

National Commander on Membership

Every year we seem to struggle to collect our membership in a timely manner, although there are many that step up and continually have their Squadron at or above 100% early in the renewal process. What makes these Squadrons different and successful is the manner in which they view the membership process. Here are a few tips others use to be successful, please keep these in mind if you are the person that handles membership.

1) Start collecting the new membership year dues as soon as the new cards come out, usually around the end of June. It is at that point which we need to start the collection of dues to replenish the funds of the organization. Yes there are still six months left in the current membership year, but both the State and National organizations have expenses and obligations that must be met and your dues help meet those obligations. Further the Sons of The American Legion National Constitution Article X, Section 2 states in part; "The amount of such annual dues.... shall be payable Oct. 20 of each year for the succeeding year".

2) Send out your own Squadron specific renewal notice with a due date. It is true that the National Organization sends out renewal notices, but those are only intended as a reminder and should NOT be your primary resource for notifying your membership in the renewal process. Your Squadron's membership is your responsibility and the Squadron membership team is responsible for notifying your Squadron's membership by renewal notice, phone call or personal contact. Whichever method you choose make your members feel that they have been, and continue to be, an important part of your Squadron. Encourage them to get involved, keep them informed, and educate them on the ideals and principles of this organization.

3) Thank members for renewing and provide them with a brief description of how their dues benefit the organization and those we serve. This reinforces the fact that all members are important and they do make a difference in someone's life.

4) Remember December 31st is the date that all memberships which are not paid become delinquent and all benefits associated with the organization cease, therefore it is imperative that we process as many of our memberships as possible before the first of January. Sure there are always a small number of members that procrastinate and wait until the last minute to pay. You will also have those that are hesitant to renew their membership because they feel that it is of no benefit to them to continue as a member. The memberships that fall into these two categories are attainable, you just have to work for them. Part of that is accomplished by being able to explain the purpose of the organization, the other part is just being persistent.

Remember we are part of a Veterans service organization, dedicated to serving Veterans, children and youth, our communities, state and nation. This is achieved through the four pillars of service on which The American Legion was founded; Veteran's Affairs and Rehabilitation, Children and Youth, Americanism and National Security. By working together we can and we will attain our membership goals.

Respectfully,

Danny Smith, National Commander