Department of North Carolina

Membership Awards Manual

2026-2027

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Joseph "Joe" Reale Sr.
Department Commander

JIM ZAJC
Membership Chairman

2026–2027
NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

TARGET	NATIONAL
50%	SEPTEMBER 10,2026
55%	OCTOBER 14, 2026
65%	NOVEMBER 12, 2026
75%	DECEMBER 9, 2026
80%	JANUARY 13, 2027
85%	FEBRUARY 10, 2027
90%	MARCH 10, 2027
95%	APRIL14, 2027
100%	MAY 12, 2027

National Delegate Strength **30 Days Prior to National Convention**

2026-2027
RENEWAL NOTICE
DATES

CUTOFF DATES*	RENEWAL DATES
MAY 13, 2026	JULY 1-8, 2026
SEPTEMBER 9, 2026	OCTOBER 3-9, 2026
OCTOBER 14, 2026	NOVEMBER 7-13, 2026
DECEMBER 9, 2026	JANUARY 2-8, 2027
FEBRUARY 10, 2027	MARCH 2-9, 2027
APRIL 14, 2027	MAY 1-7, 2027

*Transmittals received after this date will not prevent a subsequent notice from being delivered at or around the renewal date

POST CATAGORIES

***A Post category is classified by the 2024 membership total.**

CLASS A - 500 AND ABOVE
CLASS B - 200 - 499
CLASS C - 100 - 199
CLASS D - 60-99
CLASS E - 30-59
CLASS F - 15-29

*All candidates for Department awards will have their membership records verified by the post adjutant or persons responsible for submitting the individual.

	2027 COMMANDER MEMBERSHIP AWARDS	DEADLINE DATE
Commander's 155 Award	Any Member who recruits **5 NEW** members and **RENEWS 5 CURRENT** members for the **2027** Membership year will receive a framed **155 award** consisting of **A silver dollar, ½ dollar and a nickel.**	
National Commander Membership Incentive Pin	Any Member who recruits **3 (three) NEW** members joining for the **2027** Membership year. (*A New Member is defined as any eligible veteran joining for the **2027** Membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2025-2026 Membership year. **TRANSFERS DO NOT COUNT AS NEW MEMBERS.**)*	
National Commander 103% Membership Incentive Pin	A pin will be awarded to any Post, District, County, Division, Department commander or membership chairman who achieves **103 percent** of their assigned membership goal for 2027.	

A New Member is defined as any eligible veteran joining for the **2027 Membership year who has never been member of The American Legion or and expired member prior to **2025** Membership year**

Important Department Deadlines

Cardinal Award	**September 10,2026**
Carolina Award	November 11, 2026
Dogwood Award	**December 31, 2026**
Go Getters Award	January 31, 2027
North State Award	**February 28, 2027**
Post Data Reports	April 15, 2027
Tarheel Award	May 31, 2027
Consolidated Post Report	**June 1, 2027**
Certification of Officers	June 1, 2027
Post Information Form	**June 1, 2027**

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

*All candidates for Department awards will have their membership records verified by the post adjutant or persons responsible for submitting the individual.

	INDIVIDUAL AWARDS	DEADLINE
Go- Getter Club	Each legionnaire who secures New and/or RENEWS a minimum of **5** and up to **100** members (certified by the Post Adjutant) will receive a Go-Getter Pin for each classification.	December 31st 2026
New Member Recruiter OTY by Class	Classes A, B, C, D, E and F – Individuals in each Post Class who secures ***the highest number of*** **NEW members** (certified by the Post Adjutant) will receive a certificate.	May 12,2027
Department Recruiter OTY	Each Post will have the opportunity to submit the name of its Recruiter OTY who has signed up the **most NEW Members** for the 2027 Membership year. The individual who has signed up the most members in the state will receive a certificate and his/her name will be submitted for the National Recruiter of the Year.	May 12,2027

