

**Internal Affairs & Membership Division  
Weekly Report to the National Commander  
January 10, 2025  
Matthew Herndon, Director – (317) 630-1406**

**2024 Traditional Membership:**

Final Membership as of December 31<sup>st</sup> was at **97.91%** of the 1,452,188 goal with **1,421,775** current members (new recruits, renewals and encumbered DMS transfers). Congratulations to the Departments of Michigan and New Mexico for achieving their 2024 membership goal in December.

**2025 Traditional Membership:**

Membership as of the January 8<sup>th</sup> report is at **77.85%** of the 1,445,882 goal with **1,125,680** current members (new recruits, renewals and encumbered DMS transfers). The 80% target date is January 15, 2025, nine departments have already met or exceeded this goal.

**DMS New Member Acquisition:**

The 2025 DMS new member acquisition program has acquired **41,953** new members since July 1. This represents about **41.95%** of the projected 100,000 for 2025.

**New Members by Branch of Service and Conflict:**

This chart shows the branch of service and war era for new members brought in at the post level and DMS for 2025.

<b>Conflict</b>	<b>Conflict Totals</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>	<b>Branch of Service</b>	<b>BOS Totals</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
GW_TERRORISM	18,117	29.49%	USA	28,920	47.08%
OTHER	17,889	29.12%	USN	12,036	19.59%
VIETNAM	11,052	17.99%	USAF	10,725	17.46%
PERSIAN_GULF	5,676	9.24%	USMC	7,229	11.77%
Unknown	5,326	8.67%	Unknown	1,478	2.41%
LEBANON_GRENADA	1,852	3.01%	USCG	947	1.54%
KOREA	702	1.14%	USSF	60	0.10%
PANAMA	678	1.10%	USMM	35	0.06%
WWII	131	0.21%	<b>Total New Members:</b>	<b>61,430</b>	
WWII_MM	7	0.01%			
<b>Total New Members:</b>	<b>61,430</b>				

**Multi-Year Membership:**

The multi-year membership option can only be accessed on the national website at [www.legion.org/renew](http://www.legion.org/renew). To date **45,869** members have taken advantage of this option. We encourage departments to put information out in emails and newsletters informing and encouraging members to use this option.

**National Commander LaCoursiere's Membership Goals:**

Commander LaCoursiere's focus is on retaining the members. He worked with the M&PA Committee on creating the Department Retention Award. His expectation is to engage current members on a regular basis. Whether it is through Buddy Checks or contacting members about their membership dues, members need to feel wanted and valued.

**Retention:**

As an organization, Commander LaCoursiere set a goal of 90% for retention. A column has been added to the daily, weekly, and target date membership reports for each department. **Our current retention rate is 75.80% at the traditional level. There are 44,214 department headquarters post members who are paid for 2024 that have not renewed for 2025 and 441,069 at the post level and who have not renewed for 2025.**

As we see from above, there is a large pool of members within the posts and departments. There is the capability to immediately identify and start the engagement process to contact the member to renew their membership.

**Recruiting:**

National Commander LaCoursiere set a goal of 75,000 new traditional members for the 2025 membership year. **To date we have recruited 38,970 new members into the organization at the local post level.**

**New Member Video:**

Former American Legion Membership & Post Activities Committee Chairman Matt Jabaut hosted a new-member orientation video that provides a clear understanding of the nation’s largest veterans organization and what the Legion does to strengthen America.

The video is ideal for new member orientations at local posts or to show to potential members. You can also email it to new members. You can find the video at this link on the Legion’s Vimeo channel <https://vimeo.com/americanlegion>.

**Membership Excellence “Be the One” Dog Tag Coin:**

To qualify one will need to recruit three new members into The American Legion. A new member is defined as any eligible veteran joining for the 2025 membership year who was not a member during the 2024 membership year. You can find the form at:

<https://www.legion.org/about/leadership/national-commander/national-commanders-incentive-program>

**Sons of The American Legion (SAL)**

The SAL continues to grow, and 2025 membership is also increasing steadily. Preparations are being made for the Washington Conference and Spring NEC meetings.

