

**Internal Affairs & Membership Division  
Weekly Report to the National Commander  
March 20, 2025  
Matthew Herndon, Director – (317) 630-1406**

**2025 Traditional Membership:**

Membership as of the March 19<sup>th</sup> report is at **87.80%** of the 1,445,882 goal with **1,269,477** current members (new recruits, renewals and encumbered DMS transfers). The 95% target date is April 9, 2025.

**DMS New Member Acquisition:**

The 2025 DMS new member acquisition program has acquired **56,854** new members since July 1. This represents about **56.85%** 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	24,455	29.48%	USA	39,125	47.16%
OTHER	24,271	29.25%	USN	16,186	19.51%
VIETNAM	14,708	17.73%	USAF	14,293	17.23%
PERSIAN_GULF	7,662	9.24%	USMC	9,805	11.82%
Unknown	7,403	8.92%	Unknown	2,127	2.56%
LEBANON_GRENADA	2,417	2.91%	USCG	1,289	1.55%
KOREA	946	1.14%	USSF	82	0.10%
PANAMA	903	1.09%	USMM	57	0.07%
WWII	190	0.23%	<b>Total New Members:</b>	<b>82,964</b>	
WWII MM	9	0.01%			
<b>Total New Members:</b>	<b>82,964</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 **48,689** 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 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 84.55% at the traditional level. There are 34,578 department headquarters post members who are paid for 2024 that have not renewed for 2025 and 307,507 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 51,967 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)**

Preparations are underway for the SAL Spring NEC meetings and the National Convention.

#### **2025 SAL Membership Info.**

**As of: March 17, 2025**

2025 Goal:	<b>401,263</b>
Total Actual Membership:	<b>344,763</b>
% of Year-End Goal:	<b>85.92%</b>
2025 Renewal Percentage:	<b>77.78%</b>
Detachments at 80%:	<b>41</b>
Detachments at 90%:	<b>7</b>

**\*\* 90% Target Date – April 9<sup>th</sup>**

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

**2025 – 34 grants (28 members/6 posts) totaling \$119,290.76**

California (Wildfires) – 8 members/0 posts

Florida (Hurricanes Helene & Milton) – 20 members/6 posts

(Exp. 6/13/25) A series of storms sparked tornadoes, high winds, dust storms, and wildfires across 8 states last weekend resulting in at least 42 deaths, and dozens injured. There were 87 tornadoes reported on March 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> that led to 27 deaths in Missouri, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and North Carolina. Additionally, many people in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas were

forced from their homes by high winds spurred by the same system resulting in an additional 15 deaths. Many states, such as Arkansas declared states of emergency in advance of the storms so that emergency agencies and funding could be allocated for the response.

(Exp. 5/30/25) Dozens of wildfires in North and South Carolina prompted the evacuation of thousands of people from their homes when the area was plagued with dry conditions and gusty winds. In South Carolina, 175 wildfires burned across the state, scorching over 4,200 acres of land and straining firefighting resources, according to the state fire marshal's office. Response operations were ongoing in various areas, including Horry, Spartanburg, Union, Oconee, and Pickens counties. The largest of the brush fires was in Carolina Forest, a community west of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The fire had exploded in size overnight, forcing residents in at least a half dozen neighborhoods to flee their homes, officials said.

The fires prompted localized evacuation orders, and South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster (R) declared a state of emergency, noting that crews were fighting more than 175 wildfires spanning 4,200 acres in the state. Another fire, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, stretched to about 400 acres, according to the North Carolina Forest Service.

The fires reported in North Carolina range in size from less than one acre to more than 600 acres, according to the North Carolina Forest Service. The largest one is the blaze in Polk County. No declaration has yet been issued for North Carolina. We will continue to monitor.

(Exp. 5/15/25) Residents in 13 West Virginia counties affected by February 2025 flooding can now report stream debris blockages to their local conservation districts. This action comes after the state declared a disaster due to widespread flooding across southern parts of the Mountain State. The counties under the disaster declaration include Mercer, McDowell, Raleigh, Summers, Greenbrier, Wyoming, Boone, Cabell, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mingo, and Wayne. Reporting debris blockages is essential for recovery efforts, especially for those seeking assistance through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program.

(Exp. 3/24/25) There are numerous fires disasters in Southern California, and we have started to receive NEF grants from the Department of California due to these fires. We have been advised that as many as approximately 100 TAL and SAL members may have been affected. Fueled by powerful winds and dry conditions, a series of ferocious wildfires erupted on Jan. 7 and roared across the Los Angeles area, killing at least 29 people, including some who died trying to prevent the fires from engulfing their homes, and destroying thousands of structures.

