

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Larry J. Besson

Illinois

Chairman

John W. Querfeld

Illinois

Director

The National Internal Affairs Commission was established by resolution of the National Executive Committee in 1947. The original charge for this constitutional commission still remains: to formulate and recommend policies and to oversee the implementation of adopted policies relating to activities conducted for organizational purposes.

Among those purposes are all those not properly the responsibility of any other national commission, as well as membership strategies, post formation, clerical and records administration for posts and individual members, and special projects. The commission provides guidance and assistance to the national adjutant on necessary administrative operations.

Under the broad interpretation of those purposes not properly the responsibility of other commissions, Internal Affairs oversees awards, constitutional discipline and commemorative activities. The commission also monitors legislative and other regulatory activities that potentially affect American Legion posts and departments, recommending appropriate courses of action.

The commission has six standing committees assigned to it for supervision and coordination: 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemorative Committee, 75th Anniversary of WWII Commemorative Committee, 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, American Legion Riders Advisory Committee, National Convention Resolutions Assignment, Constitution and By-Laws, and Membership & Post Activities. The latter has separate reporting responsibilities to the national convention and the National Executive Committee.

Internal Affairs is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the activities of Sons of The American Legion, which is a major program and not a separate organization. The commission also oversees the long-term programs and activities of Paid-Up-For-Life, the National Emergency Fund, American Legion Riders, National American Legion College, The American Legion Amateur Radio Club and the Leadership, Education And Development (LEAD) training program.

National Convention Resolutions Assignment Committee

Henry P. Bradley

Massachusetts

Chairman

The Resolutions Assignment Committee meets at least three days before the convening of the national convention. This committee has the responsibility to receive, consider and transmit all resolutions – with or without recommendation – to the appropriate convention committee for a report to the convention. During an average year, between 200 and 300 resolutions will be assigned.

Constitution & By-Laws Committee

Vincent Gaughan

Illinois

Chairman

The National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion can only be amended by the duly elected delegates at a national convention.

However, the Constitution & By-Laws Committee, established by the authority of the National Executive Committee in 1939, authorizes this committee to study and make proper recommendations concerning all of the matters that pertain to the National Constitution and By-Laws, as well as matters relating to the Uniform Code of Procedure, which provides rules and regulations for the revocation, cancellation or suspension of department and post charters of The American Legion.

Membership & Post Activities Committee

Kenneth E. Orrock

South Dakota

Chairman

Billy R. Johnson

Georgia

Membership Director

Membership and programs go hand in hand to make The American Legion an organization able to provide people and resources to serve the needs of veterans and their families. Membership & Post Activities is pleased to report a continuing membership of over 2 million members worldwide.

Membership

Final 2014 membership – 2,208,651

Final 2015 membership – 2,135,965

2016 membership as of Aug. 1, 2016 (projected) - 2,050,000

53rd Annual National Membership Workshop

The 53rd Annual National Membership Workshop convened in Indianapolis on July 28-30, 2016, with more than 300 department and district officers in attendance from 50 departments.

Many who attended already had a good understanding of The American Legion's membership program, especially as it pertains to their departments and districts. When the workshop concluded, they left prepared to face day-to-day membership challenges with a better understanding of the Legion as it relates to matters involving retention and the ability to recruit new members.

The goal of the workshop is to provide these essential membership workers with the tools, knowledge and desire to conduct an effective American Legion membership program. Whether they are involved in membership recruitment or program implementation, the workshop teaches veterans to help veterans and provide communities the essential programs to maintain a quality of life which all veterans fought and served to preserve.

Post Development/Revitalization

The Membership & Post Activities Committee developed a training program in January 1996 designed to assist posts, districts and departments in developing and revitalizing posts. The program provides training workshops to interested volunteers, along with practical field application.

The success of the program is evident, based on the revitalization and development of more than 4,000 American Legion posts in the past 20 years. Many departments have succeeded in revitalizing posts without any actual assistance from National Headquarters staff. Whether departments request field assistance or just send members to the training workshop, positive results follow if they adhere to guidelines.

