

Supplement To S.A.L. MEMBERSHIP TRAINING-
2012-2013

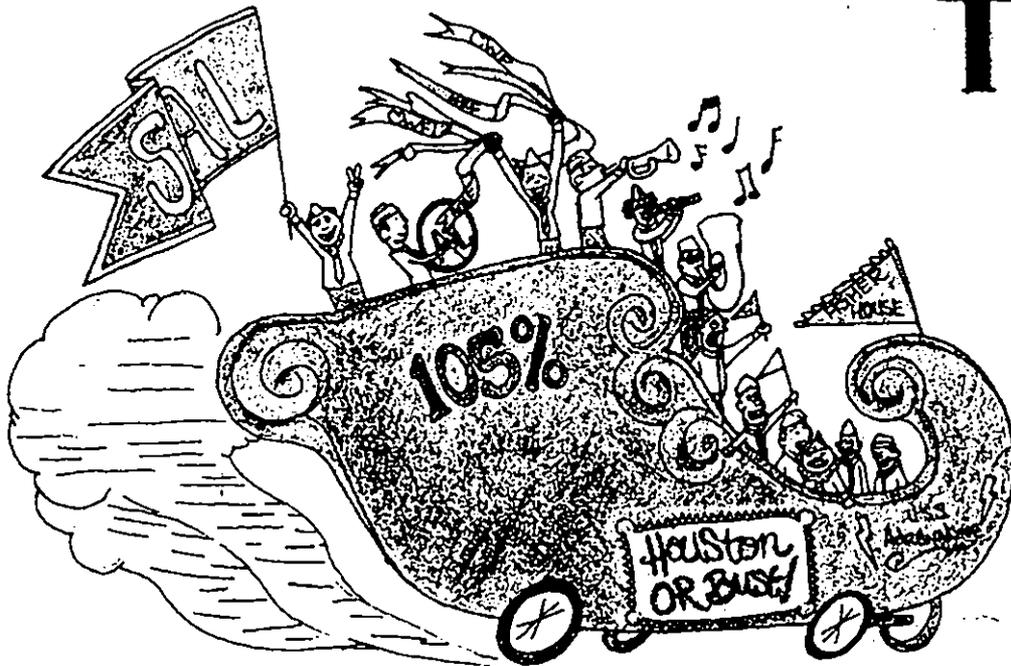
PART

I



Membership goals for the 2012 – 2013 National Membership Program

WE'RE ON
THE



Bandwagon!

The Sons of the American Legion Bandwagon

The S.A.L. Membership Bandwagon is the 2013 National Membership theme for the 2012-2013 membership year. According to Webster's Dictionary, the definition of the word "BANDWAGON"

1. An elaborately decorated wagon used to transport musicians in a parade. 2. A cause or party that attracts increasing numbers of adherents. We have taken that definition to offer a fun ride promoting our membership nationwide. While promoting membership, the Bandwagon image also supports our visions for success with American Legion Family programs.

Motoring out of Indianapolis at the close of National Convention, our Bandwagon sets out across the land in search of each National Target Date. There's a seat on the Bandwagon for every Detachment. A Detachment will be seated if it has achieved the membership percentage on that Target Date. We're hoping for a smooth, fast ride with each seat filled on board. The smoother the ride, the easier it will be for each Detachment to arrive on the journey to the next target.

Detachments will receive a Certificate of Achievement when seated by each Target Date. Remember, the Bandwagon only moves forward and is strictly powered by the adrenaline of the Sons membership. Pennants, flags and banners promoting CWF, NEF and Fisher House can be seen waving in the breeze as our Bandwagon moves around the world. Final destination: National Convention in Houston 2013 with 105 % membership.

So how do we get to our goal?

Membership RECRUITMENT goes hand in hand with "JUST ASK". And while our organization has success in getting new members, it's keeping each member on board that's the issue. We lose thousands of members each year producing a reduction in our growth. Phone calls, mailings and direct contact can be a solution. There is at least one reason why a member does not renew.

Focusing on RENEWEL and REINSTATEMENT may also be solved with "JUST ASK". Find out why some do not stay with our SAL? We must give our members reasons for keeping their membership. It all starts with promotion of the American Legion Posts, our communities, the local/national American Legion Family programs with each member. Helping the squadrons maintain and exceed membership this year is OUR MISSION.

Education and Communication offered at the National level is brought to the forefront to meet our mission. Promotion of the Triple Nickel, offering materials and literature, websites and utilization of social media are just a few of the many means to reduce our membership losses. An increase of 5,000 additional members and 105% before the Delegate Cut-off for National Convention is our goal. Increasing the renewal rate to 90% is attainable in 2013.

The S.A.L. Membership Bandwagon is a FUN FILLED RIDE which exudes imagination, innovation, energy and power. These are all means by which we can continue to grow and **FORGE OUR FUTURE TOGETHER** as Sons of The American Legion.



**2012-2013
MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES
SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION**

SEPTEMBER 12, 2012	10%
OCTOBER 17, 2012	25%
NOVEMBER 15, 2012	35%
DECEMBER 12, 2012	45%
JANUARY 16, 2013	60%
FEBRUARY 13, 2013	75%
MARCH 13, 2013	80%
APRIL 10, 2013	90%
MAY 8, 2013	100%
*JULY 24, 2013	105%

***Delegate Strength Target Date**

**2012-2013
MEMBERSHIP
YEAR**



2012 – 2013 Individual Recruitment Award

The National Membership Committee offers a recruitment pin award for those members recruiting five (5) new members into the Sons of The American Legion within a membership year. This pin is suitable to wear upon your cover or lapel. You must meet and complete the requirements listed below.

- Recruit five (5) new members into the S.A.L., no renewals
- All information must be clearly printed or typed. Non-readable forms will not be processed
- The new members membership record must be received at the Detachment and National Headquarters
- This form must be postmarked prior to midnight of August 31, 2013
- Only one (1) award pin per member regardless of the total new members recruited
- American Legion Family members are also eligible for this award
- **No Abbreviations.** Information must be spelled out and complete



NATIONAL RECRUITMENT AWARD

Recruiter's Name _____ Member ID# _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Full Squadron Name and Number _____ Detachment _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Unless specified different, the pin will be sent to the address stated above

New member information

#1 Name _____ 6 Digit Sequential Card # _____

#2 Name _____ 6 Digit Sequential Card # _____

#3 Name _____ 6 Digit Sequential Card # _____

#4 Name _____ 6 Digit Sequential Card # _____

#5 Name _____ 6 Digit Sequential Card # _____

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURES

[] SQD [] POST COMMANDER _____ DATE _____

[] SQD [] POST ADJUTANT _____ DATE _____

SQUADRON ADVISOR (required) _____ DATE _____

RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO: (Regional Membership Chairman)

East – Gary Denmon – 503 Page Ave, Endicott, NY 13760-3941

South – Al Sanders – 132 Sue Drive, Monroe, LA. 71202-7655

Midwest – Danny Smith- 15103 So. 84th St., Papillion, NE. 68046-4628

Central – Randall Eicher- 3798 Cheryl Dr., Bucyrus, OH. 44820-9647

West – Mark Cohen- 290 Quincy St., Twin Falls, ID. 83301-5141

PINS WILL MAILED AT THE END OF EACH MONTH



RENEWAL TIME

Sons of The American Legion

ANNUAL DUES \$ _____ for membership 20 _____

It is renewal time for membership dues in the Sons of The American Legion. As you know, membership is the lifeblood of any organization. Your membership dues contribute to the overall programs of the SAL and keeps our membership growing. You are important to us. Your promptness in forwarding dues at this time will be deeply appreciated.

