Department of Virginia

Award Manual

Scott Maddrea, Commander

Kevin Gaddis, Membership Chairman

National Target Dates

Target Date	%	National	Department
Cardinal Award	35%		August 13, 2025
Early Bird Kickoff (Jefferson Award)	50%	September 10, 2025	September 3, 2025
Fall Meetings (Jamestown Award)	55%	October 15, 2025	October 8, 2025
Veteran's Day	65%	November 13, 2025	November 6, 2025
Pearl Harbor Day (Dogwood Award)	75%	December 10, 2025	December 3, 2025
Mid-Winter (Yorktown Award)	80%	January 14, 2o26	January 7, 2026
President's Day (Foxhound Award)	85%	February 11, 2026	February 4, 2026
Legion Birthday	90%	March 11, 2026	March 4, 2026
Children and Youth	95%	April 8, 2026	
Old Dominion Gold	100%		April 15, 2026
Old Dominion Silver	100%		April 22, 2026
Armed Forces Day (Old Dominion Blue)	100%	May 13, 2026	May 6, 2026
Delegate Strength		30 days prior to the Convention	

National Target Dates fall on the second Wednesday of the month unless there is a holiday on that day or at the beginning of the week.

The October Target Date is moved a week to allow departments to participate in Fall Meetings without affecting membership processing for that week.

Since Veterans Day falls on a Monday, the November target date will be on a Thursday.

To maximize the December renewal notice, the January target date will be on the third Wednesday of the month.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

LEGIONNAIRE of the Year — Due: May 22, 2026

POST COMMANDER of the Year — Due: May 22, 2026

DISTRICT COMMANDER of the Year — Due: May 22, 2026

DISTRICT COMMANDER REPORTING AWARD ***(New)***

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

CONTINUOUS YEARS RECOGNITION — Upon Renewal

COMMANDER'S DISTINCTIVE HAT PIN

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN AWARDS
- Race to the Front ***(New)***
- Year-End Post Membership Chairman

NEW MEMBER RECRUITERS (Post/District/Region/Dept) — Due: May 6, 2026

NATIONAL AWARDS
- Gold/Silver/Bronze Brigade Recruiters — Due: May 20, 2026
- National Recruiter of the Year — Due: May 20, 2026
- Pioneer Award
- 100% District Commander Pin
- New Post Development Pin
- District Commander "Race to the Top"
- District Commander Membership Achievement
- District Commander New Post Development Award
- Revitalization Recognition Letter

POST MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

POST MEMBERSHIP TARGETS

100% POSTS

JOHN J. WICKER JR TRAVELING TROPHY

NATIONAL AWARDS

District/Post Honor Ribbon	Due: January 31
Post Membership Retention Award	Due: May 13
Certificate of Meritorious Service	
Five or More Consecutive Years All-Time High Post Award	

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

JOHN J. PERSHING HONOR AWARD

GENERAL HENRI GOURAUD TROPHY AWARD

HENRY D. LINDSLEY TROPHY

NORTH CAROLINA TROPHY

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

DEPARTMENT RETENTION AWARD

DEPARTMENT HONOR RIBBON

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

LEGIONNAIRE of the Year (Post/District/Region/Department)

Awarded to those Legionnaires nominated by their Posts for outstanding service to that Post during the 2025-2026 Legion Year.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Post Commanders are not eligible for this award during their term in office.
2. If the Post wishes their selection for Post Legionnaire of the Year to be considered for awards **above the Post Level, a narrative evaluation, (not to exceed one page), of that Legionnaire's accomplishments must accompany the nominating form.**
3. No Legionnaire shall be eligible for this award more than once in his/her lifetime and a post may make only one submission per year.

AWARD LEVEL	AWARD
Post	Dogwood Cap Pin (awarded during Vice Commander meetings at Department Convention)
District	Special Certificate (awarded during Vice Commander meetings at Department Convention)
Region	Pen Set and $25 (awarded at General Session Department Convention)
Department	Plaque & $100.00 check. Hotel accommodations for two-nights at the Department Convention and two tickets to the Convention Banquet (reimbursed). (Awarded during General Session at Department Convention). Note: Dept does not reserve room or tickets.

