

Membership Team

Training Guide

THE AMERICAN LEGION



Membership Eligibility Dates



Gulf War/War on Terrorism

August 2, 1990, to cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S.
Government

Panama

December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990

Lebanon and Grenada

August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984

Vietnam War

February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975

Korean War

June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955

World War II

December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946 *

* Merchant Marine – During this War Era only

World War I

April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918

POST MEMBERSHIP TRAINING GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

POST MEMBERSHIP TRAINING GUIDE

In the past, the National Headquarters of The American Legion has conducted Membership Workshops, Conferences, Seminars and the like at National, Regional, Department and local levels. We constantly strive to keep the Membership Team of The American Legion up-to-date with the many recruiting and retention tools and methods that are available, such as the materials contained in this guide. Legionnaires tell us one of the main problems is getting the word out to the membership workers in a timely, motivated, informational and workable manner. It is with this in mind we have developed the Post Membership Training Guide consisting of a four part-training manual:

- Part I - Membership -- Self-Evaluation & Equating a Post's Performance
- Part II - Membership Retention & Renewals
- Part III - Special Programs & Recommendations
- Part IV - Successful Membership
(Sample letters, programs, diagrams, and techniques now used by other Departments, Posts and Districts)

As programs change, the guide will be revised. New guides will be distributed at the annual National Membership Workshop. *(This Guide can also be downloaded from the Legion web site at www.legion.org).* Information contained in this guide could be used as training tools for Department, District and Post membership workshops and conferences. The Post Membership Training Guide is suitable for all levels of Membership Teams.

Recruit – Retain – Reinstate

“The difference between the professional membership worker and the membership worker is commitment and dedication. Commitment to a goal and the dedication to reach or even exceed that goal.”

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PART I
MEMBERSHIP
ORGANIZATIONAL
PLANNING

EXAMINATION

Every individual holding an office or committee chairmanship in the Post, County, District or Department should be able to answer all or some of the following questions. These are but a small sample of the questions one may expect from Legionnaires this coming year.

1. If an individual wishes to have a resolution brought before a National Convention, he should first get his Post to act upon it.

T or F
2. What is project "Stay Active"?
 - a. A project to revitalize our programs.
 - b. A project to keep in touch with Legionnaires that move.
 - c. A project to keep outgoing officers busy in Legion work.
 - d. A National Defense project in support of the B-1 Bomber.
 - e. None of the above.
3. A veteran of the Vietnam-era had a general discharge, but his discharge was upgraded to honorable under President Carter's "Special Discharge" Review Program. This veteran is:
 - a. Eligible for membership in The American Legion
 - b. Eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary.
 - c. Not eligible for membership in The American Legion.
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. None of the above.
4. A member may be suspended or expelled from The American Legion only upon a proper showing of cause. The first process in all actions of expulsion or suspension is:
 - a. Kick a member out of the Post.
 - b. Bar the member from the Post
 - c. File with the Adjutant of the Post written causes in triplicate, properly verified by affidavit of the accuser or accusers.
5. Each year, following adjournment of Congress, the staff revises The American Legion Post Service Officer's Manual. This revised manual is mailed to all Department Headquarters in sufficient quantities to provide one copy for each Post within each Department.

T or F
6. If dues are not paid by January 1 of each calendar year, the member becomes delinquent. February 1, the member is suspended, June 30, the member is dropped from the membership rolls.

T or F
7. A member of a Post who transfers to another Post without a formal transfer form could lose his continuous membership years in the process.

T or F
8. The \$13.50 National Per Capita is broken down as follows:
 - a. \$2.50 Legion Magazine, \$4.25 Rehabilitation, \$6.75 General Fund.
 - b. \$6.00 Rehabilitation, \$6.75 Legion Magazine, \$.75 General Fund.
 - c. \$6.50 General Fund, \$5.50 Legion Magazine, \$1.50 Rehabilitation.
 - d. \$10.50 General Fund, \$3.00 Legion Magazine.

9. What is the proper procedure to be followed by a Post Service Officer in helping a veteran to file and litigate a claim for benefits?
- The Post Service Officer should advise the veteran of the address and of the nearest Veterans Administration Regional Office and suggest that he write a letter to that office explaining his problem and asking for the appropriate forms to be filed.
 - The Post Service Officer should supply the veteran with the appropriate forms and tell him to complete them and forward them to the nearest Veterans Administration Regional Office for attention.
 - The main function of the Post Service Officer is to advise and counsel the claimant and assist in the preparation of forms and in securing the necessary supporting evidence. When the forms are properly completed, they are forwarded to the Department Service Officer, who is recognized as an accredited representative of The American Legion for presentation of the claim to the appropriate division or official of the Veterans Administration.
10. Membership is the primary duty for the Post First Vice Commander.
- T or F
11. How may a Post of The American Legion be organized and chartered?
- Those persons desiring to form a Post must make application to the National Commander. The National Commander and National Adjutant issue all charters. Copies of the approved charter are sent to the Department Commander and the Department Executive Committee of the Department concerned.
 - Those persons desiring to form a Post must make application to the Department Commander, and the Department Adjutant issues the Post charter upon receipt of a properly executed application.
 - Those persons desiring to form a Post must make application to the Department Commander. (Department determines the number of applicants necessary to form a Post). Post charters are issued by National Headquarters on approval of the National Commander and the National Adjutant. New Posts are issued temporary charters for a period of not less than 90 days.
12. A member in good standing of a participating Department may purchase a National Paid-Up-For-Life membership through his/her Post.
- T or F
13. As a general rule, a Post is unable to remain solvent if its only source of income is derived from:
- Contributions.
 - Membership dues.
 - Taxes.
14. How do we make a new member an active Legionnaire?
- Concentrate on social and recreational activities.
 - Appoint the new member to a committee
 - Meet the new member – greet the new member and involve the new member in those functions in which interest is shown.
15. How do you get new members?
- Ask them.
 - Ask them.
 - Ask them.
 - All of the above.

ANSWERS TO EXAMINATION

- | | | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. T | 2. b | 3. a | 4. c | 5. T | 6. T | 7. T |
| 8. d | 9. c | 10. T | 11. c | 12. T | 13. b | 14. c |
| 15. d | | | | | | |

EQUATING A POST'S PERFORMANCE

Take a few minutes and give some serious thought as to an evaluation of your own American Legion Post. The evaluation on the next page will lead you into the "Post Responsibility Audit." It's nothing more than a rating of your Post to see how well it fills a legitimate need in the community.

The "Post Responsibility Audit" anticipates that an organization will participate, through its members, in meaningful activities within the community where its members reside. But it does mean one thing more – and this is important – it means that we should also be able to measure the results of our activities.

Of course, one measure is found in the Post's membership record. But the type of exercise we have developed to help answer the question of "why" of the membership situation and perhaps point out the "how" of correcting deficiencies which might be drawing the membership figure into decline.

There is no precise standard to determine the quality of a Post, but we do have a starting point. Use the "Post Responsibility Audit" on the next page as a guide for your Post, and if you are in a leadership position with the Posts that you visit. Provide a copy to the Post Commander and Post Adjutant.



POST RESPONSIBILITY AUDIT

1. Post has good youth programs.

When scoring this one, look not only at the variety of the programs and the number of youth served, but also at the post's management of the programs.

Score _____

2. Post members are interested and active.

Does the post offer a variety of activities to appeal to the interests of a broad spectrum of the membership or are all the "eggs in one basket?"

Score _____

3. Post is a real asset to the community.

Does an identifiable segment of the post's financial support and volunteer manpower go to assist community programs and facilities – hospital, charity fund drives, recreation programs, etc.?

Score _____

4. Post is a community center.

A dozen card players and/or a few daytime bar patrons won't identify your post as a community center.

Score _____

5. Post aids veterans in need of help.

This element begins with an active post service officer and goes on from there – counseling, medical care of hospitalization assistance, claims, jobs, education and training, etc.

Score _____

6. Post has a businesslike operation.

Don't be decoyed on this one by an adjutant who substitutes activity for progress. Look at the condition of post records, files, clubroom operation, etc.

Score _____

7. Post is a friendly place to be.

Does post make a sincere effort to make new members feel at home? Or does it cater to the few "regulars" who drop in every day?

Score _____

8. Post is well thought of in the community.

Does the post have an effective public relations program to display its achievements and its participation in civic programs?

Score _____

9. Post offers activities and functions for Legion families.

Are such activities well planned and well attended?

Score _____

10. Post conducts regular, interesting meetings.

Are meetings conducted according to ritual? Does the Commander have a prepared agenda? Are programs planned in conjunction with the meetings?

Score _____

Now, transfer your scores for each of the ten items to the chart on the next page by placing a check mark in the appropriate scoring column for each item.

Post Responsibility Audit

Rating numbers:

- 0 - No Participation
- 1 - Poor
- 2 - Below Average
- 3 - Average
- 4 - Above Average
- 5 - Excellent

Rate 0 to 5

	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Youth Programs						
2. Interested and active members						
3. Community asset						
4. Community center						
5. Aid to veterans						
6. Businesslike operation						
7. Friendly atmosphere						
8. Attitude of community						
9. Functions for families						
10. Post meetings						

TOTAL POST SCORE _____

Rating Schedule from Total Score:

- 0 – 4 Dead
- 5 – 14 Poor (“Barely Breathing”)
- 15 – 24 Below Average (“Early Stages of Malignancy”)
- 25 – 35 Average (“Can be Sold Enthusiastically”)
- 36 – 50 Excellent (“Sells Itself”)

This entire exercise has been put together not necessarily to indicate a quick method for rating posts, although it can be used in this manner. The primary purpose is to indicate, by evaluating what a post is doing (or not doing), whether the post is fulfilling a useful function, whether it is an organization that has the potential for attracting a larger membership, and whether it is truly a community asset.

It is also a method of pinpointing a post’s weaknesses that should be valuable to its leadership in bringing about needed improvements.

