

**Internal Affairs & Membership Division
Weekly Report to the National Commander
January 31, 2025
Matthew Herndon, Director – (317) 630-1406**

2025 Traditional Membership:

Membership as of the January 29th report is at **81.89%** of the 1,445,882 goal with **1,183,973** current members (new recruits, renewals and encumbered DMS transfers). The 85% target date is February 12, 2025, **five** departments have already met or exceeded this goal.

DMS New Member Acquisition:

The 2025 DMS new member acquisition program has acquired **44,045** new members since July 1. This represents about **44.05%** 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	19,875	29.95%	USA	31,214	47.03%
OTHER	18,454	27.81%	USN	12,993	19.58%
VIETNAM	12,116	18.26%	USAF	11,559	17.42%
PERSIAN_GULF	6,267	9.44%	USMC	7,854	11.83%
Unknown	5,947	8.96%	Unknown	1,604	2.42%
LEBANON_GRENADA	2,019	3.04%	USCG	1,042	1.57%
KOREA	787	1.19%	USSF	65	0.10%
PANAMA	743	1.12%	USMM	37	0.06%
WWII	153	0.23%	Total New Members:	66,368	
WWII MM	7	0.01%			
Total New Members:	66,368				

Multi-Year Membership:

The multi-year membership option can only be accessed on the national website at www.legion.org/renew. To date **47,054** 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 79.49% at the traditional level. There are 40,500 department headquarters post members who are paid for 2024 that have not renewed for 2025 and 381,921 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 42,668 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 attended the Mid-Winter conference at the detachment of New Hampshire. NVC Ashley attended the Western region roundup in Nevada. The SAL membership is already at **75.8%** of the goal! Preparations being made for Washington Conference.

2025 SAL Membership Info.

As of Jan 29, 2025

2025 Goal:	401,263	
Total Actual Membership:	304,166	
% of Year-End Goal:	75.8%	
2025 Renewal Percentage:	69.42%	
Detachments at 60%:	49	
Detachments at 75%:	20	75% target date Feb 12

The National Emergency Fund (NEF):

2025 – 25 grants (19 members/6 posts) totaling \$92,098.67

Florida (Hurricanes Helene & Milton) – 19 members/6 posts

There are numerous fires in Southern California, and we expect to see many NEF grants in the future due to these fires. The following pertains and is up to date from today's date, January 28, 2025:

- **The Palisades Fire** erupted the morning of Jan. 7 in Pacific Palisades, a Los Angeles neighborhood east of Malibu, as a brush fire. The blaze, which had grown to 23,448 acres, was 95% contained, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire. Cal Fire said the fire damaged or destroyed more than 6,800 structures.
- **The Eaton Fire** ignited hours after the Palisades Fire near a canyon in the sprawling national forest lands north of downtown Los Angeles. It had exploded to 14,021 acres and was 99% contained, according to Cal Fire. The agency has reported that 9,418 structures were damaged or destroyed in the blaze.
- **The Hughes Fire** began near Castaic Lake in northern Los Angeles County on Wednesday morning and quickly grew to over 10,000 acres. It had covered 10,425 acres and was 98% contained by Monday night.
- 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.
- At least 29 people have died in the fires, according to Los Angeles County officials.
- The Border 2 Fire near the San Diego border has 6,625 acres burned so far and is 74% contained.

We are still accepting grant applications for Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the flooding in New Mexico, and the wildfires in California.

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):

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 – 9 Grants totaling \$89,639.57

Completed: 9

Grants to servicemembers – 2

Grants to facility – 7

2025 – 0 Grants totaling \$0

Grants pending – 1

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:

We often hear Legionnaires say they didn't know about an event, didn't receive training information, or weren't aware of leadership opportunities. The issue isn't a lack of information—it's that the message isn't being received. Effective communication is not about the sender; it's about the receiver. If our message isn't reaching its intended audience, we need to reconsider how we're delivering it.







The solution is straightforward: break it down, share it widely, and invite everyone.