All departments are encouraged to participate in this program. However, success requires a commitment from every level of leadership. For more information about the Post Development/Revitalization program, contact your department, write to The American Legion, Membership Division, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206, call 317-630-1321, or e-mail membership@legion.org.

Reconnect

The Reconnect program is a Department of Defense initiative to "reconnect" Americans with today's military. Reconnect is also an open invitation from the U.S. military for organizations such as The American Legion to strengthen ties between the total force – active duty, National Guard and reserve components – and the civilian community. This is not a free ticket to recruit; rather, it is an opportunity for The American Legion to showcase our programs and services.

Legionnaires attend Reconnect events with an attitude of serving U.S. military members and their families and promoting the military in the local community. Success depends on the participation of American Legion departments and the cooperation of local posts in communities near military installations and National Guard and reserve units.

While Reconnect visits to larger installations are important for public relations, thousands of local National Guard and reserve units need The American Legion's assistance too. Because of the war on terrorism, the Guard and reserves have played a much larger role in national defense than any other time in U.S. history. These men and women, with their families, are citizen-soldiers who do not always have established military support networks readily available to them. The American Legion can fill this void.

Direct Renewal

In 2011 we began the "online" renewal process, and as of May 15, 2016, we have over 210,000 members taking advantage of this streamlined and simple process. An important fact is that our new members (1st, 2nd and 3rd year renewals) show a higher propensity (approximately 43 percent) to use the online option. This is a fast and easy option for our members and a streamlined process for the posts and departments to receive their per-capita.

Direct Membership Solicitation

Since 1982, the Direct Membership Solicitation (DMS) program has brought over 4 million new members into American Legion departments. Obviously, DMS is successful in acquiring new members, but its ultimate goal is to provide a resource of members who can be transferred to a local post. DMS members can also be used to build new posts.

Membership Campaign Promotion

The National Membership Awards Program distributes more than 65,000 various awards annually to recognize membership accomplishments at all levels of the organization. The promotion plan for the National Membership Campaign is formulated during the annual planning session of the Membership & Post Activities Committee in Indianapolis in January. Following are point achievers for 2015-2016:

EARLY BIRD/NEF KICKOFF - SEPTEMBER 16, 2015: 51 departments qualified for the **50 percent** target date: **Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California,**

Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, France, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

FALL MEETINGS - OCTOBER 14, 2015: 53 Departments qualified for the 55 percent target date: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, France, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

VETERANS DAY – NOVEMBER 13, 2015: 53 Departments qualified for the 65 percent target date: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, France, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

PEARL HARBOR DAY – DECEMBER 9, 2015: 33 Departments qualified for the 75 percent target date: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Philippines, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin.

MID WINTER – JANUARY 20, 2016: 52 Departments qualified for the 80 percent target date: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, France, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Philippines, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

PRESIDENT’S DAY – FEBRUARY 10, 2016: 45 Departments qualified for the 85 percent target date: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, France, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Philippines, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

LEGION BIRTHDAY – MARCH 9, 2016: 19 Departments qualified for the 90 percent target date: Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Philippines, South Carolina, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

“BIG TWELVE” COMPETITION WINNERS:

Category I	None qualified
Category II	Michigan, Minnesota
Category III	Georgia, Wisconsin
Category IV	None qualified

Category V **South Dakota, Arkansas**

Category VI **Idaho**

CHILDREN & YOUTH – APRIL 13, 2016: 4 departments qualified for the **95 percent** target date: **Georgia, Idaho, Mexico, Philippines.**

ARMED FORCES DAY – MAY 11, 2016: 2 Departments qualified for the **100 percent** target date: **Mexico and Philippines.**

By achieving **100 percent** of the department **2016** membership goal, the departments will receive a plaque recognizing this achievement, to be presented at the National Convention in *Cincinnati, Ohio.*

DELEGATE STRENGTH – AUGUST 1, 2016: Delegate strength is determined by the membership in the hands of the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the National Convention. Total number of delegates for each department is based on five delegates at large, one delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, and the members of the National Executive Committee.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER OF THE YEAR: Any department commander, who met or exceeds his/her 100 percent goal for **2016** by **May 11, 2016**, will receive a plaque recognizing his/her achievement. The plaque will be presented at the National Convention in *Cincinnati, Ohio.*

GOLD BRIGADE RECRUITER AWARD: A Legionnaire who recruits **50** or more NEW members by **May 11, 2016**, will qualify for enrollment in the elite **GOLD BRIGADE** of The American Legion.