PLEASE SEND DUES TO:

If the above address is incorrect, notify the Squadron Adjutant. If your dues have already been paid, please disregard this notice. Thank you.



RENEWAL TIME

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ANNUAL DUES \$ _____ for membership 20 _____

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PLEASE SEND DUES TO:

If the above address is incorrect, notify the Squadron Adjutant. If your dues have already been paid, please disregard this notice. Thank you.



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

RECORD

2012

 www.legion.org/sons

SQUADRON MEMBERSHIP TEAM

Membership and renewals of membership are the keys to success in any squadron. One method of being successful is to establish a "Squadron Membership Team" in every squadron.

A Squadron Membership Team consists of several members of your squadron working membership. The first step is to take the squadron membership register and divide it into parts based on locations of members, members known, and perhaps where individuals may work or attend school. Renewals can best be made by mailings from the squadron to the member himself, personal contact (where appropriate), telephone, and any known associate and/or member of The American Legion who may know how to contact the appropriate squadron member.

The Squadron Membership Team should be divided into two (2) groups. First group working on new membership growth and the other group on membership renewals. Working together will significantly increase your membership throughout the year. Membership is a year-round responsibility working ahead for growth in numbers, supporting programs of The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion and our nation's veterans and families.

NEW SQUADRON DEVELOPMENT

Detachment Membership Chairmen and Advisors are encouraged to implement and continue "New Squadron Development" in their respective detachment. Detachments should discuss SAL membership at every meeting and identify those posts without squadrons or inactive squadrons with no membership. Department Advisors and/or Detachment Membership Chairmen should periodically contact those posts through the department in starting or reactivating squadrons.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RECORD

The purpose of the National Membership Record is to maintain a current total of SAL membership for each detachment. As you will note the beginning year of this record is 1983.

Due to missing records, some years final membership totals are not available. Attempts are being made to locate these missing years so an accurate account of the final years membership would be available from the beginning of the Sons of The American Legion, which was established in 1932. Anyone having knowledge or copy of a detachment final membership total prior to 1983 is encouraged to forward them to National Headquarters or the National Membership Chairman.

MEMBERSHIP GOALS

The national membership goal of the Sons of The American Legion is established by the National Membership Committee. The goal has been set for at least one (1) member higher than the final membership of the previous membership year, i.e., the membership goal of 2012 is based on the final 2011 membership as of December 31, 2011.

Each Detachment has the flexibility in setting their goal, which should be higher, however, this goal cannot be less than the national goal.

Additional information on membership goals can be obtained by contacting the S.A.L National Membership Committee at sal@legion.org.

REMEMBER...

MEMBERSHIP IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION - NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RECORD

Detachment	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
ALABAMA	149	161	105	195	373	533	616	852
ALASKA	335	480	554	645	695	740	741	735
ARIZONA	820	866	871	989	1152	1260	1374	1269
ARKANSAS	121	94	60	157	125	166	140	118
CALIFORNIA	2275	2116	2042	2174	2384	2594	2426	2798
COLORADO	688	649	697	686	909	593	862	924
CONNECTICUT	279	281	307	293	261	227	381	541
DIST. OF COLUMBIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DELAWARE	207	135	75	86	94	121	151	231
FLORIDA	2486	2691	3075	3087	2926	3117	3111	3684
FRANCE	93	83	63	57	61	78	106	108
GEORGIA	125	210	266	430	513	631	782	1064
HAWAII	5	4	3	2	12	22	21	103
IDAHO	34	62	48	61	49	79	81	112
ILLINOIS	2949	3173	3271	3827	4209	4455	4794	5157
INDIANA	10096	10813	11105	12418	13489	14528	16167	18188
IOWA	128	141	146	84	170	233	407	481
KANSAS	998	1350	1742	1988	2036	2234	2368	2668
KENTUCKY	883	935	1031	1134	1017	1063	1341	1696
LOUISIANA	648	925	978	1101	1016	957	960	1081
MAINE	549	717	871	776	915	1058	1209	1287
MARYLAND	5905	5859	6067	6117	5955	6692	7280	7846
MASSACHUSETTS	476	476	509	610	534	601	683	945
MICHIGAN	5311	5345	5533	5752	6032	6749	7380	8381
MINNESOTA	2415	2460	3068	3509	3924	4204	4851	5223
MISSISSIPPI	78	70	91	126	88	69	133	187
MISSOURI	766	868	1002	961	943	1041	1115	1496
MONTANA	24	27	39	61	81	74	106	112
NEBRASKA	2166	2419	2694	3183	3764	3815	4035	4092
NEVADA	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0
NEW HAMPSHIRE	717	1055	1520	1865	2100	2338	2565	3047
NEW JERSEY	3047	3084	3169	3426	3626	4118	4396	4645
NEW MEXICO	268	263	263	378	316	348	376	504
NEW YORK	5024	5182	5655	7308	7412	8068	9409	11075
NORTH CAROLINA	184	156	156	183	191	289	552	488
NORTH DAKOTA	80	18	23	39	45	49	98	458
OHIO	5740	6103	6262	6990	8513	9697	10939	12055
OKLAHOMA	385	300	377	318	307	186	274	375
OREGON	153	192	293	367	507	652	731	953
PENNSYLVANIA	2963	3491	4101	4564	4840	5699	6395	7710
PHILIPPINES	541	190	483	606	607	679	549	572
PUERTO RICO	32	36	0	0	0	0	0	15
RHODE ISLAND	144	148	101	92	87	135	162	209
SOUTH CAROLINA	137	159	95	168	192	282	350	446
SOUTH DAKOTA	0	0	0	0	0	18	27	35
TENNESSEE	464	402	381	518	728	824	821	1130
TEXAS	1916	2045	2133	2324	2532	2655	2786	3240
UTAH	146	133	104	135	127	165	223	249
VERMONT	175	239	316	333	424	625	585	900
VIRGINIA	978	937	1112	1312	1332	1551	1717	1939
WASHINGTON	319	375	421	313	438	523	598	679
WEST VIRGINIA	394	506	567	632	511	583	698	745
WISCONSIN	1223	1340	1507	1361	1367	1441	1432	1718
WYOMING	168	248	255	336	359	257	339	359
TOTAL	66207	70012	75607	84095	90288	99116	109643	124925

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION - NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RECORD