Membership Program – Check List

Post # _____

Page 1

YES NO

<p>Does membership show growth potential of an active American Legion Post? When reviewing membership records, there are two indicators of “trouble”. One is a sharp and drastic drop of membership – reflecting post policies, which are driving members away. The other is a slow decrease in membership, which indicates a post not meeting the expectations of its membership. Other reasons may exist such as changes in geographic, demographics or other organizations offering better facilities, etc.</p>		
<p>Are renewals matching the number of attrition losses? The average age of a Legionnaire is about 64 years of age. We can expect normal attrition of our membership rolls due to deaths. However, if your post is to remain healthy, those members must be replaced through an effective membership recruiting program</p>		
<p>Is the post attracting veterans from all war periods? Nationwide, a breakdown of Legionnaires by war time period, shows about 25% being from World War 2, and 20% from the Korean War period and 50% from the Vietnam War, Lebanon/Grenada, Panama, and Gulf War/War on Terrorism eras.</p>		
<p>Does the history of the post reflect a variety of people in its elective and appointive offices? Is opportunity allowed for newer members to participate in leadership roles of the post? The traditional American Legion post/district and department structure allows for progression through varying degrees of leadership positions. A post should offer opportunity to its membership to progress upward “through the chairs” of the various positions.</p>		
<p>Does the post participate in the Direct Renewal Notice program offered by National Headquarters? The Direct Renewal Notice program is a proven winner. There is no cost to the post to have their membership renewals mailed automatically by the National Headquarters. Your Department Headquarters strongly encourages all posts to use this important membership tool.</p>		
<p>Are dues paid being monitored, and by whom? The Post Adjutant, with the assistance of the Post Membership Chairman, should share the responsibility of monitoring who has paid their dues. The Adjutant should be involved due to the fiscal responsibilities involved, and the Membership Chairman must be involved to properly know how his/her ongoing retention program is going.</p>		
<p>Does the post maintain and use a delinquent list? To track renewals, a listing of prospects should be maintained for each delinquent member. There MUST be some way to monitor who has, and who has not, been contacted regarding their membership renewal.</p>		
<p>Does the post currently make personal visits or telephone delinquent members? We all receive too much “junk mail”. A personal touch is often needed to motivate our membership to renew. Without a telephone call or a personal visit, the renewal may never be made!</p>		
<p>Does the post receive “Project Stay Alive” cards from their district and use them to bring new members into the post? Tens of thousands of Legionnaires are moving across the United States every month! When a Legionnaire moves into your post area, you should receive a “stay active” card from your district. These are paid up members who are eligible for immediate transfer to your post and members who may have been very active in their previous Legion post.</p>		

Membership Program – Check List

Post # _____

Page 2

YES NO

<p>Does the post receive Headquarters Post cards? Are these new Legion members contacted? Who monitors the Headquarters Post transfer referrals?</p> <p>When you receive Headquarters Post referrals, treat them as HOT PROSPECTS. The card signals that someone has just joined The American Legion. If they were motivated to join, they are probably motivated to get involved. Contact them. Invite them to a post function ... and ask them to refer other prospective Legionnaires to you!</p>		
<p>Have community leaders, such as the Mayor, Chief of Police, etc., who are eligible for the Legion, been asked to join?</p> <p>Community leaders are a valuable resource to Legion posts, and our posts are very often valuable resources to those same community leaders. They should be invited to join the Legion if they are eligible.</p>		
<p>Have important centers of influence (business leaders, newspaper editors, ministers, law officers, firemen, etc.) been asked to join?</p> <p>Centers of influence cover the many professions found in a community. If your post desires to have a membership composition reflecting the community around it, you have to reach out to all walks of life. Centers of influence are those people who are “on the go, and in the know.” Their membership by itself may spark interest from other community leaders.</p>		
<p><u>Does this post exist for a reason? What programs does it sponsor, and does it offer incentives to veterans who join?</u></p> <p>A post must have a reason to exist through American Legion post programs and activities. It attracts membership and builds bridges to its community. A post must have programs of varied interest to attract membership.</p>		
<p>Is the post interested in future growth?</p> <p>Membership doesn't “just happen.” The post leadership must be committed to bringing in new members, thereby preserving the post and its programs.</p>		
<p>Are post officials aware of circumstances that may be affecting their membership and retention programs?</p> <p>A visiting assistance team can never have enough time to fully study all of the factors that could affect the growth or decline of a post. From experience, the team may suggest solutions to problems, but the local post is the best source for identifying local negative influences.</p>		
<p>Are there organizations more successful than the Legion within the community? If so, why are they successful and the post is not?</p> <p>Competition from other groups or organizations can affect membership...but there may be ways to offset the impact of another group. Attempt to define what attracts your membership to the other organization, and then plan activities, facilities, or programs to offset it.</p>		
<p>Does the post have a newsletter for its membership? Does it have a public relations officer and a functioning public relations program?</p> <p>Are post programs publicized in a planned way? Is the membership reminded of upcoming issues and events through a newsletter? Remember, we must form thought, shape opinion, and motivate through any public relations program. Internal and external. Our greatest achievements are worthless, unless they are recognized by the community around “non-active” members and us.</p>		

Membership Program – Check List

Post # _____

Page 3

YES

NO

<p>Does the post communicate with the majority of its membership through any means? Only a percentage of Legionnaires will be present at any post meeting. We depend upon publications, phone calls, etc., to keep our total membership motivated toward retaining their membership. Some form of communication is essential!</p>		
<p>Are new members initiated? Are they invited to the post, placed under the “wing” of an established member and made to feel welcome? An important step in new member recruiting should be a formal initiation. New members should be welcomed into the organization and congratulated on their decision to become a part of The American Legion. Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions. If your post has an initiation ceremony, it should be conducted with dignity, and in a professional manner! It is an excellent idea to appoint “sponsors” for new members. Someone who can introduce them to other members, and make them feel at “home” in their new post home! Try to match new members with their special interests. Get them involved in post activities.</p>		
<p>Are families made to feel welcome in this post? What activities may draw more families? Many newer Legion members are attracted to posts because they offer activities the entire family may enjoy. Does the post make a special effort to include family activities on their calendar of events?</p>		
<p>Does the post offer a wide base of appeal to potential members? What programs, events, and community activities does it participate in? Not everyone is interested in Bingo, Horseshoes, Turkey Shoots, etc. A growing American Legion Post offers a wide variety of programs and activities to attract a wide variety of people. Sports programs such as bowling and golf tournaments have helped keep memberships alive, as well as traditional Legion programs.</p>		
<p>Does the post sponsor a variety of traditional “Legion” programs (i.e.; Americanism, Children and Youth, Rehab, VAVs, etc.)? The traditional programs of The American Legion are time tested and popular not only among Legionnaires and their families, but the communities they help. Our basic pledge is service to God and Country...every Legion post should support our National and Department programs to the best of their ability.</p>		
<p>See Part IV of this guide for more information and guidance on these topics to assist you in your Membership Programs.</p>		

The Real Value Behind Your Membership Card.



*Sometimes You Just
Have To Brag A Little.*

These figures are from just **57%** of our Posts who reported their activities. Be sure to turn in your Consolidated Post Reports to be counted in these figures!

Programs	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
<u>VA & R</u>				
Rehabilitation cases handled	115,737	147,050	127,084	145,744
Emergency case aid to veterans	\$ 1,839,542	\$ 1,917,326	\$ 1,650,386	\$ 2,085,629
VAVS hours donated	1,015,228	938,965	934,869	1,110,724
Cash contributions to VAVS	\$ 1,506,465	\$ 1,778,597	\$ 2,178,954	\$ 2,362,789
<u>NATIONAL SECURITY</u>				
Pints of blood donated	90,273	85,763	81,641	85,077
Blood donors	40,815	36,856	33,802	87,446
ROTC medals given	5,744	7,428	5,147	11,390
<u>UNIFORMED GROUPS</u>				
Cost of uniformed groups	\$ 2,794,059	\$ 2,804,700	\$ 2,641,748	\$ 2,860,667
<u>AMERICANISM</u>				
Boys State				
Boys sponsored	14,168	13,858	12,942	15,561
Cost of Boys State	\$ 3,136,651	\$ 3,137,925	\$ 3,104,400	\$ 3,625,835
Baseball				
Number of teams	2,360	2,242	2,230	2,462
Other teams sponsored	1,716	1,572	1,461	1,634
Cost of all athletic teams	\$ 9,095,026	\$ 8,389,582	\$ 6,996,074	\$ 7,557,273
Boy Scouts				
Scouting units sponsored	1,857	1,836	1,746	2,047
Number of Scouts	55,322	53,096	48,765	57,119
Cost to American Legion Posts	\$ 1,556,701	\$ 1,794,335	\$ 1,589,832	\$ 1,619,041
Education & Scholarship				
Number of scholarships awarded	7,482	7,925	7,135	8,694
Cost of scholarships	\$ 3,744,897	\$ 3,843,135	\$ 3,565,133	\$ 4,108,537
Community Service				
Hours of community service	2,123,961	2,697,459	2,290,256	2,935,908
Cost of community service	\$ 4,561,170	\$ 5,306,579	\$ 4,891,503	\$ 5,071,735
<u>CHILDREN & YOUTH</u>				
Cash aid to needy children	\$ 2,280,726	\$ 2,406,931	\$ 2,544,311	\$ 2,935,908
Value of goods to children	\$ 2,136,233	\$ 2,259,487	\$ 2,431,002	\$ 2,595,348
<u>CONTRIBUTIONS</u>				
United Fund	\$ 223,528	\$ 174,090	\$ 183,871	\$ 255,999
Red Cross	\$ 252,823	\$ 286,231	\$ 381,122	\$ 379,025
Cancer	\$ 416,250	\$ 368,339	\$ 419,609	\$ 516,496
Handicapped Children	\$ 483,996	\$ 522,006	\$ 461,439	\$ 1,357,162
American Legacy Scholarship				
Donations (9-11 Scholarships)	\$ 317,599	\$ 280,867	\$ 317,207	\$ 687,370
All other charities	\$ 6,092,802	\$ 5,836,456	\$ 5,845,085	\$ 7,804,809
<u>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</u>	\$ 7,786,998	\$ 7,467,989	\$ 7,608,333	\$11,000,861

MEMBERSHIP – MEMBERSHIP – MEMBERSHIP

It seems you are always asked to increase your membership and no matter what programs you begin discussing, you always come back to membership.

The reason for this is obvious -- “membership is the lifeblood of The American Legion.” Without members, there would be no Legion programs. Without members, we would have no voice on Capitol Hill. Without members, there would be no accomplishment in assistance and support to veterans, their families, the community, state and nation. But, The American Legion has recorded consistent accomplishments for veterans and their families since 1919.

It is often emphasized, “It is not the price you pay to belong, but the price you paid to be eligible to belong.” Often times your members are hesitant to ask veterans to join The American Legion because we are asking the veteran for his money and his time. Do you not feel, as a Legionnaire, that time and money will be well spent in advancing the many and various programs of The American Legion? Don’t be hesitant or apologetic, ask them to join, ask them to renew – NOW.

You must offer every eligible veteran the opportunity to be a Legionnaire. Many Legionnaires ask; “What do you talk about when you approach a prospective member?” Because of the American Legion and its nearly three million members there is:

- A fair and equitable GI Bill of Rights for our veterans
- A Flag Code to direct the proper display and respect for “Old Glory”
- A viable VA Health Care system
- Courage to fight for a Constitutional Amendment against flag desecration
- Persistent efforts to secure recognition and treatment for illness caused by Agent Orange and unknown illnesses from the Persian Gulf War

You can tell the prospective Legionnaire about:

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE, which contains updates on the status of legislation that directly affects all veterans...information on outfit reunions...monthly interviews with key government officials...debates on the “Big Issues” from two opposing points of view...occasional accounts of real-life experiences during the war years...and much, much more.