POST HONOR RIBBONS: Post Honor Ribbons were shipped to **1,591** posts whose **2016** membership as of **December 31, 2015** exceeded their final **2015** membership.

CERTIFICATE OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE: These certificates were awarded for **223** posts for attaining a new all-time-high membership for **2016** by **December 31, 2015.**

FIVE CONSECUTIVE YEARS ALL-TIME-HIGH: These citations are awarded to posts with five or more consecutive years of all-time high membership in **2016.**

DISTRICT COMMANDERS “RACE TO THE TOP”:

District commanders are the linchpin of The American Legion's chain of command, serving as the vital link between the national and department organizations and all posts. As we are all aware, the local post is where the "rubber meets the road." If it doesn't happen at the post level, it doesn't happen at all. District commanders are the people charged with ensuring that all posts in their district maintain their vitality.

Consequently, this unique award was created to provide a meaningful incentive for the five top district commanders in each category and reward their successful membership efforts. The winning district commanders and guests receive:

- Distinguished guests of the National Commander at National Convention.
- 1st class hotel accommodations for four nights at convention location.
- Legion cap that signifies they are Race-To-The-Top winners.

The following provides more specific information on how you can win.

Competition will be divided into five categories based on the membership of the district without regard to geographic locations. District commanders will compete in each of the following categories based on the final **2015** totals, and a top district commander for the national award will be selected from each of the five categories. Second and third place awards will also be presented in each category.

Category I Districts of: 15 to 1,499 members

Category II Districts of: 1,500 to 2,999 members

Category III Districts of: 3,000 to 4,999 members

Category IV Districts of: 5,000 to 7,499 members

Category V Districts of: 7,500 and above members

Trip to National Convention will be presented to the top district commander and spouse in each category whose district membership on **March 31** represents the greatest percentage over the final previous-year membership of that district.

Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify. First place award entitles you and your guest to attend the 98th National Convention in *Cincinnati, Ohio*.

Second Place Awards will be presented to the district commander in each category whose district membership on **March 31** represents the second-highest percentage over the final previous-year membership of that district. **Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify.** Winners will receive a **\$500** check.

Third Place Awards will be presented to the district commander in each category whose district membership on **March 31st** represents the third-highest percentage over the final previous-year membership of that district. **Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify.** Winners will receive a **\$375** check.

This year's winners are:

FIRST PLACE WINNERS: (TRIP TO NATIONAL CONVENTION – CINCINNATI, OHIO):

Category I	Chris O. Bradley Sr.	Alabama	122.95%	District 35
Category II	Dean M. Noechel	Colorado	100.69%	District 7
Category III	Robert M. Shreve	Georgia	106.37%	District 3
Category IV	None qualified			
Category V	Aaron R. Cunningham II	Ohio	102.29%	District 4

SECOND PLACE WINNERS (\$500 CHECK):

Category I	Robin D. Rucker	South Carolina	118.58%	District 20
Category II	Harold D. Perry	Florida	100.62%	District 7
Category III	Jodie L. Pajak	Massachusetts	101.16%	District 3
Category IV	None qualified			
Category V	None qualified			

THIRD PLACE WINNERS (\$375 CHECK):

Category I	Terry A. Brown	Oregon	109.02%	District 7
Category II	Joseph A. Piento	Illinois	100.23%	District 7
Category III	None qualified			

Category IV None qualified

Category V None qualified

DISTRICT COMMANDER NEW POST ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

RECIPIENTS:

District commanders who achieve the goal of creating new American Legion posts in their respective district and have the new post's Temporary Charter Application on file at National Headquarters by **May 11, 2016**, qualify for a special recognition framed certificate.