Detachment	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
ALABAMA	808	807	807	949	1153	1207	1174	1298
ALASKA	802	647	612	667	887	942	898	1022
ARIZONA	1505	1730	2061	2141	2283	2301	2466	2545
ARKANSAS	122	267	220	358	282	289	320	382
CALIFORNIA	3150	3366	3486	3782	4061	4198	4253	4263
COLORADO	1105	1010	1310	1389	1477	1471	1625	1735
CONNECTICUT	680	818	1008	1155	1279	1323	1250	1399
DIST. OF COLUMBIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	57
DELAWARE	308	374	466	577	647	635	707	816
FLORIDA	3996	4568	5130	5458	5419	5517	5844	6209
FRANCE	92	96	95	98	112	129	156	139
GEORGIA	1412	1511	1373	1606	1608	1957	2330	2395
HAWAII	79	97	103	116	117	80	92	102
IDAHO	132	274	291	360	400	414	386	423
ILLINOIS	5706	6217	6865	7483	8004	8610	9352	9648
INDIANA	19836	20933	22997	23924	24883	25776	27278	28493
IOWA	496	627	732	848	858	932	934	1234
KANSAS	2786	3012	3282	3711	3813	4014	4269	4294
KENTUCKY	1909	1981	2036	2285	2700	2927	3210	3318
LOUISIANA	1007	1175	1113	1098	917	938	1041	1059
MAINE	1375	1596	1798	1756	1727	1874	1811	1942
MARYLAND	7943	8604	9284	9858	10318	10564	11185	11914
MASSACHUSETTS	1139	1529	1638	1613	2060	2229	2643	2983
MICHIGAN	9260	10120	10880	11551	11494	12162	12731	13260
MINNESOTA	5093	5282	5466	5489	5609	6046	6436	6537
MISSISSIPPI	159	174	128	189	154	242	287	234
MISSOURI	1546	1692	1714	1934	2006	2064	2027	2211
MONTANA	108	94	82	99	105	134	131	168
NEBRASKA	4297	4504	4702	4974	5084	5397	5260	5135
NEVADA	12	6	3	17	27	19	65	94
NEW HAMPSHIRE	3302	3629	3779	4145	4288	4358	4433	4687
NEW JERSEY	4868	5124	5463	5430	5816	5909	6321	6504
NEW MEXICO	510	777	1025	1119	1220	1107	1112	1134
NEW YORK	11914	13131	14706	15264	15819	16190	16748	17202
NORTH CAROLINA	449	481	493	670	745	869	1145	1339
NORTH DAKOTA	371	316	296	321	332	259	233	232
OHIO	13499	15218	17167	18434	19795	20944	22159	23143
OKLAHOMA	551	465	414	669	396	363	434	372
OREGON	1171	1246	1152	1159	1233	1372	1418	1397
PENNSYLVANIA	9165	10642	12203	13856	15193	17117	19009	21347
PHILIPPINES	458	198	237	173	160	135	152	1063
PUERTO RICO	0	15	46	63	72	32	67	28
RHODE ISLAND	315	362	307	359	317	325	396	440
SOUTH CAROLINA	408	396	465	326	464	421	384	436
SOUTH DAKOTA	36	30	92	69	27	94	83	108
TENNESSEE	1330	1303	1250	1128	1122	1328	1323	1398
TEXAS	3342	3512	3745	4114	3890	4013	4633	4729
UTAH	284	279	309	287	287	291	364	359
VERMONT	1129	1260	1530	1724	1926	2014	2003	2191
VIRGINIA	2068	2244	2494	2521	2712	2671	2924	2646
WASHINGTON	711	932	1009	1067	1100	1158	1272	1334
WEST VIRGINIA	1073	1045	1321	1707	1874	2042	2169	2373
WISCONSIN	1821	1768	1736	1713	1750	1840	1847	1917
WYOMING	310	409	455	473	479	458	512	525
TOTAL	135948	147893	161376	172276	180501	189701	201302	211256

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION - NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RECORD

Detachment	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
ALABAMA	1437	1447	1587	1800	1940	1868	1979	2192
ALASKA	1181	1252	1174	1210	1355	1380	1422	1444
ARIZONA	2955	3128	3298	3661	3834	4177	4482	4852
ARKANSAS	345	322	337	336	295	370	364	397
CALIFORNIA	4813	5114	5544	5955	6255	6918	7038	7911
COLORADO	1827	2022	2112	2170	2222	2251	2455	2681
CONNECTICUT	1445	1438	1547	1360	1442	1424	1701	1749
DIST. OF COLUMBIA	77	105	100	71	83	92	57	105
DELAWARE	911	1021	1038	1142	1319	1533	1624	1754
FLORIDA	6432	7096	7662	8605	9347	10178	10487	11203
FRANCE	105	140	172	253	269	213	231	274
GEORGIA	3078	3279	3715	4230	4473	4560	4853	4614
HAWAII	98	101	99	96	89	37	29	28
IDAHO	452	485	478	527	573	642	582	628
ILLINOIS	10453	10996	11571	12296	13139	13444	13948	14538
INDIANA	29390	31035	32393	33686	34692	34899	35611	36103
IOWA	1192	1309	1496	1613	1872	1943	2019	2200
KANSAS	4350	4421	4442	4737	4742	4835	5274	5455
KENTUCKY	3478	3598	3718	4037	4073	4145	4198	4304
LOUISIANA	1117	1188	1266	1451	1555	1574	1630	1803
MAINE	2155	2153	2229	2360	2359	2489	2494	2496
MARYLAND	12441	12634	12878	13208	13901	14295	14581	15053
MASSACHUSETTS	3371	3480	3850	4143	4252	4297	4916	5276
MICHIGAN	13438	13893	14549	15641	16419	17421	18159	18882
MINNESOTA	6747	7435	7796	8829	9383	9554	10062	10384
MISSISSIPPI	274	279	295	317	372	396	455	382
MISSOURI	2265	2305	2340	2521	2427	2454	2682	2757
MONTANA	194	273	315	361	517	531	581	666
NEBRASKA	5129	5432	5376	5572	5474	5487	5637	5558
NEVADA	124	147	165	137	149	93	99	142
NEW HAMPSHIRE	4837	5071	5275	5646	5634	5851	5955	5970
NEW JERSEY	6812	7076	7149	7586	8112	8468	9095	9031
NEW MEXICO	1169	1197	1139	1212	1315	1311	1392	1448
NEW YORK	17745	18847	20150	21997	23379	24541	25383	25703
NORTH CAROLINA	1429	1589	1610	1622	1693	1620	1599	1656
NORTH DAKOTA	261	257	303	319	334	317	433	570
OHIO	24491	25379	26568	27772	29245	28789	29214	29829
OKLAHOMA	633	597	642	785	850	723	1000	727
OREGON	1411	1254	1379	1454	1445	1437	1505	1662
PENNSYLVANIA	23174	25132	27278	30992	34019	36581	39497	43365
PHILIPPINES	169	190	172	226	133	129	37	0
PUERTO RICO	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RHODE ISLAND	384	362	368	358	413	399	367	342
SOUTH CAROLINA	415	471	809	732	741	817	798	867
SOUTH DAKOTA	177	181	299	336	311	433	361	308
TENNESSEE	1576	1689	1630	1837	1768	1670	1642	1714
TEXAS	4844	4831	5296	5800	6177	6226	6101	5984
UTAH	407	393	437	498	436	421	439	485
VERMONT	2441	2584	2774	3394	3462	3555	3763	3888
VIRGINIA	2733	2855	3010	3190	3358	3635	3746	4045
WASHINGTON	1508	1464	1723	1898	2029	2128	2240	2310
WEST VIRGINIA	2671	3203	3088	3132	3146	3148	3146	3205
WISCONSIN	1972	2057	1989	2176	2472	2600	2746	2804
WYOMING	566	531	549	839	912	972	974	1012
TOTAL	223140	234738	247179	266126	280206	289271	301083	312756