The American Legion Member Benefit Plan. Substantial travel discounts for both the member and family include motel and rental car discounts, eye care plan, and the discount prescription program. Also, medical and dental insurance plans are available. (Go to www.legion.org for more information.)

American Legion Life Insurance Plan...available only to members...the largest, low-cost insurance plan of it’s kind in the country. Now offering exciting plans for members and their families.

The American Legion Membership Card, which gives the member access to nearly 14,000 Legion Posts worldwide and guarantees that our members will always have a fellow veteran nearby.

But more important are the intangible benefits of membership, the ones you can’t put a dollar value to – the lifelong friendships that develop from being actively involved with others...the leadership qualities one gains by holding offices at the Post, District, Department, or National echelons...the sense of accomplishment one feels after seeing a project through to successful completion...and most importantly, the self-satisfaction of knowing that just by being a member we are helping others less fortunate than ourselves.

All of the above-mentioned benefits of membership, both tangible and intangible, add up to one thing – opportunity. This opportunity is enhanced by additional benefits of membership available through your Department and your Post.

At your next Post meeting, emphasize to your Legionnaires that membership in The American Legion is an opportunity to be shared with those non-member, eligible veterans. The American Legion provides for our veterans and their families through the following programs:

Troop Support Services (TS2)
Legion Riders
Assistance to needy children and families
College Scholarships to High School Students
Veterans Administration Volunteer Services
Blood Donor Program
High School Oratorical Contest
Boys State and Nation
American Legion Baseball
Job Assistance Programs
Boy Scouts, Cub Packs, Explorer Units
Flag Education Programs
Crime Resistance

Temporary Financial Assistance
Heroes to Hometowns
Missing Children Programs
Drug Abuse Programs
Teenage Suicide Prevention Programs
Special Olympics
The American Legion Auxiliary/Girls State and Nation
The National Emergency Fund
The Family Support Network
The Flag Honor Guard
Sons of The American Legion
Department Service Officers
Children's Miracle Network Affiliation

Ask them where their interests lie and offer them the opportunity to serve.

As The American Legion continues its intensive drive to protect and preserve veterans' benefits programs – especially in the area of medical care – the numerical strength of the organization is so important. Is your Post doing its part in the nationwide drive to increase the Legion's growth?

The American Legion – “Still Serving America!”

ASK THEM



TO JOIN -- TO RENEW



“PRIDE”



<u>PUBLIC RELATIONS</u>	<u>IMPLEMENT</u>	<u>DEVELOP</u>	<u>EDUCATE</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get A Good P.R. Officer - Publicize Everything We Do - At All Levels - In The Media (Dailies, Weeklies, Cable TV, etc) - Legion Name In First Sentence Of Story - "Cadillac In A Cardboard Box" - Reward The Media That Uses Your Story - Honor Their Deadlines - Use The Right Format For Each Type Of Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't Just Talk About It, Do It (Do What You Say) - Delegate Authority - Provide Meaningful Involvement - Start Now! - Be Creative! - Be Different! - Be Flexible! - Adjust To Changes (But Don't Change Just For The Sake Of Change. Rather, Change For The Better.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reward Workers - Encourage New Workers And Leaders - Maintain A Positive Attitude - Establish Goals - Leaders Lead - The Right Person For The Right Job (Don't Make Someone An Officer Just Because He Or She's Been Around A Long Time Or Because It's Fashionable - Develop Trust - Build Self-Esteem In Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our Own Members - The Public - Our Sales Force. We Need To Know What We Are Selling And To Whom (Programs - History) -A.L. Extension Course -Legion Colleges - In-Field Support (District, Department, National) - Presentations - Mini Lessons At Post Meeting - Newsletter: (Have A Plan For Your Meetings) (What Are You Planning?) (What Are You Doing?) - Schools, Community Groups (Potential Guest Speaker -- Invite Them To Your Post)

Membership in The American Legion is a matter of PRIDE:

- PRIDE in Tradition
- PRIDE in Heritage
- PRIDE in Accomplishment
- PRIDE in Serving
- PRIDE in Belonging

We owe every eligible veteran the opportunity to share in the “PRIDE”.

MOTIVATION



I am afraid the word motivation means many different things to many different people. So let's begin with the New Webster's Dictionary definition of *Motivate* (Motivation) – to furnish with a motive; to impel; to induce.

Some people say motivation is knowing where you want to go (your goals and objectives) and how you're going to get there (your plan). The word motivation is derived from the combination of the words: motivate and action (toward your goals).

Motivation is not a big rally, although a rally can sometimes be used to stimulate motivation. Motivation, simply stated, is to set your goals and establish and work the plan that will enable you to accomplish those goals. Perhaps the late Will Rogers summed it up best when he said; "Ladies and Gentlemen, in order to be successful in selling or any other activity, you need to know what you're doing, love what you're doing and believe in what you're doing."

We know our National Membership Goals for this year and we know the goals of our Departments, Districts/Counties and Posts. In order to continue the progress and inroads The American Legion has made in programs for Veterans, widows, children, orphans and the many programs for our community, state and nation, our membership must continue to grow. Membership is the life-blood of The American Legion. Perhaps that last sentence is motivation enough for us to attain our goals.

As we discussed in our membership workshops throughout the various regions of The American Legion, we must have PRIDE and COMMITMENT toward attaining our mission. We at National Headquarters are committed to support and assist each Department, District/County and Post in meeting their part of the membership challenge. We are all PROUD Legionnaires and will be even PROUDER of The American Legion and our own membership when we exceed our target for this membership year.

Qualities to Attain Success

We must all be self-motivated by a desire to attain our membership goals. We must be excited and motivated in the accomplishments and programs of The American Legion, so that we can convey this feeling of pride and belonging to all prospective members. Through our own PRIDE in The American Legion, there is a high degree of

determination that will allow us to continue even when we encounter a setback or two. We will all learn from this tremendous experience and become more proficient, which will allow us to accomplish our goals. Our desire and determination will get the job done.

We must be totally organized, at all levels of our membership campaign, with a plan of action that will accomplish, step by step, the goal we must attain. Our plan must consider all aspects of prospecting and selling as well as time management.

There must be a COMMITMENT not only to doing the job but a total COMMITMENT of accomplishing the mission and goal. This commitment involves time and energy and whatever else is necessary to get the job done – successfully. We must all be willing to put in the time and effort necessary without considering it as drudgery.

Last but not least or perhaps first, last and always we must have a good PMA (Positive Mental Attitude). We must know we will accomplish the goal – no matter what. We must be open to suggestions from others and must be flexible enough to put these ideas in the overall plan to accomplish our goal. We must be "possibility thinkers." We must look for and create opportunities and ways to improve our programs, which will aid us in accomplishing our goals. We must be results-oriented and revise our plan if the revision furthers the attainment of our membership goals.

In summary, in order to succeed in our membership goals we must have:

1. Definite goals
What is your goal? – Department
County/
District
Post
2. Timetable/Plan of Action
3. Commitment/Organization
4. Hard Work/Organization
5. Positive Mental Attitude
6. Determination
7. Team Work

If you leave out just one of the above ingredients, your chances of making your goal will be less. Like a good recipe, all of the ingredients must be there in the right amounts and everyone will savor the flavor. Include all of the ingredients in your membership programs, and we will savor the flavor – SUCCESS.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN PLANNING GUIDE

As most of you know, the membership population of The American Legion has gone up and down in recent years. We must continue to grow. Although traditional membership augmented by direct marketing has created a significant increase again this year, this is no indication that we can let up now. We must continuously work our current membership plan and start, begin now, to plan our next membership year if we are to achieve our goals.

As our numbers grow, so does our political power. As years pass the term “veteran” is being forgotten. As an organization of devoted men and women veterans, we must be willing to commit ourselves to turning this present course around and stand by this slogan... “*We remember the Vet so that no one forgets.*”

It is a foolish thing to begin looking at a membership plan as though the world has been created yesterday. We must build on the past, and then move through the present into the future.

That’s right, if we are to achieve maximum effectiveness in completing a truly successful membership year, which will lead to continued success, it will have to consist of the whole picture.

Ask yourself which membership tools were the most effective in obtaining new members and retaining current members this year. Which were not? Was there something missing? Could you have done it differently? Was there something you used in the past that worked well, but you haven’t used for some time? Are there some things you’ve been using repeatedly, but aren’t receiving the return for the time and effort involved?

You, as the Membership Chairman, have been selected for this most challenging task. The membership planning-development guide below is provided to assist you in the accomplishment of your goals and objectives.

PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

To build membership: Create three (3) membership development teams:

- 1.) Contact team
- 2.) New member team
- 3.) Retention team

To coordinate and direct membership development teams’ activities, the Post has selected you as a Membership Chairman.

You will select from the Post membership those who are reliable and “go-getters”, then select from among them the members for the two specialty teams (New Member Team and Retention Team).

All of the members of the two specialty teams are also members of the Contact Team.

To effectively use the Contact Team, the Post leaders and you, as Membership Chairman, restrict membership development teamwork to the local Post community area, as applicable.

The geographical borders of the local Post community area should cover the local business-trading zone, industrial complex zone and the immediate residential neighborhoods.

There should be some features of the local Post community area which give it high potential for successful membership development; some of these factors are:

- 1.) Convenience in travel time to the Post and scheduled Post events;

- 2.) A sense of community awareness of the Post, its location and positive contributions to the community;
- 3.) A willingness throughout the community to help the Post build its membership (poster/counter-top displays, public service announcement outlets, local advertising buyers, etc.); and
- 4.) A large potential of prospective members in the community.

You, the Membership Chairman, should direct the Contact Team in building a list of contact areas, where potential membership might be located and contacted. A large varied list of contact areas might be built among many communities. See “Prospects Are Everywhere” (page 56).

The Membership Chairman decides with the Post leaders on specific Post events to host in the local Post community area during the year (which will be open to the public and for which a small donation is requested upon admission to the event).

