

**Internal Affairs & Membership Division
Weekly Report to the National Commander
February 28, 2025
Matthew Herndon, Director – (317) 630-1406**

2025 Traditional Membership:

Membership as of the February 26th report is at **85.85%** of the 1,445,882 goal with **1,241,258** current members (new recruits, renewals and encumbered DMS transfers). The 90% target date is March 12, 2025, **three** departments have already met or exceeded this goal.

DMS New Member Acquisition:

The 2025 DMS new member acquisition program has acquired **50,423** new members since July 1. This represents about **50.42%** 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	22,869	29.85%	USA	36,232	47.25%
OTHER	22,316	29.10%	USN	14,977	19.53%
VIETNAM	13,571	17.70%	USAF	13,266	17.30%
PERSIAN_GULF	7,064	9.21%	USMC	9,054	11.81%
Unknown	6,716	8.76%	Unknown	1,831	2.39%
LEBANON_GRENADA	2,234	2.91%	USCG	1,200	1.56%
KOREA	877	1.14%	USSF	74	0.10%
PANAMA	851	1.11%	USMM	50	0.07%
WWII	178	0.23%	Total New Members:	76,684	
WWII MM	8	0.01%			
Total New Members:	76,684				

Multi-Year Membership:

The multi-year membership option can only be accessed on the national website at www.legion.org/renew. To date **48,167** 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 82.99% at the traditional level. There are 36,397 department headquarters post members who are paid for 2024 that have not renewed for 2025 and 331,736 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 48,167 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)

NVC Lawrence attended the Mid-Winter conference at the Iowa detachment. Preparations are underway for the Spring NEC meetings.

2025 SAL Membership Info.

As of: February 26, 2025

2025 Goal:	401,263
Total Actual Membership:	328,153
% of Year-End Goal:	81.78%
2025 Renewal Percentage:	74.47%
Detachments at 75%:	40
Detachments at 80%:	23

80% Target Date – March 12

The National Emergency Fund (NEF):

2025 – 35 grants (29 members/6 posts) totaling \$116,530.64

California (Wildfires) – 8 members/0 posts

Florida (Hurricanes Helene & Milton) – 21 members/6 posts

Water levels continue to rise across Kentucky and other parts of the Ohio Valley and mid-Atlantic regions, which are already reeling from a deadly coast-to-coast winter storm. Now, the situation is set to worsen as another major storm threatens snow and dangerously cold weather. The storm,

which hammered several states with severe weather and heavy rainfall over the weekend, has claimed at least 14 lives—one person died when a tree fell on a home in Atlanta, another in West Virginia, and 12 in Kentucky including a mother and a 7-year-old child who were in a car stuck in high water.

Emergency teams from the Kentucky National Guard and Kentucky State Police conducted over 1,000 rescues and first responders went "door to door" in flooded zones to ensure everyone's safety, said Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear during a Monday press conference. In just under 24 hours, a deluge exceeding a month's worth of rain inundated Kentucky, triggering the lethal floods. Despite the end of the rainfall, the flooding danger persists as waterways remained swollen, Beshear added. Beshear declared a state of emergency on Friday ahead of the storm to get approval for a federal disaster declaration that made federal aid available to affected areas, including ongoing search and rescue operations.

Two people have died, and one is still missing in southern West Virginia amid widespread flooding, the state's governor said Tuesday. Gov. Patrick Morrisey said during a news briefing that a husband and wife from Welch, W.Va., were killed during flooding over the weekend. Morrisey said a firefighter in McDowell County also died Monday night, but the circumstances were not immediately known. A news release from the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office later said the death happened while responding to a structure fire.

The governor said a fourth person has been unaccounted for several days and crews are continuing to search for them. Morrisey said he had requested a federal emergency disaster declaration in order to receive federal funding and additional resources. The governor said cleanup and recovery efforts continue for much of southern West Virginia, including about 60-65 water rescues since the weekend.

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

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 year 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 Runner)

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 Effective Communication

One of the biggest challenges we continue to face is ensuring that information is received—not just sent. We provide incredible training opportunities, but if Legionnaires don't know about them, they can't take advantage. Information doesn't mean anything if it's not reaching the people who need it.

So, how do we fix that?

- ◆ Keep messages clear and direct – Avoid information overload; get to the point.
- ◆ Share widely – This isn't just for a select few. Every Legionnaire should have access.
- ◆ Personally invite members – A direct ask makes all the difference. People engage when they feel included.

So What?

By improving communication, we ensure that every Legionnaire has access to the tools they need to lead, grow, and strengthen our organization. Leadership starts with awareness—let's make sure no one misses out on opportunities to serve.

Washington Conference NALC & Training Updates

The National American Legion College (NALC) continues to evolve, with key updates in curriculum, instructor selection, and program accessibility. Following a few Washington Conference meetings, we are moving forward with adjustments to the cost of NALC and some training initiatives.

Key Updates:

- ✓ NALC Application & Website Updates – Applications will be available mid-March.
- ✓ Instructor Review – Evaluations are underway to assemble a highly qualified team of trainers who will effectively deliver Servant Leadership-based education.
- ✓ Training Alignment – Ensuring that NALC, National Convention training, Regional Training, and Department-level education are consistent, high-quality, and accessible to a diverse audience of Legionnaires.

These changes reflect a commitment to strengthening leadership development and making training more impactful for Legionnaires at every level.