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION - NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RECORD

Detachment	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ALABAMA	2254	2360	2291	2266	2103
ALASKA	1470	1456	1449	1409	1439
ARIZONA	5089	5564	5672	5831	5896
ARKANSAS	593	576	522	546	532
CALIFORNIA	8477	8770	8916	9360	9843
COLORADO	2577	2716	2669	2630	2684
CONNECTICUT	1838	1914	1903	1949	1988
DIST. OF COLUMBIA	143	194	176	186	136
DELAWARE	1845	1982	2094	2210	2303
FLORIDA	11790	12265	12837	13286	14016
FRANCE	267	277	310	287	280
GEORGIA	4948	5020	5066	5241	5179
HAWAII	38	40	43	68	43
IDAHO	663	668	599	552	524
ILLINOIS	14587	14789	14957	15143	14872
INDIANA	35372	35185	36074	36991	37426
IOWA	2396	2602	2760	2740	3002
KANSAS	5844	6015	6046	6051	6092
KENTUCKY	4381	4424	4281	4301	4217
LOUISIANA	1823	1772	2004	1924	2016
MAINE	2609	2765	2895	2854	2787
MARYLAND	15343	15449	15634	15460	15486
MASSACHUSETTS	5428	5409	5437	5492	5442
MICHIGAN	19296	19929	20408	20926	20746
MINNESOTA	10437	10431	10632	10835	10905
MISSISSIPPI	510	500	601	779	564
MISSOURI	2931	3000	3135	3277	3345
MONTANA	692	687	713	754	858
NEBRASKA	5573	5557	5678	5678	5613
NEVADA	87	131	108	193	303
NEW HAMPSHIRE	5999	5918	5968	6034	5890
NEW JERSEY	9097	8869	9019	8978	9394
NEW MEXICO	1508	1656	1582	1657	1688
NEW YORK	26145	26215	26970	27891	28630
NORTH CAROLINA	1705	1680	1729	1824	1923
NORTH DAKOTA	590	677	671	697	750
OHIO	30108	30085	30428	30438	30606
OKLAHOMA	695	701	791	853	879
OREGON	1765	1809	1841	1924	1859
PENNSYLVANIA	46779	49144	52578	54784	56945
PHILIPPINES	16	0	0	17	23
PUERTO RICO	0	0	0	0	0
RHODE ISLAND	264	367	280	264	226
SOUTH CAROLINA	970	1037	964	1049	1007
SOUTH DAKOTA	412	435	434	514	573
TENNESSEE	1787	1787	1661	1568	1724
TEXAS	6136	6311	6230	6451	6641
UTAH	577	784	658	611	583
VERMONT	3912	3951	3961	3937	3900
VIRGINIA	4119	4300	4434	4476	4493
WASHINGTON	2380	2382	2624	2588	2599
WEST VIRGINIA	3201	2944	2883	2845	2875
WISCONSIN	2990	3051	3158	3200	3309
WYOMING	1005	1048	1074	1241	1204
TOTAL	321461	327598	335,848	343,060	348,361

**SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
2012 MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES**

September 14, 2011	10%
October 19, 2011	25%
November 16, 2011	35%
December 14, 2011	45%
January 19, 2012	60%
February 8, 2012	75%
March 14, 2012	80%
April 11, 2012	90%
May 9, 2012	100%
*July 26, 2012	105%

*Delegate Strength Target Date



2012
Membership Year

PART II
MEMBERSHIP
RETENTION AND
RENEWALS

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

The Retention Team has already been mentioned as one of the teams to be established in our membership planning and development section.

A listing of some of the various retention methods are also listed in the same subject area but as part of an overall Post/District/Department Retention Program the following must be considered:

1. Direct Renewal notices, which are mailed to members directly from National Headquarters were never meant to replace the personal contact from Post members in the Renewal Program. The notices are meant to support and emphasize membership renewal efforts not replace those efforts. It is up to the Post Membership/Retention Team to continue renewal efforts by mail, by phone or by personal door-to-door contact, just like we used to do it. Try it – it works!

2. The purpose of the Post communication is to see if there is a reason the member doesn't attend meetings or hasn't paid his/her dues but mainly the visit, letter, or phone call is done to allow the member the easiest manner in which to pay his dues.
3. If there is a problem, it can be worked out and the member will once again become an active member of the Post or at least renew his/her membership.
4. As you communicate with the renewal member, make an effort to get him/her involved in at least one of the many activities or programs of the Post.
5. Last but definitely not least, remind the member of the many accomplishments of The American Legion and the fact that his/her dues allow these successful programs to continue.

RETENTION: THE KEY TO MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Why do veterans join The American Legion and not renew their membership the following year?

Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to find out why they joined in the first place. If their reason for joining is realized during their first membership year, they will probably renew.

When we consider why veterans leave The American Legion, we find what we call the three M's of retention:

Moved – Mad – Mortality

Mortality: We can't do much about this one when our members report to post everlasting.

Moved: Operation Stay Active follows members from department to department so we might transfer those who move or at least keep them renewed in their current post but follow-up is necessary to assist the member in keeping his/her membership current.

Mad: This is where face-to-face contact is necessary. This is where the "rubber meets the road." Who or what is the member upset with? The retention worker must find this out before anything can be resolved. Most "mad" problems can be resolved by discussion and working it out with parties concerned. We must try!

The use of the three "I's" of retention as described here will help prevent many of the situations that cause members to leave our ranks.

- I – Initiate: Tell the story of The American Legion.
- I – Indoctrinate: Explain individual programs.
- I – Involve: Find the interest area and involve the new member.

Many of the things Legionnaires take for granted are not fully understood by the new member. Whether it is a post, district, or department event, the content and importance of the event must be explained to the new Legionnaire before he/she will make a decision to attend.

Words which must become action in order to retain members are:

Communication: Let everyone know what is going on.

Activities: Who, where, what, when, why and how must be answered to all possible participants.

Involvement: We must get as many Legionnaires as possible involved in the many and varied programs of The American Legion.