The Post leaders prepare plans and make the necessary arrangements for the Post sponsored events, and then the events are scheduled on the Post Calendar. Such possible events could be:

- 1.) Americanism Rally/Fireworks
- 2.) A Square Dance
- 3.) Post Membership Breakfast/Dinner
- 4.) Open House
- 5.) Legion Birthday Party
- 6.) A Dance
- 7.) A Kids Day Halloween Carnival

- 8.) A Fun Run Marathon Competition
- 9.) A Tractor Pull Competition
- 10.) A Talking Christmas Tree or hot-line to Santa for the kids

The Membership Chairman would direct the Contact Teams in working the event to identify and attempt to solicit membership from any eligible veteran. When a prospective member is hesitant to join the Post, the Membership Chairman would assign a member or members of one of the two specialty teams to meet the prospect and provide information and persuasion to join the Post. The prospect that joins the Post is admitted to all future Post events free-of-charge or nominal fee as the case may be.

The Membership Chairman and the Contact Team build a list of contact methods to use to find potential members in the local Post community area. Some of the methods used to contact prospects might be:

- Telephone (phone book) solicitation
- Door-to-door area canvassing solicitation
- Local media/church/civic & fraternal club newsletter/posters, counter-top displays, etc.
- Letters to the Editor
- Public Information Booth/Table/Van
- Sponsorship of local Youth Sports Team
- Post Sponsored Community Service Programs –
 - * A Community “Health Fair”
 - * A Community “Child Abuse/Missing Children Fingerprint Program”
 - * A Civil Defense Disaster Emergency Preparedness Test
 - * A Teenage Drug Abuse Program

The Membership Chairman and the Contact Team decide on a specific contact method to use – mail, phone, door-to-door; they set a specific calendar schedule for using the contact method and, finally, they decide on which selection of the local Post community area to work in using the contact method.

When all decisions have been made, the Membership Chairman directs the work of the Contact Team. As contacts with prospects are made, potential members are identified and asked to join the Post.

When the Contact Team meets a potential member who is hesitant or has a specific question about The American Legion which they cannot answer, the Membership Chairman assigns a member or members of one of the specialty teams to meet and talk with the prospect. Specialty Team members persuade all eligible prospects they meet to join and sign them up in the Post.

The New Member Team specializes in persuading eligible prospects to join the Post. The members of the Team should be American Legion members who have persuasive speaking skills; who are proven “go-getters”; who have a good working knowledge of The American Legion – its organization, purpose, history, and services;

and who are friendly and enjoy talking with people, especially strangers. The New Member Team also compiles a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers for all eligible prospects who would not join the Post when asked. The Contact Team can use this list of eligible prospects for future contact efforts.

The Retention Team specializes in persuading former American Legion members to renew their Legion membership in the Post. The Retention Team also builds a list of possible retention methods to be used in the Post to build annual membership renewals as well as Post member involvement and interest. Among several retention methods are the following:

- 1.) Surveys of membership comments/preferences for programs, activities, and services
- 2.) Special member coupons
- 3.) Telephone greetings and well-wishing
- 4.) Direct Mail
- 5.) Post Newsletter
- 6.) Post Commander’s Personal Letters
- 7.) Member-only Social Events
- 8.) Homebound Member Visitation
- 9.) Share-A-Ride Program
- 10.) Post Group Tours
- 11.) Member Program Fair
- 12.) Family Night Dinner
- 13.) Auxiliary Recognition/Appreciation Night
- 14.) Father/Son/Daughter Dinner
- 15.) Mother/Son/Daughter Dinner

The success of the work of the Team Concept in Post Membership Building is directly related to the willingness of Post members to participate as Team members and Post officers to assume the responsibility for planning, organizing and directing Post events. Success is measurable by the amount of individual effort, time and concern given to carrying out one’s duties.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

The Team Concept is equally adaptable to the District and Department levels where far greater resources are available for Team Membership when members of Teams can be selected from the many Posts within the District, and so on.

District Team efforts should be primarily directed to building membership in weak Posts in the District where possible, or in newly chartered Posts in need of membership growth to develop and sustain its programs and The American Legion home.

District officers select the District Membership Chairman and the members for the three District teams. Special attention is given to selection of the very best workers from across the District for District Team membership. District leaders and District Membership Chairman decide the Posts in need of help, the contact method to employ and the calendar of events, as well as planning and organizing the events.

National Guard & Reserve Eligibility

The National Guard and Reserves are required to meet the same eligibility requirements as the full time federal active veterans. To be eligible, the National Guardsman/Reservist **must have served at least one day on federal active duty during any of the delimiting periods** set forth in Article IV, Section 1 of the National Constitution, and either have an honorable discharge or currently be serving either in the National Guard or Reserves on federal active duty.

The key to determining if a Guardsman/Reservist has been on or currently serving on federal active duty is the “**Authority Line**” on the activation orders of the Guardsman/Reservist. In both cases “Title 10, Subsection 672 or 12301” are orders from the Secretary of Defense and are federal orders. Basic Training and Advanced Training on federal installations IS federal active duty.

The authority the Governor uses to activate the National Guard as an individual or unit is “Title 32” orders, i.e., Weekend Drills and Annual Training. These are **not** federal orders. The Reserves have similar reserve orders which are “Title 10, Subsection 270.” This authority code gives the reserve component the authority to activate the reserves for Weekend Drills and Annual Training.

Use the chart below when determining eligibility for National Guard and Reserves.

	ELIGIBLE CODES	NON-ELIGIBLE CODES
National Guard	Title 10, Subsection 672 or 12301 *	Title 32
Reserves	Title 10, Subsection 672 or 12301 *	Title 10, Subsection 270

*This Subsection was created following Desert Storm to replace 672.

This information was taken from Military Law Chapter 39.

Note: A DD-214 will be issued for the time on federal active duty or a DA-1059 for a completion of a school will be issued with a character type of discharge. All Reserve components send their service members to “Basic Training” using Title 10, Subsection 672/12301 orders.

National Guard & Reserve Recruiting

New member acquisition is essential in order for us to grow and prosper as an organization. With this in mind, one market area that has gone virtually untouched is the National Guard and Reserve. These military organizations are laced with eligible veterans who may have an interest in becoming members of The American Legion, but have not done so because they have not been asked or are unaware of what we do, and have done, on behalf of all veterans. Many of these veterans have chosen to affiliate with reserve components due to the downsizing of the active military. The great majority of National Guard and Reserve personnel have served on federal active duty, and as a result, the membership potential is great. From the statistical information provided by the VA, we know there are over 27 million veterans and the challenge we are faced with is to make contact and recruit eligible veterans. Over the past several years we have learned that acquiring new members is becoming more and more difficult. We must look beyond traditional methods of recruiting. This is a potential marketplace with a captive audience – **veterans**.

More often than not, formulating a plan is the most difficult aspect of any initiative. A great deal of thought and preparation must be applied in order to have a successful campaign. The following is a recommended outline of those necessary steps to ensure we accomplish our goal of increasing membership in The American Legion.

- 1) Write a letter to the State Adjutant General asking for his/her permission and support to approach subordinate units. The body of this letter should contain the "who, what, when, where and why". This letter should include the signature of the Department Commander in order to get the appropriate attention and response. (See "Operation Outreach" at the end of this manual, pages 86-88).
- 2) Identify locations of units/armories in your geographic area you wish to approach. Note: A complete list of units that were or are currently activated is available through your Department Headquarters. Also, your Department Adjutant has a list of all National Guard and Reserve installations within your state.
- 3) Organize at the district level. The district will normally draw the Legionnaires who are both dedicated and active. Establish teams that are knowledgeable about Legion programs and display a favorable image of The American Legion. **REMEMBER** – You will be promoting our organization in a military environment and first impressions will set the stage for future opportunities. Legionnaires who belong to these units may be beneficial to your cause. Solicit their assistance when forming your teams.
- 4) The initial contact. This may be accomplished in one of two ways: **First**, a letter from the District Commander to the Commander of a specific unit asking for an appointment to discuss a date and time when you and your team could present an overview of The American Legion (Operation Outreach). At this point you are simply trying to get your foot in the door. Your letter should mention just a few of our programs and how they could benefit the citizen soldiers in this unit. Examples of beneficial programs are: Service Officer discussing VA benefits, Troop Support Services (TS2), Family Support Network, Temporary Financial Assistance, etc. **Second**, an initial contact could be made in person by visiting the unit and talking with the full-time duty person, most likely the Training NCO. Each unit has at least one person who works in the unit on a full-time basis. Prepare ahead of time a letter addressed to the Commander, outlining the same information as above. Take this opportunity to promote yourself and The American Legion during this visit. This full-time person has direct communication with the Commander and can help you in establishing rapport. Once you have made the appointment to meet with the Commander the hard part begins.
- 5) The preparation for the appointment. Your presentation should be approximately **30 minutes** in length. This includes the warm-up, showing of the DVD, if possible, questions and answers. Ensure your team knows their material and are prepared to answer questions during this appointment. Your presentation should have merit and must be of benefit to the members of the unit.
- 6) Be prompt for the appointment. Be Prompt. Be Prompt. Be Prompt. Military leaders are very time-conscious and consider tardiness as an insult. Discuss the purpose of your visit. Highlight the benefits of presenting information to this unit. Ask for a date and time to present The American Legion to the members of the unit. Remember, we are trying to get our foot in the door, so do not state the purpose is solely for recruiting new members: **"Service First...Membership Will Follow!"**. Do have brochures and handouts to leave

with the Commander (brochures and materials are available from the Department Headquarters). These will reinforce the need for us to return in the future. Commanders are usually looking for speakers to present information to their unit, but keep in mind leaders plan the training schedule several months in advance, and this schedule may not permit you an opportunity immediately. Be patient. The purpose is to get a date and time.

- 7) Plan the event. Ensure you have the resources and manpower necessary to make the event a success. A well thought out agenda will prove to be invaluable in the planning phase. Assign your team specific duties to perform during the presentation (match needs with skills). Plan to have an information table at the event, complete with additional literature and brochures about The American Legion. Have a sign-up roster for those who may wish additional information. This roster should include name, address, phone number, dates of active duty, etc. This is important for follow-up purposes. Remember not to lose sight of the program you are presenting. This must be successful if you are going to get an invitation to return.
- 8) Execute the event. Do wear Legion attire with cap. This will identify you as The American Legion and we want to be remembered. Be professional in all aspects of your presentation. Again, be prepared for questions addressed by members of the unit. Tell your audience how they may contact you and where The American Legion is located. Finally, extend an invitation for them to visit a local post at a pre-determined date and time.

SUGGESTED EVENT

SUGGESTED TIME

Send Off / Welcome Home	As occur
Easter Egg Hunt (have them bring their children)	April
Flag Programs	June
July 4 th Celebration	July
Veterans Day	November
Thanksgiving Dinner	November
Christmas	December
Open House (Free finger food and soft drinks)	Anytime

- 9) Do a critique. This should be accomplished as soon as possible after the event to go over what went well and any area that may need improvement. Lessons learned from the previous experiences help us to strengthen our skills and make us more effective the next time.

