

**Americanism Division**  
**Weekly Report to the National Commander**  
**September 8, 2023**  
**Ron Neff, Director – (317) 630-1203**

**Scholarships & Civics**

General Regena Aye of the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Programs accepted the Educator of the Year Award at the Americanism Commission meeting on August 26 in Charlotte, NC.

The 2023 Youth Champions Delegation, attended the National Convention in Charlotte, NC, representing the best of the best of the Legion's Youth Programs.

The Youth Champion Delegates are:

- Boys Nation President – David Daniel, III (KY)
  - Junior Air Rifle Sporter National Champion – Charles Bratton (SC)
  - High School Oratorical National Champion – Haley Bock (IN)
  - Eagle Scout of the Year – Jackson Adams (WA)
  - Junior Air Rifle Precision National Champion – Jacob Wisman (WV)
- (American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain – Carl Price (PA) was unable to attend.)

The Champions presented speeches, sharing their experiences in American Legion Youth Programs with the Legionnaires in attendance.

**American Legion Baseball**

On August 16, 2023, American Legion Baseball Assistant Program Manager, Tom Starnes accompanied National Vice Commander Patricia Harris and Dept of North Carolina Baseball Chairman Mark Cauble to Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas to present Texas Rangers' shortstop, Corey Seager with the 2023 American Legion Baseball Graduate of the Year Award. Seager attended Northwest Cabarrus High School and played American Legion Baseball for Kannapolis Post 115 in Kannapolis, North Carolina; signing with Major League Baseball in 2012. He was named the National League Championship Series Most Valuable Player (MVP) and MLB World Series MVP while leading the Dodgers to the 2020 World Series title over the Tampa Bay Rays. After seven years with the Dodgers, the 2-time Silver Slugger and Homerun Derby Champion, signed a 10-year deal with the Texas Rangers where he continues to excel both on and off the field.

His leadership and charity work off the field have earned him the respect of The American Legion. The award has the unanimous consent of The American Legion's National Executive Committee.



**WEEKLY STATUS INPUT**  
**Internal Affairs & Membership Division**  
**Matthew Herndon, Director**  
**(317) 630-1406**  
**September 8, 2023**

**2023 Membership:**

Membership as of September 6<sup>th</sup> was 92.37% of the 1,535,647 goal with 1,418,528 current members (new recruits, renewals and DMS transfers). Total membership is 1,503,017 when new DMS and encumbered DMS are added into the total.

**2024 Membership:**

Membership as of September 6<sup>th</sup> was 50.34% of the 1,452,188 goal with 731,019 current members (new recruits, renewals and DMS transfers). The 50% target date is September 13, 2023, we have already surpassed this goal as an organization.

**National Commander Seehafer Membership Goals:**

Commander Seehafer has an expectation to engage members on a regular basis. With the Be the One initial, it is imperative for posts to contact members to check on their wellbeing and show them they are valued members of this organization. Whether it is through Buddy Checks or contacting members about their membership dues, members need to feel wanted and valued.

**Retention:**

As an organization, Commander Seehafer set a goal of 90% for retention. A column has been added to the daily, weekly, and target date membership reports for each department. **Our current retention rate is 50.88% at the traditional level. There are 86,208 department headquarters post members who were paid for 2023 that have not renewed for 2024 and 942,754 at the post level and who have not renewed for 2024.**

As we see from above, there is a large pool of expired members within the posts and departments. There is the capability to immediately identify and start the engagement process to contact the member to renew their membership. Leadership at all levels need to emphasize bringing back their expired members. Post leadership must start the engagement process to show the member the value of membership for long-term retention.

**Recruiting:**

National Commander Seehafer set a goal of 78,000 new traditional members for the 2024 membership year. **To date we have recruited 15,388 new members into the organization at the local post level.**

**Membership Excellence “Be the One” Dog Tag Coin:**

To qualify you will need to recruit two new members into The American Legion, one to replace you and one for growth. A new member is defined as any eligible veteran joining for the 2024 membership year who was not a member during the 2023 membership year. You can find the form at:

<https://www.legion.org/commander/pin>

**American Legion Riders:**

The American Legion Riders rode 1,100 miles from Kokomo, IN, to Charlotte, NC. The average number of riders daily was 325, and they crossed eight states on their way to the national convention site. The Legacy Run raised over \$1.551 million for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. This was a record year for the number of riders per day and the

highest amount ever raised in one year. The 2024 Legacy Run will switch charities and now support the Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF). The Finance Commission determined the Legacy Scholarship fund is fully funded for the next ten years. Thus, the change to VCF.

### **Sons of The American Legion (SAL):**

The SAL had a very successful National Convention and Donald "JR" Hall, Jr. was elected as the SAL National Commander. The SAL has surpassed the membership goal and continues to grow an **All-Time High**.