What is: a district meeting?
a division meeting?
a county meeting?
a department meeting?
a national workshop?
a department or national convention?

All of these are strange words to the prospective Legionnaire. Don't assume they know what they are – tell them.

The importance of retention at all levels is obvious for solid growth not only in membership but also in programs and overall accomplishment.

Just like the military, retention begins when the new member joins. As previously stated, it begins with a thorough initiation that is part of a good sponsorship program.

You remember when we came on board or reported to a new military assignment, we were many times given a sponsor who stuck with us and walked us through our new surroundings and new assignments until we were ready to be turned loose.

That's what the Sponsor's Guide and the Sponsor Checklist on pages 35 - 36 are all about. Assign a sponsor to each new member until the items on the checklist are accomplished and the Legionnaire feels knowledgeable and comfortable with membership in The American Legion.

You will note on the guide and the checklist there is no positive indicator for the important initiation session. This is because each post has a different time sequence for conducting their initiation sessions. The important thing is to conduct initiation sessions early in the Legionnaire's membership.

Guide and checklist: These are simple guidelines. We ask you to develop and use your own lists, but the importance of a program of this type cannot be overlooked if we are to retain those members we have worked so diligently to get.

"Retention: The key to membership growth"

HOW IMPORTANT IS MEMBERSHIP RETENTION?

An average of 200,000 Legionnaires do not renew their membership each year. That's how important it is. Not for the sake of numbers but for our impact on our elected officials and the impact on our many programs at local, state and national level - "That's why it's important."

MEMBERSHIP ACRONYMS

ADOVACATE FOR VETERANS' RIGHTS

MEMBERSHIP NEVER TAKES A BREAK

ENERGIZE YOUR POST

RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS

I CAN'T DO IT, BUT WE CAN

COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

ASK, JUST ASK

NEW MEMBERS EQUAL GROWTH

LEGISLATIVE CLOUT

EYE CARE PLAN

GROWTH EQUALS MORE MEMBERS

INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

ORGANIZATION THAT SUPPORTS ALL VETERANS

NOW IS THE TIME FOR GROWTH

MOTIVATE YOUR MEMBERS

EQUALITY FOR ALL MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP NEEDS PROGRAMS

BENEFITS OF BELONGING

EVERY MEMBER GET A MEMBER

RETENTION OF CURRENT MEMBERS

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

HOW ABOUT 4 MILLION BY 2010

I WANT YOU IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

PROGRAMS OF INVOLVEMENT

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PROGRAMS OF INVOLVEMENT

RENEWALS

Normally, during each membership year, the National Headquarters sends five renewal notices to members until they have paid their membership dues. The renewal notices are printed and mailed from National, but the dues are remitted to the Post the member belongs to, as printed on the renewal notice. The Post Membership Representative must then process the dues payment, extracting the Post per capita. The Post will then transmit these membership dues to the respective Department Headquarters. The Department Headquarters will then extract its per capita then transmit, collectively from all posts within the Department, the membership dues to National Headquarters. Within 1 – 2 days of receipt, dues payment information is recorded on the National database. Typically, this whole process should only take no more than 2 – 3 weeks.

There has been a measurable decline in traditional renewals, and frankly, we're not sure why. One way we know that Posts can get more involved with its members is by calling or visiting with these members who have not renewed yet. Find out if they need assistance, or if they have simply overlooked paying their dues. It also affords the Post the opportunity to "get in tune" with its members.

Membership should be transmitted on a regular basis – at least weekly. Listed in the Post Adjutant's Manual is a Renewal Notices Schedule that displays the cutoff dates National must receive the membership dues before a notice is generated. This schedule will be followed in order to remove the names of paid members prior to a specific mailing. If your Post Membership Representative is transmitting membership regularly as required, you or your members won't receive unnecessary Renewal Notices.

Renewal Schedule

Normally, during each membership year, National sends five renewal notices to members. The following is the renewal schedule: July, October, January, March, and May.

Sometimes, at the request of a Department, a special notice in February may be mailed to boost a Department's renewals.

The current membership year renewal schedule for transmitting memberships to arrive at National by the established date(s) is outlined in your Post Adjutant's Manual...this schedule will be followed in order to remove the name(s) of paid members prior to a specific mailing. Using this Renewal Schedule, National extracts (unpaid) member records, prints, and mails the renewal notices.

Renewal Letters & Phone Script

On the following pages are sample letters and a phone script that can be used by your post to communicate with non-renewing members. While writing letters and making phone calls is good, if you are able to personally visit with this member and meet face-to-face, you might find your results to be more productive.

SAMPLE RENEWAL LETTER TO DELINQUENT MEMBER

Date:

MEMORANDUM: Regarding Continued Uninterrupted Membership

To: Legionnaire

Greetings. Currently, I have the privilege of being Commander of American Legion Post (number).

Our Post is comprised of individuals from all walks of life, means, skills, and education, but is bound by one common bond, honorable military service to our Country.

The American Legion, for most of its existence, has operated under a calendar year for membership, and fiscal year for its general activities. This fiscal year commences after the conclusion of the National Convention held at the end of August and continues into the following August when the next National Convention concludes. For the convenience of national delegates, the Convention was changed and now takes place in late summer.

The membership dues payment forms are mailed sometime in July or early August and are to be paid by the end of December to remain in good standing.

Payments received during January of the following year will eliminate delinquency status. The American Legion continues to send reminders through June of that same year. A procedure of reinstatement needs to be followed after June.

The American Legion is interested in maintaining and increasing its role. Currently, one in 20 eligible veterans are members of a recognized veteran's organization.

We encourage you to consider early payment of dues. If the last payment form is misplaced, please consider the following option – make your check payable to American Legion Post (number). Post Dues are (\$ dues amount). Please use the enclosed envelope and mail your dues to:

American Legion Post (number)
c/o Jane Doe – Adjutant
12345 S. Main Street
Any Town, USA 12345-6789

Please include your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail. We are interested in the branch of service you served with and your American Legion 9-digit membership identification number, which is on last year's membership card.

We thank you in advance for your continuing support of the programs and activities of The American Legion. Membership is an example you are "Still Serving America."

Most Sincerely,

(Your Name)
Post Commander

SAMPLE RENEWAL LETTER – CURRENT MEMBER

Dear **Jack**

The American Legion's (200-) membership/fiscal year begins (date) and you will soon receive a "Dues Notice" from National Headquarters asking you to renew your membership. Your dues are (\$\$) a year and later in this letter I'm going to ask you to do me a favor. But first, let me point out some of the benefits of membership in The American Legion; in other words for (\$\$) you receive the following:

- (1) Twelve issues of *The American Legion Magazine*. Have you read it lately? It has been named one of the top general interest magazines in the nation.
- (2) Eleven issues of the *Sunflower Legionnaire* newspaper, which informs you of what your American Legion is doing and what activities are available to you, the member.
- (3) A \$1,000.00 Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance policy if you complete and mail the application you receive with your membership card.
- (4) Automatic enrollment in the family benefit plan; participating retailers are listed on the back of this letter – just one weekend's stay at a participating motel can more than save you the cost of Legion dues.
- (5) Membership in one of the finest Legion Post Homes in the State with unsurpassed food and beverage service – Post 173, Hays, Kansas. Last year Post 173 served (#s) youngsters in its Children and Youth Programs (such as baseball, teen suicide prevention, Special Olympics, School awards, Boys State, Christmas and Easter Parties, etc). The Post also participates in service to disabled and hospitalized veterans.
- (6) Membership in the largest volunteer organization in the world; the organization that wrote the G.I. Bill of Rights, the organization which gives so much to other organizations (the American Heart Association was started with a grant from the Legion, Reye's Syndrome is no longer the "unknown" threat it once was thanks to a Legion grant, and the list goes on and on).