Recruiting Active Duty Military

Another area in which we can pursue new member acquisition is the active duty military market. These installations offer us the opportunity to present The American Legion to a captive audience. The first question you are probably asking yourself is HOW do we gain access to this group of veterans? It's not easy, but if you follow some simple guidelines listed you could overcome some of the hurdles long before you reach them. The basic process is as follows:

- 1) Prepare a letter under the signature of the Department Commander, addressed to the Commander of the installation, stating the who, what, when, where and why. The purpose of this letter must be precise. A recommendation is to seek permission for your Department Service Officer to address those members, who have decided to separate on VA benefits. Another option might be to request permission to set up an information booth in the vicinity of the Commissary and Post Exchange/Base Exchange facilities. Whatever you decide to use as a reason, do not state your reason is for the purpose of recruiting members. Offer The American Legion as a benefit (and/or resource) to the service member. (Operation Outreach).
- 2) Organize at Department or District level. Establish teams who are knowledgeable about American Legion programs and display a favorable image. Personal appearance is a very important consideration since you will be promoting The American Legion in a military environment and first impressions are often lasting impressions. You may have members in your Department who are either active duty military or work on the installation. These Legionnaires could possibly provide insight or act as a liaison to support your cause. Seek their assistance in this endeavor. They may be able to expedite the process or at least open a door or two.
- 3) Plan the event. Ensure you have the resources and manpower necessary to make the event a success. Assign your team specific duties to perform during any presentations (match needs with skills). Plan to have an information table at the event, complete with additional literature and brochures. Have a sign-up roster for those who may want additional information. This roster should include name, address, phone #, etc. This information is important for follow-up purposes.
- 4) Execute the plan. Do wear Legion attire with cap. Be professional in all aspects of your presentation and follow-up work. Be prepared to address questions that arise during presentations or those questions that may come up during the event. Inform your audience how they may contact you and the locations of American Legion Posts in the area. Let them know how they can get additional information. This is where the sign-up roster will serve as a tool for follow-up. Depending on your audience, you might want to extend an invitation for them to visit a local Post (open house type of activity).
- 5) A critique should be accomplished immediately after the event to go over what went well and any area that may need improvement. Lessons learned from previous experiences help us to strengthen our skills and make us more effective the next time.

SERVICE FIRST!



MEMBERSHIP WILL FOLLOW!

DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN FOR POST MEMBERSHIP REVITALIZATION

REVITALIZATION OF EXISTING POSTS

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR POST?

All posts have readily available indicators that may be used to identify those that might be in need of assistance...some of these may include:

- * Does your Post meet regularly?
 - * Can you find members willing to assume offices?
 - * Does it seem that the “Club” is the only major concern?
 - * Are there any new members joining?
 - * Is gambling an asset or detriment to the well being of your Post?
 - * Have new programs been started? Are old programs dying?
 - * Is the image of your Post deteriorating in your community?
 - * Are post activities providing for current local needs?
- Does your Post have a monthly bulletin/newsletter or website to inform members of activities?

OUTLINE

1) Appoint a chairman to organize and direct the Post Revitalization Team.

Considerations:

- a) What qualifications/skills does this person possess in leading this team?
- b) Does this person have an inside track to key community leaders?
- c) Does this person present a favorable image of The American Legion?
- d) Is this person organized? Motivated? Knowledgeable?

2) Select team members.

- a) How many members necessary to complete this task?
- b) Determine the part/role each member will play.
- c) Determine individual skills necessary to have an effective team.
- d) What does each of these members know about the targeted areas and The American Legion’s Program and Policies?

3) Fact-finding – contact key community leaders in the target area to determine community needs.

Examples may be, but are not limited to:

- a) Mayor & County Officials
- b) Chamber of Commerce
- c) Police & Fire Department Chiefs
- d) Prominent Businessmen, Bankers, School Officials, Clergy, etc.
- e) Military Installations, National Guard or Reserve units

4) Prioritize information collected during fact-finding.

- a) Define necessary tasks to be completed.
- b) Assign team members specific tasks.
- c) Establish a timeline for task completion.
- d) Schedule future meetings to update teams' progress.

5) Schedule follow-up meeting(s) with key community leaders to brief them on plans and progress. Convey excitement and build interest during these appointments. Ask for recommendations in selecting a meeting location and how this Post can best serve its community.

6) Marketing & Promotional.

- a) Solicit local newspapers to announce the formation of the new Post. Use this opportunity to set the date, time and location of a meeting to inform the community. Also, incorporate membership and recruiting information in this announcement. Note: Donated space may not be available, so you should be prepared to purchase this space to ensure the information is distributed to all the veterans in the surrounding area, or submit as a Media/Press Release, which is free.
- b) Contact local radio and television stations. Provide them with Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Cable TV community bulletin boards will usually carry your message free of charge.
- c) Create and distribute flyers announcing your plans. Malls and shopping centers, during peak times, are ideal locations to distribute this type of information. Local merchants will usually display flyers in the windows of their establishment. Use this opportunity to get acquainted with them and to promote the programs of The American Legion. Be enthusiastic, honest, and sincere.

7) Initial Meeting.

- a) Be professional, excited and informative. Emphasize Americanism, Children & Youth Programs, Flag Education, Boys State, etc. Most of all highlight the benefits of membership.

- b) Have sufficient quantities of literature and handouts available for distribution (See recommended list of brochures & literature on pages 72 and 73).
 - c) Be prepared to respond to questions. Show the attendees how their involvement can benefit the community.
 - d) Determine a plan to conduct follow-up appointments.
 - e) Provide a manned information table in the rear of the meeting room. A sign-up list should be available for those who would like additional information or prefer to have one-on-one discussions.
 - f) Announce the date, time and location of the next meeting (approximately 2 weeks). Encourage them to bring their families and other veterans to the next meeting.
- 8) Continue to build interest in and around the targeted area. Distribute information pertaining to the next scheduled meeting.
- 9) Conduct a second meeting.
- a) Create a need and build a sense of urgency in revitalizing the Post. Restate purpose and potential benefits.
 - b) Invite eligible veterans to join and be a part of the history of this revitalized Post.
 - c) Announce a date and time for an organizational meeting.
- 10) Repeat any of the above steps and/or add others, as necessary.



**With You And The Help Of Others A
100% Membership Goal Can Be
Achieved!**



(SAMPLE FLYER)

PEARCE-KELLER POST No. 17
DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS
114 McCall Road
MANHATTAN, KANSAS 66502

(913) 776-4556

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY WHICH CONSISTS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY AND THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION HAS BEEN AN ESTABLISHED PART OF THE MANHATTAN COMMUNITY SINCE 1919. IN OUR EFFORTS TO CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO ALL VETERANS AND THE COMMUNITY IN GENERAL WE SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

Avenue of Flags and Burial Flag Storage
Baseball:

Biscuit League – City
T-Ball – Optimist
Pro Copy – Legion & Auxiliary
McCall's – Legion & Auxiliary
17'ers – Legion & Auxiliary
Split's – Legion & Auxiliary
Girls Softball – City

Baseball Scholarships

Basketball – City

Bowling – Kids League – Provide trophies

Bowling – Men's League

Boy Scout Camp Fund

Cadet Lawmen Academy

Member, Chamber of Commerce

Member, Eastside Business Association

Canteen Books for Veterans Hospital

Members donate time for selecting & wrapping

Christmas gifts for VA Hospital patients

Members purchase and select Christmas gifts for
family members of VA Hospital patients

Post 17 Family Assistance Program

Flag Etiquette Program for schools

Oratorical scholarship program for area students

Pops Choir – Manhattan High School

Special Olympics

Sunflower Club

Transients Aid to Veterans

Poppy Appreciation Day

Sponsor – Girls and Boys State

Flint Hill's Breadbasket

Cookies for VA Hospital

Memorial Day Activities

Veterans Day Activities

Chapel of Four Chaplains

K.S.U. Basic Cancer Research

Mayor's Holiday Fund

Flag Day Observance

Sponsor of state American Legion golf tournament

Youth Banquet

Boys and Girls State Banquet

Political Forum's "Get Out The Vote"

"YES" Fund

Annual Ham and Bean Feed

4th District Convention Parade

Annual Library Book Sale

R.O.T.C. Awards

Bingo three (3) times weekly

Saturday night dance for members and guests

Motorcycle Run to the Wall

Lobby for Veterans benefits

American Legion Child Welfare Program

Community Closet for Medical Equipment

Manhattan Emergency Shelter

National U.S.O.

Homemakers Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Valley Forge Spirit of Youth Camp

In our efforts to continue the established programs and to add new ones we invite those who qualify to join The American Legion Family. At this time, there are an estimated 2,000 veterans in the immediate area who qualify for our organization.

The American Legion meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 P.M. and the American Legion Auxiliary meets on the third Monday of the month at 7:30 P.M. You are invited to attend our meetings and if you have any questions, please call 776-4556.

PART II

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION AND RENEWALS

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

The Retention Team has already been mentioned as one of the teams to be established in our membership planning and development section.

A listing of some of the various retention methods are also listed in the same subject area but as part of an overall Post/District/Department Retention Program the following must be considered:

1. Direct Renewal notices, which are mailed to members directly from National Headquarters were never meant to replace the personal contact from Post members in the Renewal Program. The notices are meant to support and emphasize membership renewal efforts not replace those efforts. It is up to the Post Membership/Retention Team to continue renewal efforts by mail, by phone or by personal door-to-door contact, just like we used to do it. Try it – it works!
2. The purpose of the Post communication is to see if there is a reason the member doesn't attend meetings or hasn't paid his/her dues but mainly the visit, letter, or phone call is done to allow the member the easiest manner in which to pay his dues.
3. If there is a problem, it can be worked out and the member will once again become an active member of the Post or at least renew his/her membership.
4. As you communicate with the renewal member, make an effort to get him/her involved in at least one of the many activities or programs of the Post.
5. Last but definitely not least, remind the member of the many accomplishments of The American Legion and the fact that his/her dues allow these successful programs to continue.

RETENTION: THE KEY TO MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Why do veterans join The American Legion and not renew their membership the following year?

Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to find out why they joined in the first place. If their reason for joining is realized during their first membership year, they will probably renew.

When we consider why veterans leave The American Legion, we find what we call the three M's of retention:

Moved – Mad – Mortality

Mortality: We can't do much about this one when our members report to post everlasting.

Moved: Operation Stay Active follows members from department to department so we might transfer those who move or at least keep them renewed in their current post but follow-up is necessary to assist the member in keeping his/her membership current.

Mad: This is where face-to-face contact is necessary. This is where the "rubber meets the road." Who or what is the member upset with? The retention worker must find this out before anything can be resolved. Most "mad" problems can be resolved by discussion and working it out with parties concerned. We must try!