CERTIFICATION REQUIRED: Certification form on next page of this manual must be completed, certified by Post Adjutant and arrive at Department Headquarters by **May 22, 2026.**

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR CERTIFICATION FORM

Each Post may submit to the Department the name of the Legionnaire who has performed the most outstanding service to that Post during the 2026 membership year. This form must be completed, certified by the Post Adjutant, and mailed to arrive at Department Headquarters **NO LATER THAN MAY 22, 2026.**

In Post _____, the following named Legionnaire has been chosen as Legionnaire of the Year for the Legion Year 2025-2026.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

_____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

If this nominee is to be considered for award above Post Level, a narrative evaluation(not to exceed one page) of his/her accomplishments during this year must accompany this form.

Certified by: _____
Post Adjutant

Post #:_____ Location: _____

Date Signed: _____

MAIL THIS FORM TO: The American Legion
Department of Virginia
PO Box 11025
Richmond, VA 23230

FORM MUST ARRIVE NO LATER THAN MAY 22, 2026

POST COMMANDER of the Year (District/Region/Department)

Post Commanders can accumulate points during the year based on membership performance, attendance at Department and National meetings, submitting reports and Post Activities (awards will be presented at Department Convention). Awards will be based on the highest number of points accumulated for the competition at each level.

AWARD LEVEL	**AWARD**
District	Special Certificate
Region	Pen Set and $25
Department	Plaque. Hotel accommodations for two nights at Department Convention and two tickets to the Convention Banquet (reimbursed). Note: Dept. does not reserve room or purchase the tickets.

CERTIFICATION REQUIRED: Certification form on next page of this manual must be completed, certified by the Post Adjutant and arrive at Department Headquarters by **May 22, 2026.**

POST COMMANDER OF THE YEAR
CERTIFICATION FORM

(Enter points where applicable and total at end of form.)

CATEGORY I – AWARDS EARNED BY POST:

Cardinal Award (5 pts) _____
Jefferson Award (5 pts) _____
Jamestown Award (5 pts) _____
Veterans Day Award (10 pts) _____
Dogwood Award (10 pts) _____
100% by Dec.31 (40 pts) _____
Yorktown Award (15 pts) _____
Foxhound Award (15 pts) _____
Legion Birthday (15 pts) _____
Old Dominion Award
Gold (25 pts) _____
or Silver (20 pts) _____
or Blue (15 pts) _____
Dan Daniel Award (30 pts) _____ (Department will add)
John J. Wicker, Jr. Award (35 pts) _____ (Department will add)

CATEGORY II - POST COMMANDER ATTENDANCE:

2025 Department Convention (20 pts) _____
2025 Department Training (25 pts) _____
2025 National Convention (35 pts) _____
2025 Dept. Fall Conference (25 pts) _____
2026 Washington Conference (10 pts) _____
2026 Dept. Spring Conference (25 pts) _____

CATEGORY III – POST PROGRAMS (10 POINTS FOR EACH PROGRAM):

Oratorical _____
American Legion Baseball _____
Scouting _____
Boys State _____
American Legion College (Staff or Student) _____
Blood Program _____
Sons of the American Legion _____
Regularly Initiates New Members _____
Special Olympics (participation/contribution)_____
Drug Abuse Prevention _____
Teenage Suicide Prevention _____
Halloween Safety _____
Contributes to VA Hospital _____

POST COMMANDER OF THE YEAR
CERTIFICATION FORM (CON'T.)

Post Has Active Service Officer	_____
Post Has Color Guard/Burial Detail	_____
Youth Cadet Law Enforcement	_____
Junior Shooting Sports	_____
Get Out The Vote	_____
Flag Education	_____
Other (Specify)	_____

CATEGORY IV – POST OBSERVANCES (10 PTS FOR EACH OBSERVANCE):

July Fourth	_____
Veteran's Day	_____
Pearl Harbor Day	_____
Four Chaplain's Sunday	_____
American Legion Birthday	_____
Memorial Day	_____
Flag Day	_____

CATEGORY V – POST COMMUNICATIONS:

Mail Newsletter or Bulletin to Members (20 pts)	_____
Send News Releases to Media – minimum of five (10 pts)	_____
Send Cards or Visit Sick Members (10 pts)	_____
Submitted Consolidated Post Report (25 pts)	_____
Post Consolidated Report submitted on time (20pts)	_____
TOTAL FROM FRONT	_____
TOTAL FROM BACK	_____
GRAND TOTAL	_____

Certified by:

Post Adjutant (Signature)_____

Post # _____ Location: _____Post Commander: _____
Date Signed: _____
MAIL TO: The American Legion,
Department of Virginia; PO Box 11025, Richmond, VA 23230

FORM MUST ARRIVE BY MAY 22, 2026

DISTRICT COMMANDER of the Year (Region/Department)

District Commanders can accumulate points during the year based on attendance, membership performance, submitting reports and Post activities (award will be presented at Department Convention). Awards will be based on the highest number of points accumulated.