Southern California is expected to continue to face an increased risk of wildfires for a decent chunk of the year as an intensifying drought and episodes of Santa Ana winds combine to threaten more dangerous infernos.

A webinar was conducted by Florida staff after Hurricane Helene and every department was invited. This webinar provided best practices on how the Florida American Legion Disaster Management Team reacts in the aftermath of natural disasters. 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 was sent out to all Legion leadership.

The below link is past 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>

The two links below provide important information about NEF. First is the instructional PowerPoint of how to complete an NEF application:

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

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

[Request Assistance | The American Legion](#)

It's been a grim couple of years of deadly hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, tornadoes, and other severe weather events facing our country. We are engaging with those departments affected and Internal Affairs staff routinely sends out an e-mail to all national and department leadership regarding the NEF Program.

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

Nearly 2,000 servicemembers, Veterans, and their families were directly impacted by Operation Comfort Warriors in 2024, either by participating in an OCW-sponsored event or receiving care at a grant-receiving facility.

#### ***2024 – 10 Grants totaling \$89,639.57***

*Completed: 10*

*Grants to servicemembers – 2*

*Grants to facility – 8*

#### ***2025 – 2 Grant totaling \$17,000.00***

*Completed: 2*

*Grants to facility - 2*

*Grants pending – 1 (Team River Run)*

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**

#### ***The Power of Communication: Ensuring Every Legionnaire is Informed***

Friends, communication continues to be one of our greatest challenges, and I will not stop reminding everyone about its importance. Training, resources, and leadership development opportunities are only valuable if the message reaches those who need them. We must bridge this gap together.

#### ***How Can We Improve Communication?***

✓ **Keep it Simple** – Avoid information overload and focus on clear, direct messaging.

✓ **Widespread Distribution** – Information should not be limited to a select few; every Legionnaire deserves access.

✓ **Direct Engagement** – A personal invitation goes a long way in increasing participation. Invite a new Legionnaire to attend an NRIC with you.

We all play a role in making sure our members are informed. Let's change the narrative from "I didn't know about that" to "I learned something new and took action."

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## **Upcoming Training & Leadership Development National American Legion College (NALC) Updates**

- We are pleased to announce that the revised 2025 National American Legion College (NALC) application is now available! This year's updates ensure a streamlined process while reinforcing the core values of servant leadership at the heart of the program.

### **Key Updates to the Application:**

- **All-in-One Format** – The application is now structured as a single document for easier navigation, including:
  - Overview of the program
  - Application instructions by section
  - Application form (organized by section)
  - Signature page
- **Enhanced Focus on Servant Leadership** – New questions have been added to emphasize the role of servant leadership within NALC, ensuring applicants reflect on their commitment to leading with integrity, purpose, and community impact.

You can access the updated application at [American Legion College | The American Legion](#). If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out. We look forward to reviewing your applications and welcoming the next group of leaders into NALC 2025!

**Deadline to Apply: Applications are due from the department by July 31st.**

### **Training Tuesdays**

We're shaking things up for our March Training Tuesday Webinar, introducing a collaborative, hands-on approach to resolution writing. Instead of a traditional lecture, this session will be interactive, giving you the opportunity to workshop resolutions in real time alongside fellow members.

Hosted on Microsoft Teams Webinar, this session will feature breakout rooms, live discussions, and digital collaboration tools to refine resolution language, strengthen arguments, and develop clear, actionable proposals. Our goal is to move away from passive learning and instead create an engaging environment where resolutions are built, refined, and improved collectively.

### **What to Expect:**

- ✓ Overview of Resolution Development
- ✓ Breakout Room Discussions
- ✓ Live Collaboration
- ✓ Group Presentations

By embracing a more interactive format, we aim to increase engagement, encourage discussion, and make the resolution process more impactful. This is a valuable opportunity to contribute, refine ideas, and ensure resolutions are well-supported before submission.

 **Register by March 23 to participate in this hands-on experience!**

 **Sign up here: [Shaking Things Up: A New Approach to Resolutions!](#)**

- **April 29, 2025** – *Running a Post: Financial Management & Leadership Best Practices*

Encourage your fellow Legionnaires to attend! These free virtual sessions provide critical knowledge to enhance leadership skills at all levels.

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### ***Final Thoughts***

Legionnaires, our ability to lead, mentor, and support each other depends on how well we communicate. I challenge each of you to:

1. Share this update with a fellow Legionnaire.
2. Invite someone new to participate in training.
3. Offer feedback on how we can make our communication even stronger.

Together, we strengthen The American Legion. Let's keep pushing forward!

### **Be The One**

16,000 Trained

*Upcoming online training dates:*

March 26, 2025: 5:30-7 p.m. Eastern

**[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)**

*Department Be the One training:*

Georgia: March 21