DISTRICT COMMANDER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD W/DISTRICT HONOR RIBBON:

All district commanders whose **May Target Date** membership exceeds the previous year's membership by at least the number of posts in that district will be awarded the District Commander Achievement framed certificate. In addition, the district will receive a District Honor Ribbon for its district colors.

DEPARTMENT RECRUITER OF THE YEAR: Each American Legion post will have the opportunity to submit the name of the "Top Recruiter" for that post who has signed up the highest number of new members for the **2016** membership year by **May 11, 2016**. Department adjutants will determine the top new member recruiter for their respective department and certify their "Department Recruiter" to National Headquarters on or before **May 31, 2016**.

The "Department Recruiter" properly certified from each department, will be awarded a plaque with his/her accomplishment inscribed thereon.

NATIONAL RECRUITER OF THE YEAR: The individual certified with the highest number of new members recruited from among all the departments will be declared "National Recruiter of the Year". The winner of this award receives an all-expense paid trip to the 98th National Convention in *Cincinnati, Ohio*.

Sons of The American Legion

The Sons of The American Legion will conduct its 45th National Convention at the Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

For the 43rd consecutive year, the Sons of The American Legion are at an “All Time High” in membership. The SAL closed its membership at the end of 2015 with a record 362,319 members. This number represents a 1.2 percent increase over the previous year. A total of 35 detachments achieved 100 percent membership.

Membership in the Sons of The American Legion for 2016 is expected to surpass that of 2015, which will give them another “All Time High” for 2016 prior to the National Convention.

The SAL continues its support of American Legion programs and is heavily involved with support to our nation’s veterans in the VAVS program. In 2015, the SAL provided over 340,126 volunteer hours in VA homes and hospitals.

Donations in cash and goods to these veterans exceeded \$1,249,154 nationwide.

Other projects include Americanism programs, to which \$2,127,994 was donated along with 734,592 hours of service. This was remarkable considering that only 20 percent of the squadrons submitted reports. The Sons have raised over \$360,510 in 2015 for the Child Welfare Foundation. The Sons also provided several grants through The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The Sons of The American Legion have contributed over \$6 million to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

The Sons continue to support the Legion programs with major emphasis on VAVS, National Emergency Fund, and The American Legion Legacy Scholarship as well as other vital programs. As an integral part of the American Legion Family, the Sons continue to serve and provide assistance to posts and their communities.

The American Legion Riders

The American Legion Riders (ALR), organized by chapters in over 1,800 American Legion posts, has grown to more than 100,000 members with Rider programs in every domestic department. The ALR programs are administered within the various departments. There are no national officers for the Riders.

During the Fall Meetings, the NEC appoints members to the ALR National Advisory Committee, responsible for advising the national leadership on resolutions before the Internal Affairs Commission and to act as sources of information for departments and posts.

The Riders raise money for many charitable causes, most notably for children and youth programs and for wounded or returned servicemen and women. Since 2006, the annual American Legion Legacy Run has conducted ten major cross-country, multi-day motorcycle runs totaling over 14,000 miles and collecting over \$6 million for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship trust program. For more information about the Riders visit www.legion.org/riders.

The American Legion Amateur Radio Club

The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC) has been conducting national nets, special event operations, and membership activities since 2011. Members in local post “ham” radio clubs support local emergency management agencies, law enforcement and fire departments, and FEMA in emergency communications “when all else fails.”

Nearly 3,000 American Legion Family members with FCC ham radio licenses have joined TALARC. Our own flagship station – K9TAL, located in the basement of American Legion National Headquarters – has inspired the formation of sister stations K5TAL (Gautier, Mississippi Post 1992), K6TAL (Palm Springs, California Post 519), W6TAL (Redlands, California Post 106), AA8AL (Belle Valley, Ohio Post 641), KM4MND (Loganville, GA Post 233), WL7CXW (Anchorage, Alaska Post 104), WB4TAL (Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina Post 116), KG7TQX (Washougal, Washington Post 122), and K7HLR (Clearfield, UT Post 139). Other posts and departments have expressed strong interest in developing local post radio clubs and emergency radio teams.

