



***Membership*** is the lifeblood of any service or veteran's organization. We must retain all our current members and work ardently to obtain and recruit new ones. Both retention and recruitment are enormous challenges, that must be met head on.

Working and volunteering in communities, states and around the world, The American Legion has been dedicated to veterans, troops, national security, youth and patriotism since its founding over a century ago and we must continue this legacy. We must not fail in this endeavor, and strong membership is the most important asset to ensure we remain the largest viable organization working on behalf of our nation's veterans.



# PERSPECTIVE ON MEMBERSHIP

Year End Membership Totals:                      2018/2019    10,099                      2019/2020    9,416                      2020/2021    9,563

NOTE: During 2018/2019 membership year 494 members moved on to Post Everlasting significantly contributing to decreasing the 2019/2020 total. During the 2020/2021 year 206 members were reported as deceased.

2019/2020 Membership Year was the lowest since 1945 with 9,416 members. However, with hard work a turnaround started in 2020/2021 and will (must) continue.

**We are still losing members faster than we recruit. This must change....**

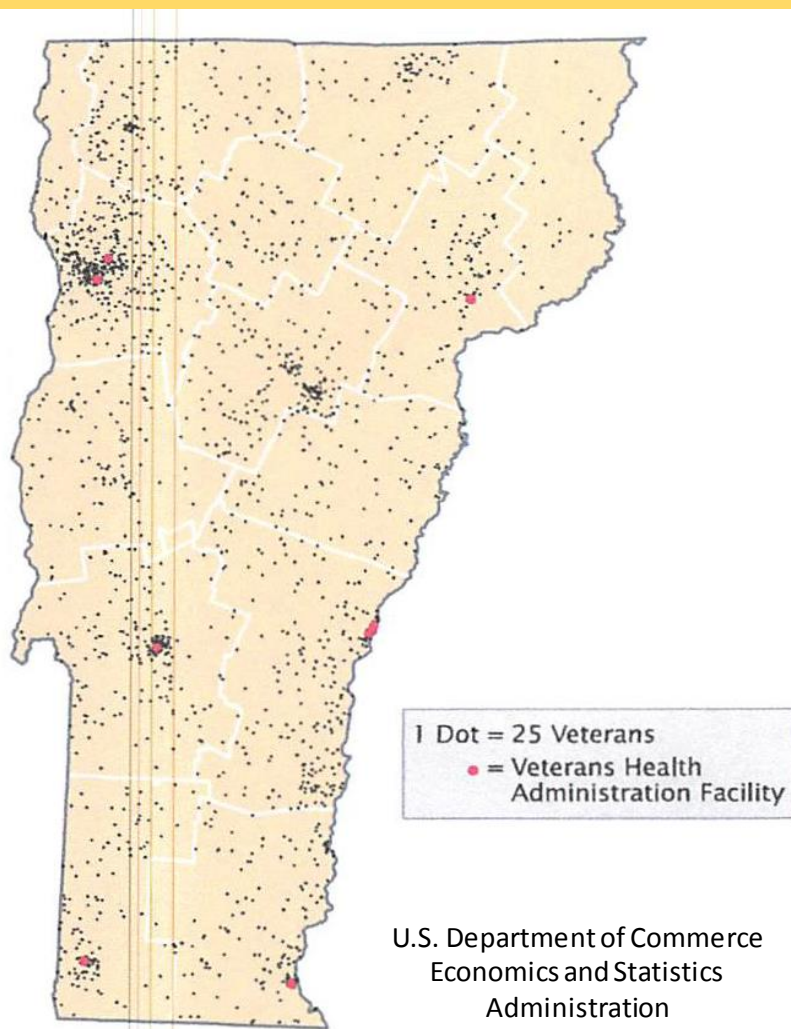


# CHALLENGES

- Vermont never developed large cities in that the state is mountainous, heavily forested, and many of the rivers flow north to Canada instead of towards US ports on the Atlantic.
- Only one relatively metropolitan urban area with only nine incorporated cities in the state.
- Population of Vermont is 624,592 and it is the 49<sup>th</sup> most Populous state in the nation.
- The population density in Vermont is 68.0 people per square mile.
- More deaths than births in the state
- In the past 10 years more people moved out of the state than in.
- More seniors and fewer children, and fewer working-age adults.
- East/west travel in the state is through the mountains with no major highways.
- Broadband and cell service limited and at times unavailable in various areas in the state.
- No billboards or outside off premise advertising allowed anywhere in the state per state statute.
- No active duty military bases, with only a small Coast Guard facility on Lake Champlain and an Air and Army National Guard base in Colchester, Vermont.
- No major corporations in the state to attract employment and younger veterans.
- Covid-19.