AWARD LEVEL	**AWARD**
Region	Pen Set
Department	Plaque. Hotel accommodations for three nights at the Department Convention and two tickets to the Convention Banquet (must be registered prior to the event) (reimbursed)

CERTIFICATION REQUIRED: Certification form on the next page of this manual must be completed, certified by District Adjutant and arrive at Department Headquarters by **May 22, 2026.**

DISTRICT COMMANDER OF THE YEAR
CERTIFICATION FORM
(Enter Points where applicable. Department will total.)

CATEGORY I – (40% OF TOTAL) AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENT EARNED BY DISTRICT / Multiply number of posts achieving award and points for totals.
(contact Dept for spreadsheet on Post Target Date Goal Awards, if needed)

Post Target Date Goal	Total	
No "Goose Egg" Posts by 9/29/2022 (20 pts each)	_____	
Cardinal Award (5 pts ea)	_____	
Jefferson Award (5 pts ea)	_____	
Jamestown Award (5 pts ea)	_____	
Veteran's Day Award (10 pts ea)	_____	
Dogwood Award (10 pts ea)	_____	
100% by Dec. 31, (40 pts ea)	_____	
Yorktown Award (15 pts ea)	_____	
Foxhound Award (20 pts ea)	_____	
Legion Birthday (20 pts ea)	_____	
Old Dominion Gold Award (25 pts ea)	_____	
Old Dominion Silver Award(15 pts ea)	_____	
Old Dominion Blue Award(10 pts ea)	_____	
Posts earning Dan Daniel Award (30 pts ea)	_____	(Department will add)
Posts earning John J. Wicker, Jr., Award (35 pts ea)	_____	(Department will add)
New Post with Temporary Charter (25 pts each)	_____	
New SAL Squadron Organized (10 pts each)	_____	

CATEGORY II – (20% OF TOTAL) DISTRICT COMMANDER ATTENDANCE:

2025 Department Convention & DEC (20 pts)	_____
2025 New Officer Training (20 pts)	_____
2025 Department Training (25 pts)	_____
2025 National Convention (35 pts)	_____
2025 Veterans Day Service (20 pts)	_____
2025 Department Fall Conf. & DEC (25 pts)	_____
2026 Washington Conference (10 pts)	_____
2026 Dept. Spring Conference & DEC (25 pts)	_____
2026 Memorial Day Service (20 pts)	_____

(Continued next page)

DISTRICT COMMANDER OF THE YEAR
CERTIFICATION FORM (CON'T)

CATEGORY III – (20% OF TOTAL) POST PROGRAMS (ENTER NUMBER OF POSTS PARTICIPATING, DEPARTMENT WILL COMPUTE PERCENTAGE): DISTRICT COMMANDERS: YOU MUST CONTACT EACH POST FOR YOUR NUMBERS.

Oratorical	_____
American Legion Baseball	_____
Scouting	_____
Boy's State	_____
American Legion College (Staff or Students)	_____
Blood Program	_____
Sons of the American Legion	_____
Youth Cadet Law Enforcement	_____
Junior Shooting Sports	_____
Get Out The Vote	_____
Flag Education	_____

CATEGORY IV – (20%OF TOTAL) REPORTS (ENTER NUMBER OF POSTS PARTICIPATING – DEPARTMENT WILL COMPUTE PERCENTAGE):

Post Visitation Quarterly Report (turned in all 4)	_____
Consolidated Post Report Form	_____
Children & Youth Report	_____
Americanism Report	_____

TOTAL _____ **(Department will total)**

CERTIFIED BY: _____
DISTRICT ADJUTANT

DISTRICT #: _____ **DATE SIGNED:** _____

District Commander: _____ **(please print)**

MAIL TO: The American Legion
Department of Virginia
PO Box 11025
Richmond, VA 23230

FORM MUST ARRIVE BY MAY 22, 2026

DISTRICT COMMANDER REPORTING AWARD (Region/Department)

Awarded to the District Commander in each region with the highest percentage of completed annual reports (Post Data Form; Consolidated Post Reports (CPR); Americanism Report; Children & Youth Report: Service Trophy; and Four Chaplains) For purposes of this award, submission of the Certification of Officer form and Post History submissions will not be considered due to the late submission deadlines for those reports. These awards will be presented at Department Convention.

