid to rest on Wednesday, August 5th, at noon. His final resting place will be Roselawn Cemetery, 400 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Champaign. There will be a Celebration of Life following the services at American Legion Post 24, 705 Bloomington Road, Champaign.

**SONS
OF THE
AMERICAN
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**DETACHMENT OF
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**For God
And Country**

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