# VETERAN DEMOGRAPHICS



40,145 veterans in the state with the majority being from the Vietnam era (15,619). Of the 40,145 veterans, over 50 percent are 65 years of age or older.

Over 25 percent of the state's veterans are more than 75 years of age.

There are more World War II veterans (2,472) living in the state than veterans younger than 35 years of age (1,896).

U.S. Census 2017  
ACS 5-Year Survey



# National Commander James “Bill” Oxford

2019/2021 – “A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE”

## EMPHASIS:

Public Relations Needs to be part of your membership program.

We have a story to tell.

B&B = Branding and Bragging

Show people who we are and what we do.

## GOALS:

90 percent retention.

100,000 new members.

100 percent Consolidated Reporting by all posts.

Move 75 percent of the DMS lists to post homes.

Buddy check twice a year (Memorial Day and Veterans Day).

# National Commander Paul Dillard

2021/2022 – “NO VETERAN LEFT BEHIND”



# 2021/2022 MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

➤ EARLY BIRD KICKOFF	September 9, 2021	50%
➤ FALL MEETINGS	October 14, 2021	55%
➤ VETERAN'S DAY	November 10, 2021	65%
➤ PEARL HARBOR DAY	December 8, 2021	75%
➤ MID-WINTER	January 20, 2022	80%
➤ PRESIDENT'S DAY	February 9, 2022	85%
➤ AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY	March 9, 2022	90%
➤ CHILDREN & YOUTH	April 13, 2022	95%
➤ ARMED FORCES DAY	May 11, 2022	100%



# MEMBERSHIP PLAN

## *Guiding Philosophy*

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*Membership is **LOCAL** and **PERSONAL**.....*

***Recruit, Renew, and Retain.***





# Department Membership Team

Membership Director

Area Commanders (Northern & Southern)

District Commanders (Districts 1 thru 5)

County Commanders (Addison, Chittenden, Franklin,

Caledonia, Essex, Orleans,

Lamoille, Orange, Washington,

Bennington, Rutland

Windham, and Windsor Counties)

Department Service Officer



# Plan Outline

- Start early to identify and incentivize non-renewed members to rejoin.
- Upon receipt of quota from National Headquarters set **SMART** quotas for all posts.  
Specific...**M**easurable...**A**ttainable...**R**eportable...**T**rackable
- Promote the American Legion Education Institute and offerings, particularly as it relates to membership.
- Distribute copies of power point presentation of “**Every Legionnaire is a Recruiter**” to all posts.
- Stress the need for “selling ourselves” through local media...tell our story...**LOCAL & PERSONAL**.
- Provide all members of Membership Team and all posts a listing of all media outlets with contact information.
- Department PIO to disseminate major American Legion stories and to prepare press releases and disseminate the same to media outlets, to include full use of social media at Department level.
- Promote the use of social media at all levels...designation of a PIO at the Post level to “**SELL THE BRAND**”.
- Provide all members of the Membership Team and all posts a copy of the “Membership Public Relations Guide”.



# Plan Outline (continued)

- Provide Membership Director and Area Commanders with the “Public Relations Toolkit”.
- Individually challenge all Legionnaires to obtain one new member by mid-winter conference. Provide each with a membership application. Can be mailed out in post bulletin or newsletter or with membership card...Again **LOCAL & PERSONAL**...Membership team to get forms out to all posts.
- Incentivize membership activities at all levels.
- Department to provide Membership Director and Area Commanders with ZOOM account information to facilitate meetings. The same will be available to District and County Commanders in coordination with their respective Area Commander.
- Promote Legionnaires to establish their own account on MyLegion, explaining the benefits.
- Strongly promote and encourage all posts to utilize MyLegion for membership.
- Remind all posts that they must submit membership by the first Friday of each month to assist and facilitate the Department in meeting target dates for National compilation.
- Membership Director will coordinate with Department Service Officer and provide him with membership application forms and brief him on recruitment and its importance and the vital role he plays.
- Communication and flexibility paramount at all levels.
- Membership Director to provide oversight and guidance of all aspects of this plan. He is “leading the charge” for 100%.