#### **2023 SAL Membership Info (September 6<sup>th</sup>)**

|                          |         |                   |
|--------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Total Actual Membership: | 376,714 | (102.42% of goal) |
| Renewal Percentage:      | 88.43%  |                   |
| Detachments at 100%:     | 39      |                   |
| Detachments at 105%:     | 19      |                   |

#### **2024 SAL Membership Info (September 6<sup>th</sup>)**

|                          |        |                  |
|--------------------------|--------|------------------|
| Total Actual Membership: | 53,314 | (13.95% of goal) |
| Renewal Percentage:      | 12.22% |                  |
| Detachments at 10%:      | 43     |                  |

### **Consolidated Post Report (CPR):**

We have reports from 8,292 of our 12,267 American Legion posts that have submitted their data for a completion rate of 68.4%. Congratulations to the departments of **DE, ID, IN, MD, MT, NE, NM, WI** for obtaining 100% CPR reporting.

### **Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR):**

We have reports from 1,947 of our 5,884 Sons of The American Legion squadrons that have submitted their data for a completion rate of 33.1%. Congratulations to the detachments of **DE, PR, VT, WI** for obtaining 100% CSR reporting.

This is the final 2023 CPR & CSR report, and 2023 inputs will no longer be accepted.

### **The National Emergency Fund (NEF):**

Approved Grants:

*2022 – 104 grants (98 members/6 posts) totaling \$261,761.75*

- Florida (Hurricane Ian) – 89 members; 3 posts
- Florida (Hurricane Nicole) – 1 member
- Kentucky (Tornado & Flooding) – 0 members; 2 posts
- Louisiana (Hurricane Ida) – 2 members
- Oklahoma (Tornado) – 1 member
- Puerto Rico (Hurricane Fiona) – 3 members; 1 post
- Tennessee (Wildfire) – 1 member
- Texas (Tornado) – 1 member

*2023 – 98 grants (90 members/8 posts) totaling \$334,341.13*

- California (Flooding) – 1 member
- Florida (Hurricane Ian) – 87 members; 7 posts
- Florida (Hurricane Nicole) – 1 member
- Illinois (Straight Line Winds) – 1 post
- Oklahoma (Tornado) – 1 post

Hurricane season is upon us, and Hurricane Idalia hit the coast of Florida while we were in Charlotte at National Convention. The Department of Florida has already advised us that NEF grants are forthcoming. Hurricane Lee is currently picking up speed in the Atlantic and is now a Category 5 storm. The path is currently unknown. Many different

models show varying tracks. More to be known in the coming days and week, but the Atlantic coast could be impacted.

Hurricane Jova is set to move northwest off the western coast of the United States in the coming days. While the storm isn't expected to make landfall like Hurricane Hilary, the weather front will send big waves towards surf spots in California.

Deadly wildfires and devastation in Lahaina, Maui in the Hawaiian Islands in early August should generate at least 4-7 NEF grants once those members are at a place to apply. The Hawaiian Governor and President Biden declared that area a disaster area. Death toll currently is around 115, but expected to rise while recovery efforts underway, and the Department of Hawaii has asked to not send supplies to Hawaii, as they are still trying to navigate how and where to receive them.

Recently deadly flooding in the Northeast and Maine and Vermont have been declared disaster areas by the President of the United States. We have reached out to those departments regarding the National Emergency Fund.

An e-mail went out June 28<sup>th</sup> to all national and department leadership about the NEF, with the NEF Grant Application PowerPoint with voiceover instructions on how to complete the NEF grant application. It also included a link to the video of PNC/IL Department Adjutant Marty Conatser on how they developed an SOP for disaster recovery, to include assisting with NEF grant applications.

There have been other storms and natural disasters throughout the country that we will continue to monitor.

### **Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW):**

Over 5,000 servicemembers, veterans, and their families were directly impacted by Operation Comfort Warriors in 2022, either by participating in an OCW-sponsored event or receiving care at a grant-receiving facility.

Application submissions for OCW grants continue to indicate an increase in the annual number of grants to individual veterans and federal medical care facilities.

*2022 – 62 Grants totaling \$371,927.27*

Completed:

Grants to servicemembers – 38

Grants to post/districts – 10

Grants for events – 9

Grants to federal medical care facilities – 5

*2023 – 77 Grants totaling \$441,435*

Completed:

Grants for VA Facilities - 5

Grants to servicemembers – 30

Grants for events - 10

Grants to federal medical care facilities – 5

Pending:

Grants for events - 7

Grant for VA Facilities - 2

Grants for servicemembers – 18

Total Veterans Served (including pending grants): 4,430

**Training:**

During the 104<sup>th</sup> National Convention, we held subject matter expert training in the expo hall on Saturday and Monday. These twelve training sessions averaged 45 attendees and were well received.

We also held new district commander training on Monday for three hours. This session was kicked off by then Leading Candidate Daniel Seehafer and he set the tone and his expectations for these district commanders. They also received training centered around working membership, MyLegion, and the importance of showing the value of membership by M&PA Committee Chairman, Matthew Jabaut. This session had around 75 attendees.

Heading into September we look to host a training on The American Legion application and are working on the training newsletter. Any articles or ideas need to be submitted by September 13, 2023.

Contact: [legiontraining@legion.org](mailto:legiontraining@legion.org).