**2024 SAL Membership Info.**

**(final) year-end membership as of Dec 31, 2024**

2024 Goal:	<b>382,111</b>	
Total Actual Membership:	<b>397,243</b>	<b>New All-Time High</b>
% of Year-End Goal:	<b>103.96%</b>	
2024 Renewal Percentage:	<b>90.38%</b>	
Detachments at 100%:	<b>45</b>	
Detachments at 105%:	<b>21</b>	

\*\* 27 detachments met new all-time high

## **2025 SAL Membership Info.**

As of Jan 8, 2025

2025 Goal:	<b>401,263</b>	
Total Actual Membership:	<b>267,527</b>	
% of Year-End Goal:	<b>66.67%</b>	
2025 Renewal Percentage:	<b>61.19%</b>	
Detachments at 45%:	<b>50</b>	
Detachments at 60%:	<b>35</b>	( 60% target date Jan 15 )

## **The National Emergency Fund (NEF):**

### ***2024 – 109 grants (95 members/14 posts) totaling \$313,697.98***

Florida (Hurricanes Debby, Helene & Milton) – 78 members/5 post

Georgia (Hurricane) – 1 member

Indiana (Tornado) – 1 post

Iowa (Flood/Tornado) – 4 members/2 posts

Louisiana (Tornado) – 1 member/1 post

New York (Microburst) – 1 post

North Carolina (Hurricane) – 1 member/1 post

Philippines (Typhoon) – 1 member

South Carolina (Hurricane) – 3 members/1 post

South Dakota (Flood) – 2 members

Tennessee (Flood) – 2 members/1 post

Texas (Devastating Storms/Hurricane) – 2 members/1 post

### ***2025 – 16 grants (11 members/5 posts) totaling \$64,151.81***

Florida (Hurricanes Helene & Milton) – 11 members/5 post

The Palisades Fire in the Southern California greater Los Angeles area started on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, and the following is the current information as of today's date:

- Fast-moving fires are engulfing the Los Angeles area, prompting mandatory evacuations of more than 80,000 people.
- The Palisades Fire has already burned through almost 3,000 acres, while the Eaton Fire has destroyed 1,000 acres and the Hurst Fire has affected 500 acres.
- While the blazes are zero percent contained, 10 deaths have been reported.
- The fires were sparked by a combination of dry conditions and powerful winds, which were expected to strengthen overnight.

Governor Gavin Newsome declared a state of emergency and said early Wednesday that more than 1,400 firefighters, first responders and officials have been deployed "to combat these unprecedented fires in LA." An e-mail went to the California leadership regarding the National Emergency Fund. We will be tracking.

Over the first weekend in November, severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds and flooding caused a State of Emergency declaration in six counties in Oklahoma. Additionally, the National Weather Service damage survey teams confirmed that tornadoes hit eastern Oklahoma and Northwest Arkansas on Nov. 4. While there have been injuries, no deaths have been reported for these storms at this time.

In mid-October, at least two people have died, and hundreds have been rescued in Roswell, New Mexico, according to the New Mexico State Police, after extreme overnight rainfall brought severe flooding, stranding motorists and sweeping away cars. The New Mexico National Guard and other

agencies have rescued at least 290 people, including 38 who were taken to hospitals, the agency confirmed in a statement. The National Weather Service declared an overnight flash flood emergency for Roswell and nearby areas, as emergency management within Chaves County reported numerous water rescues.