The use of the three "I's" of retention as described here will help prevent many of the situations that cause members to leave our ranks.

- I – Initiate: Tell the story of The American Legion.
- I – Indoctrinate: Explain individual programs.
- I – Involve: Find the interest area and involve the new member.

Many of the things Legionnaires take for granted are not fully understood by the new member. Whether it is a post, district, or department event, the content and importance of the event must be explained to the new Legionnaire before he/she will make a decision to attend.

Words which must become action in order to retain members are:

Communication: Let everyone know what is going on.

Activities: Who, where, what, when, why and how must be answered to all possible participants.

Involvement: We must get as many Legionnaires as possible involved in the many and varied programs of The American Legion.

What is: a district meeting?
a division meeting?
a county meeting?
a department meeting?
a national workshop?
a department or national convention?

All of these are strange words to the prospective Legionnaire. Don't assume they know what they are – tell them.

The importance of retention at all levels is obvious for solid growth not only in membership but also in programs and overall accomplishment.

Just like the military, retention begins when the new member joins. As previously stated, it begins with a thorough initiation that is part of a good sponsorship program.

You remember when we came on board or reported to a new military assignment, we were many times given a sponsor who stuck with us and walked us through our new surroundings and new assignments until we were ready to be turned loose.

That's what the Sponsor's Guide and the Sponsor Checklist on pages 35 - 36 are all about. Assign a sponsor to each new member until the items on the checklist are accomplished and the Legionnaire feels knowledgeable and comfortable with membership in The American Legion.

You will note on the guide and the checklist there is no positive indicator for the important initiation session. This is because each post has a different time sequence for conducting their initiation sessions. The important thing is to conduct initiation sessions early in the Legionnaire's membership.

Guide and checklist: These are simple guidelines. We ask you to develop and use your own lists, but the importance of a program of this type cannot be overlooked if we are to retain those members we have worked so diligently to get.

“Retention: The key to membership growth”

HOW IMPORTANT IS MEMBERSHIP RETENTION?

An average of 200,000 Legionnaires do not renew their membership each year. That's how important it is. Not for the sake of numbers but for our impact on our elected officials and the impact on our many programs at local, state and national level – “That's why it's important.”

MEMBERSHIP ACRONYMS

ADOVACATE FOR VETERANS' RIGHTS

MEMBERSHIP NEVER TAKES A BREAK

ENERGIZE YOUR POST

RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS

I CAN'T DO IT, BUT WE CAN

COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

ASK, JUST ASK

NEW MEMBERS EQUAL GROWTH

LEGISLATIVE CLOUT

EYE CARE PLAN

GROWTH EQUALS MORE MEMBERS

INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

ORGANIZATION THAT SUPPORTS ALL VETERANS

NOW IS THE TIME FOR GROWTH

MMOTIVATE YOUR MEMBERS

EQUALITY FOR ALL MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP NEEDS PROGRAMS

BENEFITS OF BELONGING

EVERY MEMBER GET A MEMBER

RETENTION OF CURRENT MEMBERS

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

HOW ABOUT 4 MILLION BY 2010

I WANT YOU IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

PROGRAMS OF INVOLVEMENT

RENEWALS

Normally, during each membership year, the National Headquarters sends five renewal notices to members until they have paid their membership dues. The renewal notices are printed and mailed from National, but the dues are remitted to the Post the member belongs to, as printed on the renewal notice. The Post Membership Representative must then process the dues payment, extracting the Post per capita. The Post will then transmit these membership dues to the respective Department Headquarters. The Department Headquarters will then extract its per capita then transmit, collectively from all posts within the Department, the membership dues to National Headquarters. Within 1 – 2 days of receipt, dues payment information is recorded on the National database. Typically, this whole process should only take no more than 2 – 3 weeks.

There has been a measurable decline in traditional renewals, and frankly, we're not sure why. One way we know that Posts can get more involved with its members is by calling or visiting with these members who have not renewed yet. Find out if they need assistance, or if they have simply overlooked paying their dues. It also affords the Post the opportunity to “get in tune” with its members.

Membership should be transmitted on a regular basis – at least weekly. Listed in the Post Adjutant's Manual is a Renewal Notices Schedule that displays the cutoff dates National must receive the membership dues before a notice is generated. This schedule will be followed in order to remove the names of paid members prior to a specific mailing. If your Post Membership Representative is transmitting membership regularly as required, you or your members won't receive unnecessary Renewal Notices.

Renewal Schedule

Normally, during each membership year, National sends five renewal notices to members. The following is the renewal schedule: July, October, January, March, and May.

Sometimes, at the request of a Department, a special notice in February may be mailed to boost a Department's renewals.

The current membership year renewal schedule for transmitting memberships to arrive at National by the established date(s) is outlined in your Post Adjutant's Manual...this schedule will be followed in order to remove the name(s) of paid members prior to a specific mailing. Using this Renewal Schedule, National extracts (unpaid) member records, prints, and mails the renewal notices.

Renewal Letters & Phone Script

On the following pages are sample letters and a phone script that can be used by your post to communicate with non-renewing members. While writing letters and making phone calls is good, if you are able to personally visit with this member and meet face-to-face, you might find your results to be more productive.

SAMPLE RENEWAL LETTER TO DELINQUENT MEMBER

Date:

MEMORANDUM: Regarding Continued Uninterrupted Membership

To: Legionnaire

Greetings. Currently, I have the privilege of being Commander of American Legion Post (number).

Our Post is comprised of individuals from all walks of life, means, skills, and education, but is bound by one common bond, honorable military service to our Country.

The American Legion, for most of its existence, has operated under a calendar year for membership, and fiscal year for its general activities. This fiscal year commences after the conclusion of the National Convention held at the end of August and continues into the following August when the next National Convention concludes. For the convenience of national delegates, the Convention was changed and now takes place in late summer.

The membership dues payment forms are mailed sometime in July or early August and are to be paid by the end of December to remain in good standing.

Payments received during January of the following year will eliminate delinquency status. The American Legion continues to send reminders through June of that same year. A procedure of reinstatement needs to be followed after June.

The American Legion is interested in maintaining and increasing its role. Currently, one in 20 eligible veterans are members of a recognized veteran's organization.

We encourage you to consider early payment of dues. If the last payment form is misplaced, please consider the following option – make your check payable to American Legion Post (number). Post Dues are (\$ dues amount). Please use the enclosed envelope and mail your dues to:

American Legion Post (number)
c/o Jane Doe – Adjutant
12345 S. Main Street
Any Town, USA 12345-6789

Please include your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail. We are interested in the branch of service you served with and your American Legion 9-digit membership identification number, which is on last year's membership card.

We thank you in advance for your continuing support of the programs and activities of The American Legion. Membership is an example you are "Still Serving America."

Most Sincerely,

(Your Name)
Post Commander

SAMPLE RENEWAL LETTER – CURRENT MEMBER

Dear **Jack**

The American Legion's (200-) membership/fiscal year begins (date) and you will soon receive a "Dues Notice" from National Headquarters asking you to renew your membership. Your dues are (\$\$) a year and later in this letter I'm going to ask you to do me a favor. But first, let me point out some of the benefits of membership in The American Legion; in other words for (\$\$) you receive the following:

- (1) Twelve issues of *The American Legion Magazine*. Have you read it lately? It has been named one of the top general interest magazines in the nation.
- (2) Eleven issues of the *Sunflower Legionnaire* newspaper, which informs you of what your American Legion is doing and what activities are available to you, the member.
- (3) A \$1,000.00 Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance policy if you complete and mail the application you receive with your membership card.
- (4) Automatic enrollment in the family benefit plan; participating retailers are listed on the back of this letter – just one weekend's stay at a participating motel can more than save you the cost of Legion dues.
- (5) Membership in one of the finest Legion Post Homes in the State with unsurpassed food and beverage service – Post 173, Hays, Kansas. Last year Post 173 served (#s) youngsters in its Children and Youth Programs (such as baseball, teen suicide prevention, Special Olympics, School awards, Boys State, Christmas and Easter Parties, etc). The Post also participates in service to disabled and hospitalized veterans.
- (6) Membership in the largest volunteer organization in the world; the organization that wrote the G.I. Bill of Rights, the organization which gives so much to other organizations (the American Heart Association was started with a grant from the Legion, Reye's Syndrome is no longer the "unknown" threat it once was thanks to a Legion grant, and the list goes on and on).

Earlier, I said I would ask a favor of you; actually two favors – first, please pay your American Legion dues so your officers can concentrate on the Legion's community service and youth programs rather than worrying about membership, which we must have to exist. Second, I ask you to consider giving me credit for collecting your dues. Since I no longer live in Hays, I must rely on this letter to help collect membership thus retaining the distinction of being the top membership worker of your State Headquarters Staff.

If you wish to give me credit for collecting your dues – Great! If you would rather credit someone else, that's fine too. You may credit me by completing the enclosed membership application, and returning it along with your (\$\$) check in the enclosed envelope provided, or by dropping it by the Post Home. Or scratch my name off and credit whomever you prefer, just as long as you pay your dues.

If you've already paid your (date) dues please disregard this letter, but don't forget to complete and return the application for the free insurance when you receive your membership card.

Sincerely,

Chuck Yunker

CHUCK YUNKER
State Adjutant
Member Post 173

RENEWAL PHONE SCRIPT

Hello, I'm _____ from American Legion Post _____
Name – Position Number

here in _____. Are you _____?*

Location Former Member's Name

(Is he/she at home? May I talk to him/her please?)

*If so, continue as follows – if not, repeat message above if member has just been called to the phone.

_____ The reason I'm calling is I (we) noticed you have not renewed
Member's Name

your membership in The American Legion for the current year. I (we) hope this is just an oversight but then again since your membership is important to us we wanted to make sure everything was all right and if we could perhaps assist you in some way. (Wait for response).

- a. If there is a problem – listen – see if Post can help and/or if problem can be solved.
- b. If there is an error – member has paid and has card – get any information available, check it out – get back to the member.
- c. If there is no problem, suggest times and dates you could come by to pick-up his/her dues.
“Could I come by in the next 30 minutes to renew your membership or is tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. better?”
- d. Wait for response.
- e. Confirm the response by repeating it along with the address (they may have moved and we don't know it).
- f. Thank them for their time – no matter what the outcome.

THE AMERICAN LEGION
POST-NEW MEMBER (TRANSFEREE)
SPONSOR'S GUIDE

_____ IS APPOINTED AS AN AMERICAN LEGION
Name

SPONSOR FOR _____
Name

Address

Phone number

HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO GET THE NEW MEMBER OF YOUR POST OFF TO A GOOD START.