	POST AWARDS **Posts will receive various forms of recognition for their membership achievements.**	DEADLINE
Cardinal Award	Each Post that transmits **50% of their membership goal** to Department Headquarters by the deadline date receive an Early Bird Citation.	September 10, 2026
Carolina Award	Post Commanders who attain **100% membership goal** by Veteran's Day	November 11, 2026
First to 100%	Class A, B, C, D, E and F - Presented to the FIRST Post in each class that makes **100% of its membership goal** as certified by the Department Adjutant.	Variable date by Class
Tarheel Award	All Posts that attain their **100% membership goal** by May 31st	May 31, 2027
North State Award	All posts that attain **100% retention by February 2026**	February 2027

	District Awards	DEADLINE DATE
First to 100% District	**An Honor certificate awarded** to the **first** District Commander to reach **100% of their 2027 Membership** Goal.	Variable 2027 Membership Year
100% District Commander	**Paid State Convention expenses** awarded to the **First** District Commander in the Department to achieve 100% 2027 Membership in their District	Variable 2027 Membership Year
100% District	An Honor Certificate & 100% District Commander **baseball cap** for the District Commanders who make **100% of their 2027 Membership** Goal.	May 1, 2027
ALL 100% Posts District	**An Honor Certificate** for all District Commanders who have **ALL POSTS** in their District at 100% by cutoff date.	May 16, 2027
	Division Awards	
First to 100% Division	**An Honor certificate and $100 Emblem Sales Gift Card** awarded to the **first** Division Commander to reach **100% of their 2027 Membership** Goal	Variable 2027 Membership Year
100% Division Commander	**Paid State Convention expenses** awarded to the first 100% Division Commander in the Department to achieve 100% 2027 Membership in their Division	May 16,2027
100% Division Commander	An Honor Certificate & 100% Division Commander **baseball cap** for each **100%** Division Commander.	May 16, 2027

*****All candidates for Department awards will have their membership records verified by the post adjutant or persons responsible for submitting the individual.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

***ALL NATIONAL AWARDS WILL BE PROCESSED BY THE DEPARTMENT ***

DEPARTMENT RECRUITER OF THE YEAR

Each American Legion post will have the opportunity to submit the name of the recruiter from that post who has signed up the highest number of new members for the membership year by the May target date. Department headquarters will supply certification forms to be completed by the post commander or adjutant and submitted to department headquarters by the May target date plus one week. Department adjutants will determine the top new member recruiter for their respective department and certify the winner to National Headquarters, on or before the last day of May.

The top new member recruiter, properly nominated and certified from each department, will be awarded a framed certificate noting his or her accomplishment.

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 Membership Recruiter of the Year. The award includes a trip to the national convention: six days and five nights for the Legionnaire and guest, round-trip air transportation, hotel accommodations and reserved seating tickets to the National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests.

Monetary awards will be presented to the next highest 26 individuals:
One $1,000 check
10 $150 award checks (third place)
15 $100 award checks (fourth place)

Note: Department adjutants must nominate top recruiters on or before the last day of May.

SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION/ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
GOLD BRIGADE AWARD

A Legionnaire who recruits 50 or more new members (excluding any transfers) into The American Legion by the May target date will qualify for enrollment in the elite Gold Brigade of The American Legion. These very special Legionnaires will be awarded unique gifts designating affiliation with the Gold Brigade. Also, special recognition will be given to those Legionnaires through special announcements at the national convention, in the *Dispatch*, online and other media.

The gifts awarded to a Gold Brigade recipient will depend on the number of times he or she has qualified for this award. **NOTE: Fifth, Sixth and Tenth consecutive years qualify only for their separate respective awards.**

First-time awardees:
Gold Brigade patch
Special Gold Brigade cap pin
Gold Brigade certificate
Designer jacket or
Polo shirt or
Sweater with a Gold Brigade logo

Second through fourth time:
Gold Brigade certificate
"Hash mark" for jacket sleeve
Designer jacket or
Polo shirt or
Sweater with Gold Brigade logo

Seventh time and beyond:
Gold Brigade certificate
"Hash mark" for jacket sleeve
Designer jacket or
Polo shirt or
Sweater with Gold Brigade logo
$150 check

GOLD BRIGADE FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR AWARD

Any recipient who has earned the Gold Brigade award for five consecutive years is eligible for a distinctive blue Gold Brigade blazer. A Legionnaire may only qualify once every five years. Department adjutants must submit all Gold Brigade certification forms to National Headquarters by the last day of May.