The three regional recipients will be considered for the Department-level award.

No certification required.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

CONTINUOUS YEAR RECOGNITION

Members take a great deal of pride in the number of continuous years they have been a member of the American Legion, and due recognition at appropriate Post activities should be given by the Post for this dedicated support.

Continuous Membership Embroidered Stars and Lapel Pins are available in five-year increments for recognizing Continuous Years Membership. The stars and pins are available for purchase through National Emblem Sales at emblem.legion.org or 1-888-453-4466.

COMMANDER'S DISTINCTIVE HAT PIN

The Commander's Distinctive Hat Pin may be awarded at the discretion of the Department Commander or Department Membership Chairman to recognize any Legionnaire for exceptional service in the areas of recruitment or retention.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN AWARDS

Awarded to Post and District Membership Chairmen for setting the pace in reaching their 100% membership goals.

Race to the Front Awards (District/Tier)

Awarded to the Membership Chairman of the first Post in each District and the first three Posts in each of the six tiers (size categories) to reach 100% of their membership goal.

Category I	(15-35 member goal)
Category II	(36-75 member goal)
Category III	(76-175 member goal)
Category IV	(176-375 member goal)
Category V	(376-600 member goal)
Category VI	(601 or higher members)

POSITION	AWARD
First Place (6)	Gold Membership Achievement Medal
Second Place (6)	Silver Membership Achievement Medal
Third Place (6)	Bronze Membership Achievement Medal

Year-End Membership Chairman Awards (District/Tier)

Awards a special certificate to the Membership Chairman of the Post in each District and the three Posts in each of the six tiers (size categories) with the **highest percentage of their 2026 goal** (must be at least 100% to qualify), as of June 1st.

NEW MEMBER RECRUITERS

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 (May 6). 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.

Award Level	**AWARD**
Post	Special Certificate and a Top Recruiter Cap Pin (Gold with year engraved)
District	Pen Set
Geographic Region	Plaque and $50
Department	Plaque. Hotel accommodations for two nights at the Department Convention and two tickets to the Convention Banquet, (reimbursed). Note: Dept. does not reserve room or tickets.
National	Framed certificate

CERTIFICATION REQUIRED: Certification form must be completed, certified by Post Adjutant and arrive at Department Headquarters by May 13 2026.

POST TOP NEW MEMBER RECRUITER CERTIFICATION FORM

Each Post may submit to the Department the name of the recruiter who has signed up the greatest number of New Members for the American Legion for the 2026 Membership Year by **May 6, 2026**. This form must be completed, certified by the Post Adjutant and arrive at Department Headquarters by **May 13, 2026**. Please copy form as needed.

In Post _____ the **Top New Member Recruiter** for the 2026 membership year is:
Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____

Number of New Members Recruited: _____
Attach TYPED sheet of new member names and ID#'s/ (15 & over see Bronze/Silver/Gold Brigade also)

Certified by: _____ **(Post Adjutant)**
Post # / Location: _____
Date Signed: _____
MAIL TO: The American Legion
Department of Virginia
PO Box 11025
Richmond, VA 23230

NATIONAL AWARDS

Gold Brigade

A Legionnaire who recruits 50 or more **NEW MEMBERS** (excluding any transfers) into The American Legion by the May target date (May 13, 2026) 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.

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

NOTE: Fifth, Sixth and Tenth consecutive years qualify only for their separate respective awards.

CERTIFICATION REQUIRED: Certification form on the next page of this manual must be completed, certified by Post Adjutant along with a TYPED and numbered list attached of the new members' names and ID#'s to arrive at Department Headquarters by May 20, 2026.

GOLD BRIGADE
NEW MEMBER RECRUITER AWARD
CERTIFICATION FORM

The following member in the Department of Virginia qualifies for the Gold Brigade Award for enrolling **50** or more new members into the American Legion by **May 13, 2026.**

First-time qualifiers will receive a Gold Brigade Jacket, Cap Pin, Certificate and Patch

Second or third-time qualifiers receive a Gold Brigade Certificate, Hash Mark for their jacket sleeve and choice of Gold Brigade Jacket, Polo Shirt or Sweater with the Gold Brigade logo.