Special emphasis of TALARC is placed on local, regional and national amateur radio emergency communications in support of the National Emergency Fund (NEF) and American Legion post and department support operations before, during, and after natural or manmade disasters and terrorist attacks. The American Legion has maintained a standing Statement of Affiliation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) since 2006. For more information about American Legion Amateur Radio visit www.legion.org/hamradio.

National Emergency Fund (NEF)

From January 1, 2016 through May 24, 2016, The National Emergency Fund provided \$20,650 in grant monies to Legion members and \$13,000 to our posts. The fund currently has just over \$4.7 million.

In a normal year, approximately \$375,000 is dispersed as grants to our members and posts. Every dollar contributed to the fund is used for rendering financial assistance to those that qualify who have incurred devastation from a declared natural disaster. The grants are to be used for immediate needs – lodging, food and clothing – and not as a substitute for insurance. In order to qualify, members must have been displaced or evacuated from their primary place of residence and be a member in good standing at the time of loss. Monies to support the administrative costs of maintaining this fund and to conduct fundraising are absorbed through existing budget areas.

What makes the NEF unique is that members know they can turn to The American Legion for immediate financial assistance without the red tape or repayment

requirements normally associated with other federal and state agencies. Through the generosity of Legion and SAL members, the National Emergency Fund will continue to meet the needs of our Legion Family in the aftermath of local, state and national disasters.

To apply for an NEF grant or to make a donation, contact the program coordinator at (317) 630-1330 or go to www.legion.org/emergency.

Consolidated Post Reports (CPR)

The Consolidated Post Report was established in 1975 in order to assist departments in the documentation of the various activities a specific post has done during the 12-month reporting period, June 1 through May 31. The Consolidated Post Report (CPR) may be the most important document a post will complete during the year. A post's information, combined with that of other posts, is used when the National Commander and others testify on Capitol Hill on behalf of all veterans. Each post has a story to tell, and when we speak collectively our strength is magnified. During the 2014-2015 reporting year, 67 percent of posts reported some activity.

Throughout the reporting year American Legion post members volunteered 880,091 hours in various aspect in their communities; they donated \$2,858,758 in emergency aid; 47,230 Legionnaires gave over 77,501 pints of blood; events covered by different media outlets totaled 127,419; they performed 108,070 funeral honors at a cost of \$2,730,996; they sponsored 1,968 American Legion baseball teams at a cost of \$6,009,775; Legion posts sponsored 2,041 Boy Scout packs representing 42,513 Scouts for a cost of \$1,702,158; through various school assisted programs they spend \$5,432,725; they presented 19,102 American flags; performed 3,704,045 community service hours while spending \$4,196,722 in support of those activities; and all other donations to Red Cross, Cancer Research, United Way, Legion Endowment Fund, Children's Hospitals, National Emergency Fund and other various activities totaled \$11,928,261.

Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL)

These are Legionnaires who have voluntarily chosen to become Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) members under the National program. The PUFL program, established by National Executive Committee Resolution 10, October 9-10, 1974, was put in place to provide a more convenient solution for those members who moved frequently and those that maintain a summer and winter mailing address so their membership would remain current.

When paid in full, each PUFL member receives a permanent plastic card, as well as an annual paper membership card directly from national headquarters to verify

their continuous membership years. For more information, contact your post adjutant or finance officer or visit www.legion.org/pufl.

American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI)

The ALEI is The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization. As of May 24, 2016, the online version of The American Legion Extension Institute has issued 6,985 licenses for a modest fee of \$4.95 for current American Legion and Sons of The American Legion members and \$9.95 for non-members. Those purchasing licenses for the course allow the member to have access to this resource as long as they continue as a member in good standing.

The ALEI is located at www.legion.org/alei. The American Legion is the nation's largest and most influential network of U.S. wartime veterans, families and communities, and The American Legion Extension Institute helps bring all this together in one simple-to-use program.