Earlier, I said I would ask a favor of you; actually two favors – first, please pay your American Legion dues so your officers can concentrate on the Legion's community service and youth programs rather than worrying about membership, which we must have to exist. Second, I ask you to consider giving me credit for collecting your dues. Since I no longer live in Hays, I must rely on this letter to help collect membership thus retaining the distinction of being the top membership worker of your State Headquarters Staff.

If you wish to give me credit for collecting your dues – Great! If you would rather credit someone else, that's fine too. You may credit me by completing the enclosed membership application, and returning it along with your (\$\$) check in the enclosed envelope provided, or by dropping it by the Post Home. Or scratch my name off and credit whomever you prefer, just as long as you pay your dues.

If you've already paid your (date) dues please disregard this letter, but don't forget to complete and return the application for the free insurance when you receive your membership card.

Sincerely,

Chuck Yunker

CHUCK YUNKER
State Adjutant
Member Post 173

SAMPLE RENEWAL LETTER – CURRENT MEMBER

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Sincerely,

Chuck Yunker

CHUCK YUNKER
State Adjutant
Member Post 173

RENEWAL PHONE SCRIPT

Hello, I'm _____ from American Legion Post _____
Name – Position Number

here in _____ . Are you _____ ?*
Location Former Member's Name

(Is he/she at home? May I talk to him/her please?)

*If so, continue as follows – if not, repeat message above if member has just been called to the phone.

_____ The reason I'm calling is I (we) noticed you have not renewed
Member's Name

your membership in The American Legion for the current year. I (we) hope this is just an oversight but then again since your membership is important to us we wanted to make sure everything was all right and if we could perhaps assist you in some way. (Wait for response).

- a. If there is a problem – listen – see if Post can help and/or if problem can be solved.
- b. If there is an error – member has paid and has card – get any information available, check it out – get back to the member.
- c. If there is no problem, suggest times and dates you could come by to pick-up his/her dues.
“Could I come by in the next 30 minutes to renew your membership or is tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. better?”
- d. Wait for response.
- e. Confirm the response by repeating it along with the address (they may have moved and we don't know it).
- f. Thank them for their time – no matter what the outcome.

THE AMERICAN LEGION
POST-NEW MEMBER (TRANSFEREE)
SPONSOR'S GUIDE

_____ IS APPOINTED AS AN AMERICAN LEGION

Name

SPONSOR FOR _____

Name

Address

Phone number

HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO GET THE NEW MEMBER OF YOUR POST OFF TO A GOOD START.

TELEPHONE THE NEW MEMBER:

-Talk about the date and time of the next meeting
-Offer to pick the new member up or set a place to meet
-Provide a telephone number where you can be reached
-Inform the new member of upcoming activities at Post, District, and County or Department level
-Briefly explain these activities

AT THE MEMBER'S FIRST MEETING:

-Discuss the normal meeting schedule
-Show the new member around the Post
-Introduce the new member to all those present, especially current officers and committee chairmen
-Help the new member feel welcome
-Stay with the new member
-Answer questions that arise

MAKE THE INTRODUCTIONS:

- Arrange some time with key Post officials to talk to the new member about his/her interests
-Discuss each position and the key responsibilities
-Explain the various offices of The American Legion
-Help the new member meet as many Legionnaires as possible
-Provide assistance, answer questions, etc.

Each sponsor is asked to continue his/her contact with the newly assigned Post member until the new member is comfortable on his/her own. Each sponsor is also asked to keep in touch, periodically, with the Legionnaires he/she has sponsored.

REMEMBER... A new American Legion member, as all members, is a very important person. The new member has joined The American Legion with certain expectations of the Post, District, Count, Department and National Organization. The new member may feel somewhat uncomfortable at first but a good sponsor will assist the new member allowing him/her to build self confidence, get off to a good start and become involved as a valuable member of The American Legion team.

THE AMERICAN LEGION POST SPONSOR CHECKLIST

_____ SPONSOR FOR _____
 NAME NAME

 ADDRESS

 HOME/WORK/CELL NUMBER

	YES	NO	COMMENT
Call the new member before next meeting			
Discuss the place and time of meetings/activities			
Provide your telephone number			
Meet or talk with family regarding Auxiliary, SAL, etc.			
Offer transportation to the next meeting			
Accompany the new member on a tour of the Post			
Discuss normal meeting agenda and schedule			
INTRODUCTION:			
All members, especially:			
Post Officers			
Post Employees			
Post Committee Chairman			
FOLLOW-UP TO ASSURE:			
New members questions are answered			
New member is initiated			
New member gets involved with committee or program of his/her interest & selection			
Membership card is issued			
Family Benefits Plan is explained			
New member knows where to go to seek information and/or assistance			
Refer inquiries you can't resolve to the correct chairperson or member			

WAYS TO KEEP YOUR MEMBERS

From "101 Ways To Keep Your Members"
Compiled by Mark Levin, CAE
President, B.A.I., Inc.