TELEPHONE THE NEW MEMBER:

-Talk about the date and time of the next meeting
-Offer to pick the new member up or set a place to meet
-Provide a telephone number where you can be reached
-Inform the new member of upcoming activities at Post, District, and County or Department level
-Briefly explain these activities

AT THE MEMBER'S FIRST MEETING:

-Discuss the normal meeting schedule
-Show the new member around the Post
-Introduce the new member to all those present, especially current officers and committee chairmen
-Help the new member feel welcome
-Stay with the new member
-Answer questions that arise

MAKE THE INTRODUCTIONS:

- ...Arrange some time with key Post officials to talk to the new member about his/her interests
-Discuss each position and the key responsibilities
-Explain the various offices of The American Legion
-Help the new member meet as many Legionnaires as possible
-Provide assistance, answer questions, etc.

Each sponsor is asked to continue his/her contact with the newly assigned Post member until the new member is comfortable on his/her own. Each sponsor is also asked to keep in touch, periodically, with the Legionnaires he/she has sponsored.

REMEMBER... A new American Legion member, as all members, is a very important person. The new member has joined The American Legion with certain expectations of the Post, District, Count, Department and National Organization. The new member may feel somewhat uncomfortable at first but a good sponsor will assist the new member allowing him/her to build self confidence, get off to a good start and become involved as a valuable member of The American Legion team.

THE AMERICAN LEGION POST SPONSOR CHECKLIST

NAME

SPONSOR

FOR

NAME

ADDRESS

HOME/WORK/CELL NUMBER

	YES	NO	COMMENT
Call the new member before next meeting			
Discuss the place and time of meetings/activities			
Provide your telephone number			
Meet or talk with family regarding Auxiliary, SAL, etc.			
Offer transportation to the next meeting			
Accompany the new member on a tour of the Post			
Discuss normal meeting agenda and schedule			
INTRODUCTION:			
All members, especially:			
Post Officers			
Post Employees			
Post Committee Chairman			
FOLLOW-UP TO ASSURE:			
New members questions are answered			
New member is initiated			
New member gets involved with committee or program of his/her interest & selection			
Membership card is issued			
Family Benefits Plan is explained			
New member knows where to go to seek information and/or assistance			
Refer inquiries you can't resolve to the correct chairperson or member			

WAYS TO KEEP YOUR MEMBERS

From "101 Ways To Keep Your Members"
Compiled by Mark Levin, CAE
President, B.A.I., Inc.

- 1. Have a program, not a campaign.** Retention is a year-round priority and needs to be planned. Any post that is, or wants to be, successful at retention must be able to identify the specific steps it takes to increase its retention rate. In addition to having a series of activities that make up a retention program, your post should be able to identify resources that can be allocated to help implement the program.
- 2. Recognize members who reach milestone membership anniversaries.** If members stay in The American Legion for five, ten, twenty or more years, they are probably not among those who are likely to drop out. When members reach one of these membership milestones, it provides two retention opportunities for your post. First, it is another opportunity to recognize a member or group of members for their continuing support. Doing that solidifies their membership even more. Also, by publicly recognizing these membership milestones, you inspire other members to strive to earn the same recognition by maintaining their membership, too.
- 3. Start a regular column in your newsletter to thank members for their involvement.** One organization featured a column in their monthly newsletter that was called "Tip of the Hat." This column's sole purpose was to say "thank you" to those members who had helped the organization in some way since the previous newsletter. The member's name and the specific service they had performed were all mentioned. It became the most popular feature in the newsletter because every month members saw their name or the name of someone they knew.
- 4. Provide and encourage the use of The American Legion Emblem.** There are good reasons for members to want to display the Legion emblem or other Legion artwork. The emblem can be an effective membership and marketing tool.
- 5. When important issues come up, call some inactive members for their opinions.** It's natural for posts to contact their leadership people when an issue of importance arises, such as a legislative crisis, a local election or the setting of a new standard. These issues and events are also opportunities to involve some of the post's least active members simply by asking their opinion. When the opportunity comes up, have a list of inactive members ready to call, fax or write and ask for their opinion on how the post should react. The fact that the post cared enough to contact them might make the difference at renewal time.
- 6. Accept credit and debit cards for dues payments.** Credit and Debit card payments have become the norm for almost all purchasing transactions. If your post does not already accept them, you should consider doing so. Credit and debit card acceptance is especially useful to posts during difficult economic times because it allows members to renew and still be able to make installment payments (if a credit card company.) Your post would also be able to accept dues payments on-line, which is a very popular method of payment for the younger veterans. Your finance officer must take the fee paid to the credit card company into consideration.
- 7. Send an audio CD with your regular publications.** Even members who don't have time to read your regular publications will have time to listen to a CD on their way to or from work.
- 8. Create an annual slogan or theme for membership each year.** It's often easier to get someone's attention if they have an image of the goals of the post. Having an annual theme or slogan can rally the existing members around a specific program or set of objectives and create an image in the minds of those thinking about dropping. If your post is celebrating a milestone year, that entire year can be dedicated to an anniversary theme.

9. **Recognize your members as often as possible. Thank him or her for their participation in each and every program or function.** Whether you do it formally or informally, it pays to express appreciation to members whenever possible. It's never too late to show gratitude to hard workers!
10. **Get members involved at SOME level. "Involved" members don't drop.** Your post needs to try to find ways to get members involved in a meaningful way without taking up too much of their time. This is especially true with newer members.
11. **Publish an annual report in the local media. Thank the community for their support and send a copy to members.** Publishing an annual report (Consolidated Post Report) allows your post to summarize all the accomplishments from the previous year. It shows the community that your post is an asset to that community and it shows your members that the post is run in a business-like manner and will remind any members thinking about dropping out that they would be giving up all of the benefits listed in the report.
12. **Set up "car pools" to get people to meetings, especially new members.** Car pools help raise the attendance at meetings therefore increasing the involvement of those who may not have shown up if it weren't for the car pool. Some of the drivers may have even found excuses not to attend had it not been for their assigned driving duties.
13. **Set up a speaker's bureau: Speak at other organizations' meetings.** Posts are always trying to spread the word about the Legion and the post's activities in that community. One of the best ways to do this is by finding speaking opportunities for your post's leaders. You can establish a post speaker's bureau, a pre-qualified group of members who are capable both in terms of knowledge and speaking ability to represent your organization to the media or to other civic groups. When these representatives speak, current members are instilled with a sense of pride in membership, which can make a difference at renewal time.
14. **Be sure non-members pay a higher fee than members for programs and functions.** There are two ways to make this idea support your retention efforts. First, be sure that your post charges more for non-members to participate in any of your post functions or to purchase any of your goods or services. Second, be sure to remind your current members about this additional fee that non-members pay. This serves to remind members of the money they save each time they take advantage of your post's services.
15. **Remind members how much money they have saved by participating in programs and functions at the member rate.** Remind your members of the money they may save by participating in the national member benefits program and the discounts for post functions.
16. **Keep members' names and addresses current and accurate—it's the best sign of a "caring" organization.** It is common courtesy and good business practice to keep your membership records as accurate as possible. This becomes even more important because members' expectations increase as they compare your post's communications to those they receive from other sources.
17. **Make sure you capture e-mail addresses whenever possible. Also make sure your members know your post e-mail address so they'll accept e-mail from you.** E-mail is the quickest and least expensive method of sending information and documents to your members and to receive correspondence from your members.
18. **If you ask a member to do a volunteer job, make sure it's a WORTHWHILE job!** Even the smallest volunteer jobs need to provide some sense of accomplishment for the members assigned to do them. Although there is a lot of pressure to get members involved in the post's leadership structure, just having a title is not enough to justify the valuable time members have to give up in order to participate. Be able to pinpoint the contribution each member makes to your post's success and be certain to mention that contribution when thanking the member.

19. **Call your annual dues an investment rather than “dues”.** Referring to your dues as an investment will create an image that your post isn't spending the members' dues but rather investing it in programs and services that bring value to the members, to the post and to the community.
20. **Assign an officer to contact a certain number of inactive members each month – just a little “say Hi!” call.** Some members believe the only time we contact them is when we need money, information or support. This impression is strongest among the less active members. To alleviate some of these feelings ask officers and E-board members to make some random calls each month to your inactive members. These courtesy calls will remind these members that the post knows they're still out there and that their opinion is valued. Be sure to give the callers something substantial to talk about, such as getting input on an upcoming legislative issue or proposed post policy changes.
21. **Bring a list of inactive members to a post meeting and have members contact them.** It's an important sign to members when a volunteer leader takes the time to contact a member simply to say that the post misses them and to also relay to the member that the post is there to assist if there's anything the member needs.
22. **Get spouses active – it assures renewal.** When you have multiple family members simultaneously belonging to the Legion, the Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion, your chances of having them renew is much greater than the renewal rates of individual members.
23. **Bring in National speakers to describe how National adds benefits to state/local membership.** Posts should try to get representatives from the Department and National organization to speak at a post or District function to emphasize the member benefits available through affiliation with the National organization.
24. **Hold leadership-training programs – give your members the tools to be successful volunteers.** It is important for members who do get involved to have a good experience during their involvement. Leadership training is becoming one of the best services that organizations can give their members. The skills developed through leadership training are transferred back to the members' workplaces. At renewal time, members will remember where these skills were developed.
25. **Create a new member welcoming committee.** When a new member joins ask someone who is already a member to call the new member. Tell the new member what a good investment membership has been for them and congratulate the new member on making a great decision to join. In as little as ten seconds the welcoming member has validated the new member's decision to join by making that person feel more welcome in the Legion post.
26. **Send a “New Member Newsletter” to first year members during their first year.** New members are special because they are the least likely to know everything that is going on in your post, the least likely to be involved in a leadership position, and therefore the most likely to drop out. Several groups have developed new member newsletters that new members get throughout their first year of membership. These newsletters are basically a summary of the most important information that has been sent to them via other formats, such as newsletters and magazines, with further explanation and background. These publications usually go out three or four times during the year. New members stop receiving it as soon as they renew for the first time.
27. **Send new members a letter or postcard saying, “Here's where your \$25.00 dues went: \$3.00 for VA&R Programs; \$3.00 for Americanism Programs, etc.** This technique can be used effectively to show members that their dues investment is working for them. Even if the members are inactive, they can feel good that their dues are helping to support some very important programs sponsored by the post. Their dues are helping to make their community a better place to live.
28. **Offer plenty of member-only programs and benefits.** Your post needs to constantly remind members of the exclusive benefits they get as regular, dues-paying members. Depending on the legal requirements of your post, there will be many services and programs that can be reserved for members. These programs and services need to be highlighted whenever possible.

