

**Internal Affairs & Membership Division
Weekly Report to the National Commander
March 7, 2025
Matthew Herndon, Director – (317) 630-1406**

2025 Traditional Membership:

Membership as of the March 5th report is at **86.50%** of the 1,445,882 goal with **1,250,740** current members (new recruits, renewals and encumbered DMS transfers). The 90% target date is March 12, 2025, **four** departments have already met or exceeded this goal.

DMS New Member Acquisition:

The 2025 DMS new member acquisition program has acquired **52,030** new members since July 1. This represents about **52.03%** 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	23,445	29.76%	USA	37,173	47.19%
OTHER	22,975	29.17%	USN	15,389	19.54%
VIETNAM	13,935	17.69%	USAF	13,602	17.27%
PERSIAN_GULF	7,254	9.21%	USMC	9,305	11.81%
Unknown	6,899	8.76%	Unknown	1,941	2.46%
LEBANON_GRENADA	2,297	2.92%	USCG	1,234	1.57%
KOREA	902	1.15%	USSF	76	0.10%
PANAMA	870	1.10%	USMM	52	0.07%
WWII	186	0.24%	Total New Members:	78,772	
WWII MM	9	0.01%			
Total New Members:	78,772				

Multi-Year Membership:

The multi-year membership option can only be accessed on the national website at www.legion.org/renew. To date **48,376** 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 83.51% at the traditional level. There are 35,975 department headquarters post members who are paid for 2024 that have not renewed for 2025 and 323,111 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 49,051 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, National Vice Commanders, and many other SAL members participated in the wreath-laying ceremony on Sunday of the Washington Conference. Commander Navarreté also attended the congressional testimonial of The American Legion Commander. Preparations are underway for the Washington Conference and the beginning stages of the Spring meetings and the SAL National Convention.

2025 SAL Membership Info.

As of: March 3, 2025

2025 Goal:	401,263
Total Actual Membership:	334,366
% of Year-End Goal:	83.33%
2025 Renewal Percentage:	75.74%
Detachments at 75%:	42
Detachments at 80%:	32

80% Target Date – March 12

The National Emergency Fund (NEF):

2025 – 36 grants (30 members/6 posts) totaling \$119,530.64

California (Wildfires) – 8 members/0 posts

Florida (Hurricanes Helene & Milton) – 22 members/6 posts

(Exp. 5/30/25) Dozens of wildfires in North and South Carolina prompted the evacuation of thousands of people from their homes Sunday as 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 erupted Saturday in Carolina Forest, a community west of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The fire 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

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.

Be The One

14,250 Trained

Upcoming training dates:

March 12, 2025: 5:30-7 p.m. Eastern

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

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

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Department Be the One training

New Jersey: March 15

Georgia: March 21