On September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene made landfall as a Category 4 storm and carved a devastating path from Florida's Gulf Coast to Tennessee. Less than two weeks later, while many communities are still reeling from the massive destruction caused by Helene, Hurricane Milton hit Florida in the Tampa Bay area and moved across central Florida toward the Atlantic Ocean. Hurricane Milton made landfall near Sarasota, Florida as a Category 3 storm, bringing up to 18 inches of rain, causing flash floods, and spurring tornadoes across south and central Florida. Hurricane Milton death toll is at least 25 as of this date. An extension to the 90-day suspense date was granted until February 2, 2025, as we continue to process grants for these hurricane-stricken areas.

Hurricane Helene caused power outages for millions of individuals across several states, and thousands of homes sustained major structural damage or were destroyed, causing at least [233 confirmed fatalities](#). Extensive flooding from Helene has severely impacted western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee and multiple communities in several states, hampering the delivery of critical supplies, and FEMA has approved support for individual households in Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Relief efforts are ongoing.

A webinar was conducted by Florida staff after Hurricane Helene and every department was invited. This meeting was recorded, and you can find it at this link (fast forward to the 24:15 minute mark for the start of the meeting):

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/R1ZqkXs39Wq9EG65YUnACWVmNOjHcFJBrSNSAGJuaFNIQZ\\_eUZYSRtwaofO3AjHL.iXcq8ZM1JNDKbGcT?startTime=1727886943000](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/R1ZqkXs39Wq9EG65YUnACWVmNOjHcFJBrSNSAGJuaFNIQZ_eUZYSRtwaofO3AjHL.iXcq8ZM1JNDKbGcT?startTime=1727886943000)

They along with NEF and TFA national staff provided important information and resources to attendees and the meeting was recorded and has been sent out to all Legion leadership.

It's been a grim year of deadly hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, tornadoes, and other severe weather events facing our country. We are engaging with those departments affected and NEF staff sent out an e-mail recently to all department and national leadership regarding the NEF Program. The two links below provide important information about NEF. First is the PowerPoint of how to complete an NEF application:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYTPVnmrsh0>

This link is to the website about NEF, grants, and donations:

[Request Assistance | The American Legion](#)

The second is Illinois Department Adjutant and PNC Marty Conatser on how they set up disaster teams within Illinois following a massive tornado disaster a few years ago and which could help other departments with setting up their own disaster relief teams.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5ZlecXviD8>

### **Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW):**

Over 3,100 servicemembers, veterans, and their families were directly impacted by Operation Comfort Warriors in 2023, either by participating in an OCW-sponsored event or receiving care at a grant-receiving facility.

2024 – 9 Grants totaling \$89,639.57

Completed: 9

Grants to servicemembers – 2

Grants to facility – 7

Grants pending – 0

With the passage of Resolution 20 during last month's Fall Meetings, Operation Comfort Warriors has an updated policy manual to address grant requests. Additionally, the OCW landing pages on the National Website have been updated to reflect the changes that were made. It will be incumbent upon the Requestor to provide the information necessary to facilitate grant approval.

### **Training:**

#### **National American Legion College (NALC):**

With the NALC Stakeholder Input Survey underway, we are gathering critical insights from district and county leaders to guide the NALC curriculum's refinement. This effort prioritizes servant leadership and practical solutions to leadership challenges. **Why it matters:** Engaging voices from all levels ensures the program addresses real-world needs, strengthens alumni impact, and prepares a new generation of Legion leaders to effectively serve their communities. We encourage leaders at all levels to promote the survey and emphasize its importance to the future of NALC's mission.

[Take the survey](#)

#### **National Regional Information Conference (NRIC) – Boston:**

With 52 registered attendees representing 13 departments, including diverse leadership from Post-level commanders to National Chairs, the upcoming NRIC promises dynamic collaboration and impactful education. Sessions will cover key topics like legal updates, membership retention, and Be the One initiatives. So what: This event showcases the Legion's commitment to fostering strong, connected leaders who can implement actionable strategies at every level. Increasing attendance remains a focus, as every additional participant strengthens our collective efforts to build resilient leadership across the organization.

[Register for NRIC in Boston.](#)