# Plan Outline (continued)

- **MEMBERSHIP DRIVES**: Will be coordinated with National Staff assistance when and where it is identified it is necessary.
- **POST 100 and DMS TRANSFERS**: Actively work with Post Commanders and Adjutants to transfer members from Post 100 and Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) rolls to individual posts.
- Provide posts quarterly membership reports.
- Recognize posts in the Department Bulletin for their efforts in recruiting and retaining membership, as well as for their great work in the community.
- American Legion Thank You Coins to each post that transfers the most members from Post 100 and the DMS List in each District with a Certificate of Appreciation. To be awarded at the annual convention in June 2022.
- **REVITALIZATION**: Will be conducted when and where necessary. One post (Milton Post 57) is currently scheduled and will be initiated shortly.
- **SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION**: Coordinate with, and support, the recruitment and retention efforts of the Detachment and the Squadrons throughout the state, whenever and wherever possible.



# INCENTIVES

*The COUNTY and DISTRICT COMMANDERS are on the front line in the battle for membership and are totally empowered to work in the best interest of the Department of Vermont in this endeavor and their hard work should and will be rewarded. Their diligent work on membership is vital for our success.*

## County Commander...First County to Reach in the Department...

- ....50% by September 3, 2021 - \$10 gas card
- ....75% by December 3, 2021 - \$10 gas card
- ....80% by January 15, 2022 - \$10 gas card
- ....90% by March 4, 2022 - \$10 gas card

*\$50 Gift Card to the first County Commander to reach 100%*

## District Commander...First District to Reach in the Department...

- ....50% by September 3, 2021 - \$25 gas card
- ....75% by December 3, 2021 - \$25 gas card
- ....80% by January 15, 2022 - \$25 gas card
- ....90% by March 4, 2022 - \$25 gas card

*\$100 Gift Card to the first District Commander to reach 100%*

*All notable membership milestones achieved by Posts, Counties, and Districts will be prominently reported in the Department Bulletin as well as prominently displayed at all conferences and conventions....Awards to be presented at Annual Convention in June 2022 to include a "Recruiter of the Year Award"....*

*No great deed will go unnoticed....*

**"A Great Leader is IDEALISTIC but not unrealistic, CONFIDENT but not arrogant, BOLD but not reckless, PERSUASIVE but not manipulative, PASSIONATE but not self-righteous, TENACIOUS but not obstinate....Great Leaders are TEACHERS not tyrants. They help their followers see and understand more. They inspire them to become more and motivate them to do more."** – Michael Josephson, Josephson Institute of Ethics



# WELCOME PACKETS

All posts should have on hand “Welcome Packets” to be given to new members to their post. This is akin to a 1SG or CSM providing the same to a new member of their command. These should include at a minimum:

- The brochure “The Four Pillars of the American Legion”.
- Brochures available on Legion.org detailing the programs of the American Legion.
- Discount benefits card.
- The Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) brochure or flier.
- Blank membership form(s) encouraging them to recruit new members.
- Letter from the post welcoming them.
- Other documents or items that are appropriate for a new member.

New members, particularly younger ones are critical for the growth of our organization. They can and should play an integral role in the post membership recruitment and activities. Nurture them and let them grow in the American Legion. They are the ones that will ‘tweet”, “blog”, etc. and get the message out to young veterans who are out there and waiting to learn about this wonderful organization, and ultimately be asked to join.

*“People don’t always remember what you say or even what you do, but they always remembers how you made them feel.”*  
*Maya Angelou*



# Plan in Motion - Execution

Leadership at all levels within the Department of Vermont play a critical role in making anything happen, to include membership initiatives. This is truly a TEAM EFFORT. However, we did not wait for the plan to be put in place to start. We have already moved forward in identifying those unrenewed members of the Department and have sent them a letter in partnership with our Ways & Means Committee in their fundraising effort. A raffle is being conducted with gas cards totaling \$250 and \$150 as the two prizes. Unrenewed members, if they renew, get \$10 worth of free entries into this fundraising raffle. The tickets were included in the mailing. We are hoping that this is one way to attract former members back.

*The Department of Vermont is and will continue to build...*

A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

*to ensure....*

NO VETERAN LEFT BEHIND





# Questions or Comments