Training should never feel exclusive. No leader should feel unprepared. If we're truly committed to strengthening The American Legion at every level, we must ensure that every member—from Post-level officers to National Chairs—has access to the tools they need to lead effectively.

NRIC Boston

Tomorrow, 67 leaders from 13 departments will come together in Boston for the National Regional Information Conference (NRIC). These attendees—from Post Commanders to National Chairs—represent the strength and diversity of our leadership. They aren't just showing up; they're committing to learning, growing, and bringing valuable knowledge back to their departments.

They'll engage in important discussions, including:

-  8:30 AM – Legal Updates | NJA Seavey
-  10:00 AM – Be the One | Matt Jabaut
-  11:00 AM – Programs | Mark Avis
-  1:30 PM – Running an Effective Meeting | Sandra Davis
-  2:30 PM – Post Operations | Lisa McPhee
-  3:30 PM – Membership Retention | Matt Jabaut

This conference is a powerful opportunity for collaboration and growth. Let's encourage attendees to share their learnings and spread that knowledge throughout our organization.

NALC Survey Results

The 2025 NALC Stakeholder Input Survey has closed, and the results provide valuable insight into key areas where members see the greatest need for training and development:

✓ **Supporting Local Leadership:** More guidance is needed for district and county leaders, especially in financial management, conflict resolution, and Post operations.

✓ **Expanding Mentorship & Training Accessibility:** Members want structured mentorship and flexible learning formats that meet their varying needs.

✓ **Standardizing Leadership Tools:** There is strong demand for best practices that offer structure but also allow for local adaptation.

✓ **Focusing on Servant Leadership:** Leaders want practical tools to enhance community engagement and create a welcoming environment for all.




These findings will directly inform the updates to future NALC curriculum, ensuring it aligns with the real-world needs of our members.

Training Tuesday – What's Next?

Last week's Training Tuesday saw 755 registrations and 628 attendees—a clear indication of the demand for training. The feedback was positive, with many appreciating the interactive format and relevant topics, but we also received suggestions for improvements:

- **More Time for Q&A** – Attendees requested space for deeper discussions.
Suggestion: Posts could host watch parties to further enrich these discussions and deepen existing bonds.
 - **Additional Learning Resources** – Follow-up materials could help members apply what they've learned.
Suggestion: Encourage members to use the website for self-guided learning.
 - **Expanded Outreach** – While most attendees rely on email for training updates, some still aren't receiving the information.
Suggestion: Holding watch parties at Posts could solve this issue, as in-person meetings are still valuable for engagement.
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Upcoming Training Tuesday Sessions:

-  February: Be the One – Led by Program Manager Tony Cross
-  March: Resolutions – A look at what that means at the Post level
-  April: How to Run a Post – A deeper dive into financial management, based on high demand

We're dedicated to continuously improving these sessions to ensure every Legionnaire has access to meaningful learning opportunities.

The Challenge Ahead – and the Opportunity

How we connect, support, and strengthen each other as an organization can improve a lot of these areas. If members aren't aware of opportunities, we must prioritize using emails and social media to ensure that all information reaches those who need it.

A strong Legion depends on empowered leaders at every level. Whether it's through NRIC, NALC, or Training Tuesday, each opportunity to learn makes us stronger.

Let's continue working together to ensure all members feel informed, included, and supported.

| Time: 7:00 PM ET

REGISTER

UPCOMING FORM DEADLINES FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS & MEMBERSHIP:

2025 LEGION/SAL BULK SHIPMENT FORM – NOVEMBER 30 **PAST DUE

We have not received forms from the following departments: Alabama, Arizona, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Nebraska and West Virginia.

2026 LEGION & SAL MEMBERSHIP CARD FORMS – JANUARY 15 **PAST DUE

We are missing all three forms from the following departments: District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi and Philippines.

CERTIFICATION FORM FOR POST HONOR RIBBON – JANUARY 31

CERTIFICATION FORM FOR CERTIFICATES OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE – JANUARY 31