GOLD BRIGADE SIXTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR AWARD

Any recipient who has earned the Gold Brigade Award for six consecutive years to include the current membership year is eligible for a $150 check and an American Legion cap with the label "Master Recruiter," a Gold Brigade plaque, a cap pin and a hash mark. Department adjutants must submit the certification form by the last day of May .

GOLD BRIGADE TENTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR AWARD

Any recipient who has earned the Gold Brigade award for 10 consecutive years to include the current membership year is eligible for a distinctive blue Gold Brigade blazer. (This is a one-time award.) Department adjutants must submit all certification forms to National Headquarters by the last day of May.

THE SILVER BRIGADE AWARD

A Legionnaire who recruits 25 to 49 new members (excluding any transfers) into The American Legion by the May target date will qualify for this award. A silver pin and certificate will be awarded. **NOTE:** Silver Brigade and Gold Brigade awards cannot both be awarded to a recruiter during the same membership year.

THE BRONZE BRIGADE AWARD

A Legionnaire who recruits 15 to 24 new members (excluding any transfers) into The American Legion by the May target date will qualify for this award. A bronze brigade patch and certificate will be awarded **(page 25)**. NOTE: Bronze, Silver and Gold Brigade awards cannot both be awarded to a recruiter during the same membership year.

MISCELLANEOUS AWARDS

***ALL NATIONAL AWARDS WILL BE PROCESSED BY THE DEPARTMENT ***

DEPARTMENT HONOR RIBBON

Each department equaling or surpassing its previous year's final membership by opening day of the national convention will receive an honor ribbon for its department colors.

100% DISTRICT COMMANDER PIN

This special pin is worn only by those Legionnaires who as district commanders accomplished at least 100% of their assigned district membership goals. These commanders may be nominated at any time during the membership year.

POST REVITALIZATION RECOGNITION LETTER

Individuals who assist in revitalizing a post will receive a recognition letter from the national commander for their hard work. The revitalized post will receive a letter from the national commander welcoming them back into The American Legion.

POST HONOR RIBBON

Honor ribbons are awarded to posts whose membership for the current membership year (as of December 31) achieves an advance membership (for the year about to begin) equal to or greater than the final membership for the

year ending. Certification forms must be submitted to the Membership Division by January 31

CERTIFICATE OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE ALL-TIME HIGH AWARD

This certificate is awarded to all posts that have enrolled an advance membership for the membership year (as of December 31) equaling or surpassing the post's previous all-time high membership.

PIONEER AWARD

The National Membership & Post Activities Committee created the Pioneer Award on May 5, 1965, to recognize those directly involved with new post formation. However, recognition and awarding of this citation are the new post's responsibility. Completed certification forms should be returned to department headquarters for approval prior to being forwarded to National Headquarters. All Pioneer awards will be returned to department headquarters for proper presentation.

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT PIN

The New Post Development Pin is available to any individual who assists with the initial start-up of a new post. Volunteers can be nominated at any time throughout the year**.**

FIVE OR MORE CONSECUTIVE YEAR ALL-TIME HIGH POST AWARD

Purpose of report: To certify to National Headquarters those posts eligible to receive the Five (or more) Consecutive Year All-Time High Award. The citation may be ordered at any time for a qualifying post, but we suggest it be ordered about one month prior to the time planned for presentation (department convention, district convention, visit by department commander, etc.). Departments should check and ensure at the close of department books that all qualifying posts are certified. After a post has won the award for five consecutive years of all-time membership highs, it may continue to win the award each year thereafter as long as each year's membership sets a new all-time high. Please list posts in numerical order.

Note: Post names and numbers will be printed on the award exactly as shown on your report.

DISTRICT COMMANDER'S NEW POST ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

District commanders who create new American Legion posts in their respective districts and have the new post's temporary charter application on file at National Headquarters by the May target date will receive a framed certificate.

DISTRICT COMMANDER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD and DISTRICT HONOR RIBBON

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