1. **Have a program, not a campaign.** Retention is a year-round priority and needs to be planned. Any post that is, or wants to be, successful at retention must be able to identify the specific steps it takes to increase its retention rate. In addition to having a series of activities that make up a retention program, your post should be able to identify resources that can be allocated to help implement the program.
2. **Recognize members who reach milestone membership anniversaries.** If members stay in The American Legion for five, ten, twenty or more years, they are probably not among those who are likely to drop out. When members reach one of these membership milestones, it provides two retention opportunities for your post. First, it is another opportunity to recognize a member or group of members for their continuing support. Doing that solidifies their membership even more. Also, by publicly recognizing these membership milestones, you inspire other members to strive to earn the same recognition by maintaining their membership, too.
3. **Start a regular column in your newsletter to thank members for their involvement.** One organization featured a column in their monthly newsletter that was called "Tip of the Hat." This column's sole purpose was to say "thank you" to those members who had helped the organization in some way since the previous newsletter. The member's name and the specific service they had performed were all mentioned. It became the most popular feature in the newsletter because every month members saw their name or the name of someone they knew.
4. **Provide and encourage the use of The American Legion Emblem.** There are good reasons for members to want to display the Legion emblem or other Legion artwork. The emblem can be an effective membership and marketing tool.
5. **When important issues come up, call some inactive members for their opinions.** It's natural for posts to contact their leadership people when an issue of importance arises, such as a legislative crisis, a local election or the setting of a new standard. These issues and events are also opportunities to involve some of the post's least active members simply by asking their opinion. When the opportunity comes up, have a list of inactive members ready to call, fax or write and ask for their opinion on how the post should react. The fact that the post cared enough to contact them might make the difference at renewal time.
6. **Accept credit and debit cards for dues payments.** Credit and Debit card payments have become the norm for almost all purchasing transactions. If your post does not already accept them, you should consider doing so. Credit and debit card acceptance is especially useful to posts during difficult economic times because it allows members to renew and still be able to make installment payments (if a credit card company.) Your post would also be able to accept dues payments on-line, which is a very popular method of payment for the younger veterans. Your finance officer must take the fee paid to the credit card company into consideration.
7. **Send an audio CD with your regular publications.** Even members who don't have time to read your regular publications will have time to listen to a CD on their way to or from work.
8. **Create an annual slogan or theme for membership each year.** It's often easier to get someone's attention if they have an image of the goals of the post. Having an annual theme or slogan can rally the existing members around a specific program or set of objectives and create an image in the minds of those thinking about dropping. If your post is celebrating a milestone year, that entire year can be dedicated to an anniversary theme.

9. **Recognize your members as often as possible. Thank him or her for their participation in each and every program or function.** Whether you do it formally or informally, it pays to express appreciation to members whenever possible. It's never too late to show gratitude to hard workers!
10. **Get members involved at SOME level. "Involved" members don't drop.** Your post needs to try to find ways to get members involved in a meaningful way without taking up too much of their time. This is especially true with newer members.
11. **Publish an annual report in the local media. Thank the community for their support and send a copy to members.** Publishing an annual report (Consolidated Post Report) allows your post to summarize all the accomplishments from the previous year. It shows the community that your post is an asset to that community and it shows your members that the post is run in a business-like manner and will remind any members thinking about dropping out that they would be giving up all of the benefits listed in the report.
12. **Set up "car pools" to get people to meetings, especially new members.** Car pools help raise the attendance at meetings therefore increasing the involvement of those who may not have shown up if it weren't for the car pool. Some of the drivers may have even found excuses not to attend had it not been for their assigned driving duties.
13. **Set up a speaker's bureau: Speak at other organizations' meetings.** Posts are always trying to spread the word about the Legion and the post's activities in that community. One of the best ways to do this is by finding speaking opportunities for your post's leaders. You can establish a post speaker's bureau, a pre-qualified group of members who are capable both in terms of knowledge and speaking ability to represent your organization to the media or to other civic groups. When these representatives speak, current members are instilled with a sense of pride in membership, which can make a difference at renewal time.
14. **Be sure non-members pay a higher fee than members for programs and functions.** There are two ways to make this idea support your retention efforts. First, be sure that your post charges more for non-members to participate in any of your post functions or to purchase any of your goods or services. Second, be sure to remind your current members about this additional fee that non-members pay. This serves to remind members of the money they save each time they take advantage of your post's services.
15. **Remind members how much money they have saved by participating in programs and functions at the member rate.** Remind your members of the money they may save by participating in the national member benefits program and the discounts for post functions.
16. **Keep members' names and addresses current and accurate—it's the best sign of a "caring" organization.** It is common courtesy and good business practice to keep your membership records as accurate as possible. This becomes even more important because members' expectations increase as they compare your post's communications to those they receive from other sources.
17. **Make sure you capture e-mail addresses whenever possible. Also make sure your members know your post e-mail address so they'll accept e-mail from you.** E-mail is the quickest and least expensive method of sending information and documents to your members and to receive correspondence from your members.
18. **If you ask a member to do a volunteer job, make sure it's a WORTHWHILE job!** Even the smallest volunteer jobs need to provide some sense of accomplishment for the members assigned to do them. Although there is a lot of pressure to get members involved in the post's leadership structure, just having a title is not enough to justify the valuable time members have to give up in order to participate. Be able to pinpoint the contribution each member makes to your post's success and be certain to mention that contribution when thanking the member.

19. **Call your annual dues an investment rather than "dues".** Referring to your dues as an investment will create an image that your post isn't spending the members' dues but rather investing it in programs and services that bring value to the members, to the post and to the community.
20. **Assign an officer to contact a certain number of inactive members each month – just a little "say Hi!" call.** Some members believe the only time we contact them is when we need money, information or support. This impression is strongest among the less active members. To alleviate some of these feelings ask officers and E-board members to make some random calls each month to your inactive members. These courtesy calls will remind these members that the post knows they're still out there and that their opinion is valued. Be sure to give the callers something substantial to talk about, such as getting input on an upcoming legislative issue or proposed post policy changes.
21. **Bring a list of inactive members to a post meeting and have members contact them.** It's an important sign to members when a volunteer leader takes the time to contact a member simply to say that the post misses them and to also relay to the member that the post is there to assist if there's anything the member needs.
22. **Get spouses active – it assures renewal.** When you have multiple family members simultaneously belonging to the Legion, the Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion, your chances of having them renew is much greater than the renewal rates of individual members.
23. **Bring in National speakers to describe how National adds benefits to state/local membership.** Posts should try to get representatives from the Department and National organization to speak at a post or District function to emphasize the member benefits available through affiliation with the National organization.
24. **Hold leadership-training programs – give your members the tools to be successful volunteers.** It is important for members who do get involved to have a good experience during their involvement. Leadership training is becoming one of the best services that organizations can give their members. The skills developed through leadership training are transferred back to the members' workplaces. At renewal time, members will remember where these skills were developed.
25. **Create a new member welcoming committee.** When a new member joins ask someone who is already a member to call the new member. Tell the new member what a good investment membership has been for them and congratulate the new member on making a great decision to join. In as little as ten seconds the welcoming member has validated the new member's decision to join by making that person feel more welcome in the Legion post.
26. **Send a "New Member Newsletter" to first year members during their first year.** New members are special because they are the least likely to know everything that is going on in your post, the least likely to be involved in a leadership position, and therefore the most likely to drop out. Several groups have developed new member newsletters that new members get throughout their first year of membership. These newsletters are basically a summary of the most important information that has been sent to them via other formats, such as newsletters and magazines, with further explanation and background. These publications usually go out three or four times during the year. New members stop receiving it as soon as they renew for the first time.
27. **Send new members a letter or postcard saying, "Here's where your \$25.00 dues went: \$3.00 for VA&R Programs; \$3.00 for Americanism Programs, etc.** This technique can be used effectively to show members that their dues investment is working for them. Even if the members are inactive, they can feel good that their dues are helping to support some very important programs sponsored by the post. Their dues are helping to make their community a better place to live.
28. **Offer plenty of member-only programs and benefits.** Your post needs to constantly remind members of the exclusive benefits they get as regular, dues-paying members. Depending on the legal requirements of your post, there will be many services and programs that can be reserved for members. These programs and services need to be highlighted whenever possible.