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES:

This Gold Brigade Award will be my:

___First Gold Brigade Award _____ Other (Specify 2nd, 3rd, etc.) Time qualified

If you checked "Other", choose from the following:

Gold Brigade Jacket _____ Sweater _____ Polo Shirt _____
Circle size: S, M, L, XL, XXL, and XXXL.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NAME OF RECRUITER:

Name: _____ Post: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Number of new members enrolled (must be at least 50): _____

TYPED and numbered list attached of names and ID#'s to arrive at Department Headquarters by May 20, 2026.

Post Adjutant (Signature) _____
Date: _____

Department Adjutant (Signature) _____
Date: _____

SEND TO: Department Headquarters by May 20, 2026

Silver Brigade

A Legionnaire who recruits 25 to 49 new members (excluding any transfers) into The American Legion by the May target date (May 13, 2026) 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

CERTIFICATION REQUIRED: Certification form on next page of this manual must be completed, certified by Post Adjutant along with a **TYPED and numbered list attached of names and ID#'s** to **arrive at Department Headquarters by May 20, 2026.**

SILVER BRIGADE NEW MEMBER RECRUITER
AWARD CERTIFICATION FORM

The following member in the Department of Virginia qualifies for the "Silver Brigade" Award for enrolling 25-49 **NEW MEMBERS** into The American Legion by May target date.

Silver Brigadiers receive a Silver Cap Pin and a Silver Certificate.

Name: _____ ID# _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Number of **NEW MEMBERS** enrolled (25 to 49): _____
TYPED and numbered list attached of names and ID#'s to arrive at Department Headquarters by May 20, 2026.

_____ **Department Adjutant (Signature)**

Date_____

_____ **Post Adjutant (Signature)**

Post_____
Address _____
Date_____

MUST ARRIVE AT DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS BY MAY 20, 2026.

Bronze Brigade

A Legionnaire who recruits 15 to 24 new members (excluding any transfers) into The American Legion by the May target date (May 13, 2026) will qualify for this award. A bronze brigade patch and certificate will be awarded NOTE: Bronze, Silver, and Gold Brigade awards cannot both be awarded to a recruiter during the same membership year

BRONZE BRIGADE NEW MEMBER RECRUITER AWARD CERTIFICATION FORM

The following member in the Department of Virginia qualifies for the "Silver Brigade" Award for enrolling 15-24 **NEW MEMBERS** into The American Legion by May target date.

Silver Brigadiers receive a Bronze Brigade patch and a Bronze Certificate.

Name: _____ ID#_____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Number of **NEW MEMBERS** enrolled (15 to 24): _____

TYPED and numbered list attached of names and ID#'s to arrive at Department Headquarters by May 20, 2026.

_____ _____

Department Adjutant (Signature) **Post Adjutant (Signature)**

Date_____ Post_____

Address _____

Date_____

MUST ARRIVE AT DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS BY MAY 20, 2026.

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 (second place)
- 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.

PIONEER AWARD – The National Membership and Post Activities Committee created this award on May 5, 1965 to recognize Legionnaires involved directly with new Post formation could be recognized. **However, the recognition and the awarding of the citation are the responsibility of the new Post (**Legionnaires involved in the chartering of a new Post should make members of the new Post aware of the availability of this award).

The certification form for the Pioneer Award can be found on the next page of this manual. 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 at the next Department Conference or Convention unless you specifically request that other arrangements be made for its presentation.

After a new Post has received its temporary charter, the Post officers and members can designate the one person they feel was most instrumental in starting their Post.

Instructions for preparing the certification form are on the form and are self-explanatory. There is no deadline for submission of the form, however, you should be aware that it will probably take at least one month to receive the award after applying to Department Headquarters.

AMERICAN LEGION PIONEER DEPT. AWARD
CERTIFICATION FORM

The American Legion has authorized the issuance of a citation titled the American Legion Pioneer Award. A new Post may make a nomination for this award immediately after securing a temporary charter.

The award is a means of recognition for an individual who had made the greatest contribution to get the new Post chartered and insuring a successful operation. **No member of the new Post is eligible to receive the award, but it may be given to a District or Department Officer or other individual Legionnaire.**

This award can play an important role in giving proper recognition to both the nominee and to the new Post. If a new Post has someone to nominate, please complete the information requested below and return it to Department Headquarters for certification and forwarding to National Headquarters.

