

**Internal Affairs & Membership Division
Weekly Report to the National Commander
January 17, 2025
Matthew Herndon, Director – (317) 630-1406**

2025 Traditional Membership:

Membership as of the January 15th – target date report is at **79.46%** of the 1,445,882 goal with **1,148,954** current members (new recruits, renewals and encumbered DMS transfers), 18 departments have met or exceeded this goal. The 85% target date is February 12, 2025.

DMS New Member Acquisition:

The 2025 DMS new member acquisition program has acquired **42,804** new members since July 1. This represents about **42.80%** 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.

Conflict	Conflict Totals	Percentage:	Branch of Service	BOS Totals	Percentage:
GW_TERRORISM	18,785	29.61%	USA	29,837	47.03%
OTHER	18,216	28.72%	USN	12,448	19.62%
VIETNAM	11,437	18.03%	USAF	11,052	17.42%
PERSIAN_GULF	5,898	9.30%	USMC	7,484	11.80%
Unknown	5,606	8.84%	Unknown	1,536	2.42%
LEBANON_GRENADA	1,916	3.02%	USCG	981	1.55%
KOREA	731	1.15%	USSF	63	0.10%
PANAMA	703	1.11%	USMM	35	0.06%
WWII	137	0.22%	Total New Members:	63,436	
WWII_MM	7	0.01%			
Total New Members:	63,436				

Multi-Year Membership:

The multi-year membership option can only be accessed on the national website at www.legion.org/renew. To date **46,234** 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 77.37% at the traditional level. There are 42,763 department headquarters post members who are paid for 2024 that have not renewed for 2025 and 415,500 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 40,401 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)

National Commander Navarreté participated in the detachment of the Illinois membership caravan. NVC Ray was in Indiana, and NVC Lawrence was in Tennessee, where they participated in their respective detachment Mid-Winter Conferences. The SAL membership is already at **70%** of the goal!

2025 SAL Membership Info.

As of Jan16, 2025 – 75% Target Date is Feb 12

2025 Goal:	401,263
Total Actual Membership:	284,583
% of Year-End Goal:	70.92%
2025 Renewal Percentage:	65.09%
Detachments at 45%:	54
Detachments at 60%:	46

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 – 20 grants (14 members/6 posts) totaling \$83,151.81

Florida (Hurricanes Helene & Milton) – 14 members/6 posts

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:

- Southern California is braced for "extremely critical fire conditions" caused by a new period of Santa Ana winds today through January 16, 2025, across parts of Los Angeles and Ventura counties as the battle to contain raging blazes goes on.
- Fanned by strong winds, the wildfires have killed at least 25 people and swept through 40,000 acres in the Greater Los Angeles area, destroying entire communities and more than 12,300 structures.
- The largest blaze, the Palisades Fire, has burned more than 23,000 acres and was only 18% contained this afternoon as it threatened Brentwood, Encino, and Westwood.
- Evacuation orders are in effect for 88,000 residents of Los Angeles, and 89,000 are in evacuation warning zones, which means they may need to leave at a moment's notice.
- Los Angeles County has declared a public health emergency, warning that smoke and particulate matter could pose immediate and long-term threats.
- American Legion Palisades Post 283 has launched an online Palisades Fire Resource Hub to provide critical support and information to those affected in the area. Post 283 invites residents, organizations, and businesses to assist in recovery efforts. For more information, updates, or questions, contact Post 283 at HQ@Post283.com.
- President Biden, Jr. approved a major Disaster Declaration for California. 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. We are tracking.

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

They along with NEF and TFA national staff provided important information and resources to attendees and the meeting was recorded and will be sent out to all Legion leadership. We started processing NEF grants for Florida thus far departments.

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 newly launched 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 actively gathering critical feedback from district and county leaders to shape the curriculum. This initiative focuses on enhancing servant leadership and equipping leaders with practical strategies to address today's challenges.

Why it matters: Your voice directly influences the program's ability to meet real-world needs, amplify alumni impact, and prepare the next generation of Legion leaders for success. Please promote the survey among your networks to ensure wide participation and make a meaningful contribution to the future of NALC.

[Take the survey](#)

National Regional Information Conference (NRIC) – Boston

Registration for the NRIC has grown to 63 attendees (+11) from 13 departments, reflecting a strong commitment to leadership development across the organization. With a diverse mix of Post-level leaders, National Chairs, and Department Commanders, the event will feature sessions on critical topics like legal updates, membership retention, and the Be the One initiative. So what: The NRIC is a vital opportunity to connect leaders and equip them with actionable strategies that strengthen the Legion at every level. Each additional participant amplifies the value of this event, so let's continue encouraging registration to maximize its impact.

[Register Here: NRIC in Boston](#)

Training Tuesday: How to Run a Post

Session Overview:

Join us on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 7:00 PM ET for a Training Tuesday session on "How to Run a Post," led by experienced Legionnaire Angel M. Faulkner. This session provides practical tools and guidance for effective post management, including:

Meeting facilitation and parliamentary procedures

Officer roles and responsibilities

Program implementation and member engagement (time permitting)

Best practices for financial and administrative oversight

The 20–40 minute session will be followed by an open Q&A, where participants are encouraged to actively engage by raising their hands or submitting questions in the chat.

Session Details:

Date: January 28, 2025

Time: 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM ET

Platform: Microsoft Teams

Join the Meeting

[Click to Join the Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 246 412 542 503 | Passcode: P4h7HK6p

Dial-In: +1 317-610-0468, Conference ID: 200 185 315#

This session is designed to strengthen post leadership and operational excellence. We look forward to your participation!