29. **Send a mini-survey to members about six months after they join to see how they rate your post's services.** One educational organization called this their "six month report card." It was sent to members half way through their first year and asked the members to grade the organization in several service areas. Any members that rated a program below an A or B was given a phone call to get more information. Then the organization used that information to try to correct that problem. The organization was also able to spot potential dropped members by noting which new members didn't even bother to return the card. These members also got a phone call.
30. **Get new and inactive members to attend Department Conventions or Conferences.** They are more likely to renew when they witness the importance of the business conducted at these functions. Even if they don't attend every year, the stature of the event and the impression they get by attending will help remind them of the benefits of membership.
31. **Hold a new member reception at Conventions.** Whenever your post, district or department sponsors a meeting or educational program, use that opportunity to invite new members to attend a special reception. These receptions are usually held prior to the start of the convention or educational program. In addition to talking about the Legion, and learning about the expectations of the newer members, it is also a chance to explain how to get the most out of their participation in the event.
32. **Give new members a special ribbon to wear.** Identifying newer members does several positive things. It lets the new members feel special and it reinforces for them the fact that joining was a good idea since there are others who have the same designation. Most importantly, it allows Legion leaders to spot new members and try to make them feel welcome.
33. **Use groups of volunteers for renewal phone-a-thons.** This project not only helps your renewal efforts, but it makes the callers feel more like an important part of your Post.
34. **Make sponsors or recruiters responsible for the first renewal, too.** If your post has a sponsorship program where the recruiters are known, contact the recruiters at renewal time and let them know the new members they brought in during the past year are about to receive renewal notices. Ask that the recruiters call their recruits to let them know they are looking forward to having them with the post again next year. It reminds the recruiter about his or her efforts, and keeps those efforts from being wasted if the members they sponsored drop out a short time after joining.
35. **Give discounts or perks for early renewals.** One of the hard parts of retention is trying to figure out who among those who are late renewing is really a potential non-renewing member who is just putting their renewal off. One way to help resolve this problem is to give some sort of small discount or perk for members who renew early. Your post's financial managers need to work out the appropriate discount and accounting methods, but having the early renewal money in interest-bearing accounts may more than offset any discount given. In addition to the financial rewards for your post, there is the main benefit of being able to identify the post's most likely drops earlier in the renewal process.
36. **Give rebate vouchers for early renewals.** Instead of giving a discount for early renewals, try giving a rebate. When you ask your members to pay the full amount at renewal time, tell them that the post will send them a rebate voucher as a reward if they renew early. The voucher would have a monetary value or be in the form of a certificate good for a certain amount of credit when the member participates in a post function or social activity.
37. **Send a checklist entitled "What's your reason for not renewing?"** Send a survey that lists the most common reasons for dropping out to those people who have recently dropped their memberships and ask them to check off the reasons that apply to them. Be prepared to follow up and address each of the reasons. While a written form is not as effective as actually talking to these members, it does give the post one more chance to reinforce the value of membership and to personalize the next contact.

38. **Have the Commander send a pre-renewal letter on his/her letterhead a few weeks BEFORE the renewal is sent.** Tell of the great year you had, and how he/she is looking forward to working with the member again next year. This is usually done to remind members of all of the value they received during the past year and to tell them what they can expect in the future. By sending the report or letter prior to the renewal notice, you alert members that the renewal is coming and raise their anticipation level and their need to respond. This usually raises the number of early renewals. Having the letter on your post stationery adds to the credibility of the message and increases the chances it will be opened promptly.
39. **Have a retention committee – give it goals!** There is a need for member involvement in the recruiting process and there should also be member involvement in the retention process. Your post should have either a separate retention committee or a retention subcommittee of your membership committee. The retention committee needs to have goals and a plan of action with very definite steps that can be taken to raise the post's retention rate. The retention committee should be assigned to develop these steps and undertake them.
40. **List names of non-renewals at leadership meetings. Have a "10 Most Wanted Renewals" list.** Select 10 non-renewed members for each meeting and assign members at that meeting to contact those lapsed members. This shows your lapsed members that the post still cares about them and it draws your current members into the membership retention process.
41. **Reward renewal efforts as much as you do recruitment efforts.** There is nothing wrong with building in an incentive or recognition program for retention efforts. Such a program can even be integrated into your recruitment incentives by giving the member who recruits a new member some form of appropriate recognition when the new member joins, and again when the new member renews.
42. **After a couple of renewal notices, begin personal contacts.** When members fail to respond to dues notices, it isn't always because they intend to drop out for a particular reason or because they are generally disappointed with your post. Some members just want to know if your post cares that they are out there. A personal call to let members know they are missed can make a big difference at renewal time.
43. **Send non-renewals a newsletter with the front and back cover printed and the inside blank. Print a message inside about what the former member is missing by not renewing.** Your post's newsletters are among its most valuable membership benefits. When members drop out, they need to be reminded that they are losing these valuable benefits forever. By sending a newsletter with nothing in it except the table of contents listing all of the valuable information the former member *isn't* getting, you graphically describe the lost benefit.
44. **Dig beyond the "never did anything for me" answer. Try to find out exactly why they chose to not renew their membership.** There's always something more. Your post should prepare questions that probe beyond the surface and get to the heart of why members are leaving.
45. **Pay special attention to those who renew last.** They are the most likely to not renew next year. As your post begins identifying the non-active members it needs to contact, add these late payers to the priority list.
46. **Hold a retention contest, just like a recruitment contest.** If your members respond well to incentives and competitions consider having a retention contest among your leaders. Divide the membership roster among the post officers, executive committee and the membership team and assign a certain number of current members to each leader. Give prizes to the leaders who renew the most members. Help them out by giving them suggestions on how they can get reluctant members to renew.

47. Offer incentives to the first 10% who renew (free dinner, etc.). Why not have a contest among your members to see who can send in their renewal dues the fastest? Give some type of incentive to those who renew before a certain date or are among the first to renew.
48. List first-time renewals in a special section of your newsletter. In addition to giving special recognition to new members, list those who are renewing for the first time in a special section of your newsletter. This will remind these members that the decision they made a year ago to join your post was a good decision. It will also remind them that the post is glad to have them back again for a second year.
49. Be sure to acknowledge renewal checks, just like new member applications. Your post probably makes a big deal when new members join by sending them welcome letters and new member kits and by putting their names in your newsletter. Yet, few posts do anything to acknowledge renewals other than sending them their new Legion card. Find some way to thank them for their renewal. Put a letter or a postcard in the return envelope with their membership card. After all, these renewing members are making the same financial commitment as first-time members and they deserve some recognition.

Do everything your post can to be a reason a member wants to renew. For many members, The American Legion is the staff and the leadership. If they perceive that they have a group of dedicated, qualified staff and volunteer leaders, they'll probably be back.

GETTING OUR MEMBERSHIP 100%



.... AND KEEPING IT THERE!