Post #_____, Department of Virginia, was chartered on _____, 20____.
Nomination for the American Legion Pioneer Award is hereby made for:
_____ _____(Name of Legionnaire).

Post #_____ feels that the above nominee is eligible for the Pioneer Award because:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Certified by: _____ _____
Post Commander **Post Adjutant**

Post #_____ Location _____
Address: _____

Date Signed: _____

MAIL TO: The American Legion
Department of Virginia
PO Box 11025
Richmond, VA 23230

100% District Commander Pin

This special pin may be awarded to district commanders who accomplished at least 100% of their assigned district membership goal. These commanders may be nominated by their departments at any time during the membership year.

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.

District Commander "Race to the Top"

This National Award competition is conducted at five levels based on categories of membership of the District without regard to geographic location. District Commanders will compete in each of the following categories based on final 2022 District totals. Winners will be those District Commanders whose membership **at National Headquarters on March 31** represents the greatest percentage over the final previous years membership of that District (must be at least 100% to qualify).

Competition is divided into five categories based on the membership of the district without regard to geographic locations. District commanders will compete in each of the following categories based on final membership year totals, and a top district commander for the national award will be selected from each of the five categories. Post ribbons will also be awarded to each top district commander for all posts in those districts. Second and third place awards will also be presented in each category. The district commanders will be awarded checks in the amount of $500 for second place or $375 for third place, but no additional ribbons will be awarded for the posts in these districts. The Race to the Top certification form must be submitted by the April target date

Category I	(15-1,499 members)
Category II	(1,500-2,999 members)
Category III	(3,000-4,999 members)
Category IV	(5,000-7,499 members)
Category V	(7,500 or more members)

First place award – The top district commander and guest in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the greatest percentage over the final previous year's membership will receive a trip to the 106th National Convention in Louisville, KY in 2026. This cannot be less than 100% to qualify. Each winner and guest are entitled to a trip to the national convention as a distinguished guest of the national commander, including round-trip airfare, tickets to the National Commander's Banquet, and hotel accommodations for six days and five nights. These district commanders will also receive American Legion caps signifying they are Race to the Top winners, awarded on stage at the national convention with ribbons for each of the district's posts.

Second place – The district commander in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the second highest percentage over the final previous year's membership will receive a $500 check. This cannot be less than 100% to qualify.

Third place – The district commander in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the third highest percentage over the final previous year's membership will receive a $375 check. This cannot be less than 100% to qualify.

District Commander Membership Achievement

All district commanders whose May target date membership exceeds 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.

District Commander New Post Development 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 (May 13) will receive a framed certificate.

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 AWARDS

POST MEMBERSHIP TARGETS

At the Department Convention, Posts earning the Old Dominion Award (100%) will receive a certificate. ALL other target dates - one certificate listing all goal awards received for the year will be presented to each Post earning these awards; individual certificates for these goal awards will **NOT** be issued.

Cardinal Award
August 13, 2025-35% of 2026 Post Goal

Jefferson Award
September 3, 2025-50% of 2026 Post Goal

Jamestown Award
October 8, 2025-55% of 2026 Post Goal

Veteran's Day Award
November 6, 2025-65% of 2026 Post Goal

Dogwood Award
December 3, 2025-75% of 2026 Post Goal

Yorktown Award
January 7, 2026-80% of 2026 Post Goal

Foxhound Award
February 4, 2026-85% of 2026 Post Goal

Legion Birthday Award
March 4, 2026-90% of 2026 Post Goal

Old Dominion Award
April 15, 2026-Gold Certificate-100% of 2026 Post Goal
April 22, 2026-Silver Certificate-100% of 2026 Post Goal
May 6, 2026-Blue Certificate-100% of 2026 Post Goal

Dan Daniel Plaque
May 31, 2026-110% of 2026 Post Goal

At the Department Convention, Posts earning the Old Dominion Award (100%) will receive a certificate. ALL other target dates - one certificate listing all goal awards received for the year will be presented to each Post earning these awards; individual certificates for these goal awards will **NOT** be issued.

100% POSTS

Whenever a Posts hits 100% of their membership goal, the Post Commander, Adjutant and Membership Chairman will receive a 100% hatpin. These pins are made available as immediately as possible after the 100% is hit and confirmed no duplication or at the next conference or convention for distribution to a Post or District Officer for presentation. No Certification form required.

JOHN J. WICKER, JR. TRAVELING TROPHY

One Post from each size category will be awarded the John J. Wicker, Jr. Traveling Trophy & Cert. in recognition of having achieved the highest membership percentage above its 110% goal (award will be based on paid memberships on hand at Department Headquarters on **June 1, 2026.**

DISTRICT/POST HONOR RIBBON

Honor ribbons are awarded to posts and districts 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 National Headquarters Membership Division by January 31.

POST MEMBERSHIP RETENTION AWARD

The Post Membership Retention Award recognizes posts that achieve at least a 95% renewal rate by the May target date (May 13). To qualify, posts must meet the minimum membership required to maintain their charter. Awards are sent to the department for presentation.

CERTIFICATE OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE

This certificate is awarded to those Posts which by **December 31** have enrolled an advance membership for the year about to start equaling or surpassing the Post's previous all-time high membership (since Post Charter) will receive the National Certificate of Meritorious Service.

CERTIFICATE OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE
POST ALL-TIME HIGH MEMBERSHIP
CERTIFICATION FORM

I certify that Post# _____transmitted _____ 2024 memberships to Department Headquarters by **December 31** and that the total membership as of that date was the All-Time High membership for the Post.

This form must be completed, certified by the Post Adjutant and arrive at Department Headquarters by **January 10, 2026.**

Certified by: _____
Post Adjutant

Post #_____ Location: _____

Date Signed: _____

MAIL TO: The American Legion
Department of Virginia
PO Box 11025
Richmond, VA 23230

FORM MUST ARRIVE BY JANUARY 10, 2026

FIVE OR MORE CONSECUTIVE YEARS ALL-TIME HIGH – Each

Posts whose membership as of **May 13** reaches an All-Time-High for the fifth consecutive year is eligible to receive the National Certificate. Posts can also earn a certificate for each year the Post continues its all-time high performance after the fifth year.

FIVE CONSECUTIVE YEARS ALL-TIME HIGH
MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATION FORM

I certify that Post _____Post # _____ transmitted _____ 2026 memberships to Department Headquarters and the total membership was the fifth or more consecutive year that the Post had established an All-Time High membership. **This is based on membership as of May 13, 2026.**

NUMBER OF CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF ALL TIME-HIGH MEMBERSHIP

No. of Years	From	To

This form must be completed, certified by the Post Adjutant and final date to arrive at Department Headquarters by **June 1, 2026.**

Certified by: _____
Post Adjutant
Date Signed _____

Citation will be presented at Department Convention

MAIL TO: The American Legion
Department of Virginia
PO Box 11025
Richmond, VA 23230

FORM MUST ARRIVE BY JUNE 1, 2026

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

GENERAL JOHN J. PERSHING HONOR AWARD

This plaque is awarded annually to the department with the greatest percentage of posts receiving the Post Honor Ribbon for achieving 100 percent or more of their previous year's membership enrolled for the coming year by December 31, and having reported the achievement to National Headquarters no later than January 31

HENRY D. LINDSLEY TROPHY – Awarded to the Department who on March 31 has attained the highest percentage of membership over its previous year's final membership, without counting DMS in either year (based on membership transmittals received at National Headquarters before March 31).

GENERAL HENRI GOURAUD TROPHY AWARD – A plaque awarded annually to that first Department in each of the six categories who exceeds its National membership goal. Department categories will be according to the categories used for determining Big Twelve winners, with one winner to be determined in each category.

NORTH CAROLINA MEMBERSHIP AWARD This is a membership plaque for departments other than the 50 state departments and the District of Columbia. The North Carolina Trophy is to be awarded to the department that on March 31 has attained the highest percentage of membership over its previous year's final membership, without counting DMS in either year.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER OF THE YEAR - Any department commander who meets or exceeds the 100% goal by the May target date will receive a framed certificate, presented by the national commander at the national convention. This award does not include a trip to the national convention.

DEPARTMENT RETENTION AWARD - This award is presented to the department with the highest percentage retention rate (as of June 30) within each of the six Big Twelve categories. Qualifying departments must achieve 90% retention to compete for this award and have the highest retention rate in their category. Each of these six winners will receive a $2,000 check. A form is not required by the department for this award.

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.