- 29. Send a mini-survey to members about six months after they join to see how they rate your post's services.** One educational organization called this their "six month report card." It was sent to members half way through their first year and asked the members to grade the organization in several service areas. Any members that rated a program below an A or B was given a phone call to get more information. Then the organization used that information to try to correct that problem. The organization was also able to spot potential dropped members by noting which new members didn't even bother to return the card. These members also got a phone call.
- 30. Get new and inactive members to attend Department Conventions or Conferences.** They are more likely to renew when they witness the importance of the business conducted at these functions. Even if they don't attend every year, the stature of the event and the impression they get by attending will help remind them of the benefits of membership.
- 31. Hold a new member reception at Conventions.** Whenever your post, district or department sponsors a meeting or educational program, use that opportunity to invite new members to attend a special reception. These receptions are usually held prior to the start of the convention or educational program. In addition to talking about the Legion, and learning about the expectations of the newer members, it is also a chance to explain how to get the most out of their participation in the event.
- 32. Give new members a special ribbon to wear.** Identifying newer members does several positive things. It lets the new members feel special and it reinforces for them the fact that joining was a good idea since there are others who have the same designation. Most importantly, it allows Legion leaders to spot new members and try to make them feel welcome.
- 33. Use groups of volunteers for renewal phone-a-thons.** This project not only helps your renewal efforts, but it makes the callers feel more like an important part of your Post.
- 34. Make sponsors or recruiters responsible for the first renewal, too.** If your post has a sponsorship program where the recruiters are known, contact the recruiters at renewal time and let them know the new members they brought in during the past year are about to receive renewal notices. Ask that the recruiters call their recruits to let them know they are looking forward to having them with the post again next year. It reminds the recruiter about his or her efforts, and keeps those efforts from being wasted if the members they sponsored drop out a short time after joining.
- 35. Give discounts or perks for early renewals.** One of the hard parts of retention is trying to figure out who among those who are late renewing is really a potential non-renewing member who is just putting their renewal off. One way to help resolve this problem is to give some sort of small discount or perk for members who renew early. Your post's financial managers need to work out the appropriate discount and accounting methods, but having the early renewal money in interest-bearing accounts may more than offset any discount given. In addition to the financial rewards for your post, there is the main benefit of being able to identify the post's most likely drops earlier in the renewal process.
- 36. Give rebate vouchers for early renewals.** Instead of giving a discount for early renewals, try giving a rebate. When you ask your members to pay the full amount at renewal time, tell them that the post will send them a rebate voucher as a reward if they renew early. The voucher would have a monetary value or be in the form of a certificate good for a certain amount of credit when the member participates in a post function or social activity.
- 37. Send a checklist entitled "What's your reason for not renewing?"** Send a survey that lists the most common reasons for dropping out to those people who have recently dropped their memberships and ask them to check off the reasons that apply to them. Be prepared to follow up and address each of the reasons. While a written form is not as effective as actually talking to these members, it does give the post one more chance to reinforce the value of membership and to personalize the next contact.

- 38. Have the Commander send a pre-renewal letter on his/her letterhead a few weeks BEFORE the renewal is sent.** Tell of the great year you had, and how he/she is looking forward to working with the member again next year. This is usually done to remind members of all of the value they received during the past year and to tell them what they can expect in the future. By sending the report or letter prior to the renewal notice, you alert members that the renewal is coming and raise their anticipation level and their need to respond. This usually raises the number of early renewals. Having the letter on your post stationery adds to the credibility of the message and increases the chances it will be opened promptly.
- 39. Have a retention committee – give it goals!** There is a need for member involvement in the recruiting process and there should also be member involvement in the retention process. Your post should have either a separate retention committee or a retention subcommittee of your membership committee. The retention committee needs to have goals and a plan of action with very definite steps that can be taken to raise the post's retention rate. The retention committee should be assigned to develop these steps and undertake them.
- 40. List names of non-renewals at leadership meetings. Have a “10 Most Wanted Renewals” list.** Select 10 non-renewed members for each meeting and assign members at that meeting to contact those lapsed members. This shows your lapsed members that the post still cares about them and it draws your current members into the membership retention process.
- 41. Reward renewal efforts as much as you do recruitment efforts.** There is nothing wrong with building in an incentive or recognition program for retention efforts. Such a program can even be integrated into your recruitment incentives by giving the member who recruits a new member some form of appropriate recognition when the new member joins, and again when the new member renews.
- 42. After a couple of renewal notices, begin personal contacts.** When members fail to respond to dues notices, it isn't always because they intend to drop out for a particular reason or because they are generally disappointed with your post. Some members just want to know if your post cares that they are out there. A personal call to let members know they are missed can make a big difference at renewal time.
- 43. Send non-renewals a newsletter with the front and back cover printed and the inside blank. Print a message inside about what the former member is missing by not renewing.** Your post's newsletters are among its most valuable membership benefits. When members drop out, they need to be reminded that they are losing these valuable benefits forever. By sending a newsletter with nothing in it except the table of contents listing all of the valuable information the former member *isn't* getting, you graphically describe the lost benefit.
- 44. Dig beyond the “never did anything for me” answer. Try to find out exactly why they chose to not renew their membership.** There's always something more. Your post should prepare questions that probe beyond the surface and get to the heart of why members are leaving.
- 45. Pay special attention to those who renew last.** They are the most likely to not renew next year. As your post begins identifying the non-active members it needs to contact, add these late payers to the priority list.
- 46. Hold a retention contest, just like a recruitment contest.** If your members respond well to incentives and competitions consider having a retention contest among your leaders. Divide the membership roster among the post officers, executive committee and the membership team and assign a certain number of current members to each leader. Give prizes to the leaders who renew the most members. Help them out by giving them suggestions on how they can get reluctant members to renew.

47. **Offer incentives to the first 10% who renew (free dinner, etc.).** Why not have a contest among your members to see who can send in their renewal dues the fastest? Give some type of incentive to those who renew before a certain date or are among the first to renew.
48. **List first-time renewals in a special section of your newsletter.** In addition to giving special recognition to new members, list those who are renewing for the first time in a special section of your newsletter. This will remind these members that the decision they made a year ago to join your post was a good decision. It will also remind them that the post is glad to have them back again for a second year.
49. **Be sure to acknowledge renewal checks, just like new member applications.** Your post probably makes a big deal when new members join by sending them welcome letters and new member kits and by putting their names in your newsletter. Yet, few posts do anything to acknowledge renewals other than sending them their new Legion card. Find some way to thank them for their renewal. Put a letter or a postcard in the return envelope with their membership card. After all, these renewing members are making the same financial commitment as first-time members and they deserve some recognition.

Do everything your post can to be a reason a member wants to renew. **For many members, The American Legion is the staff and the leadership. If they perceive that they have a group of dedicated, qualified staff and volunteer leaders, they'll probably be back.**

GETTING OUR MEMBERSHIP 100%



.... **AND KEEPING IT THERE!**

PART III

SPECIAL PROGRAMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership

Right up front, Commander/Chairperson, we'll admit that this is an article about "Leadership." Perhaps you consider it one of those dull topics you have been barraged with at meetings and conferences. And you're sure you've heard this before – right? Well, Maybe. If you've heard it before, did you **do** anything about it? Were you successful in your efforts? If so, **great!** Congratulations on a job well done! However, if you think something needs to be done about developing leadership in your post and district – and you want to do your part – read on; you'll find some good ideas on where to start.

The First Step

If you are still reading, you have taken the first step. That is, you have identified the problem and considered it a challenge, rather than an insurmountable obstacle. You recognize it as a challenge to overcome **and** a challenge that could stimulate **positive growth** through renewed activity in your post.

Where to Start?

Begin by evaluating the situation and by asking questions. What is the challenge? Why is it needed? How are we going to do it? Who is going to do it? Obviously, the question of "Who?" becomes critical when dealing with volunteer workers.

What is Leadership?

Dictionaries offer a variety of definitions of "lead", usually offering "direct or guide" or "to be ahead of." The latter definition is perhaps the most overlooked quality of leadership. A good leader has to anticipate obstacles, and this can only be done through preparation. The Boy Scout motto – "Be Prepared" – says it best.

Beyond the dictionary definition, "leadership" can simply be stated as, "inspiring and helping others to work toward a goal." This can be done in several different ways: 1) Setting an example (for others to follow by what you say and do); 2) Introducing new ideas (that help solve problems, i.e., "speak up" and "think up"); 3) Helping to settle differences (and disagreements by encouraging a spirit of cooperation). When dealing with volunteers, the "dictator" approach should be reserved for dire emergencies – and may not work even then.

Why Develop Leadership?

Leadership skills will enable you to better fulfill the duties and obligations of your position. Not everyone is born a leader, but each can develop leadership skills and benefit from using them.

Whether you are elected or appointed, or simply assuming an informal leadership role, leadership skills can help you to:

- contribute to the achievement of group goals (by helping focus everyone's energy on the task at hand);
- grow professionally (leadership skills can be applied to any line of work); and, most importantly,
- enjoy personal growth and satisfaction (knowing you are making the difference).

How's Leadership Developed?

Communication ability is the key to developing leadership skills. People simply can't work together without communicating with each other. Communication is the art of getting a message across. It may be written, spoken, or that which is referred to as "non-verbal" or "body language". If you don't think this last form is powerful, just remember the expressions that greeted the last unpopular suggestion made at a post meeting.

Person-to-Person Communication

1. *Develop your speaking skills.*

Speaking, whether to an individual or group, is a skill that improves with practice (recording your speech on a small recorder and playing it back for yourself is a good technique here).

2. *Be "Timely"*

Present only information that is relevant. Also, make it a point to be on time and stick to the schedule.

3. *Practice Good Listening Habits.*

Be courteous and pay attention to what is being said. Take notes and ask questions if you do not understand.

4. *Keep A Positive Attitude.*

Smile! Even if you disagree with what is being said, don't let your emotions interfere with clear thinking. Summarize without injecting your opinions, too.

Written Communication

1. *Be Brief.*

Stick to the subject at hand to avoid confusing your readers.

2. *Be Accurate.*

Check all the facts before putting anything on paper.

3. *Keep It Simple.*

Don't use confusing technology or unnecessary complicated explanations.

Audio-Visual Aids

1. *Utilize Appropriate Visual Aids*

Used properly, A/V material can help clarify your point and maintain your audience's interest (too much or too little may only cloud the issue; the key word here is "approximate.")

In addition, the following points form a guideline for development of other important leadership skills.

Become "Team Minded"

1. *Help Develop Team Spirit.*

Encourage enthusiasm and a sense of belonging by showing Friendliness, Understanding, Fairness and Good Will. (Sincere enthusiasm is contagious.)

2. *Keep Everyone Working Toward Team Goals.*

A team of individuals working together, sharing ideas and responsibilities, can accomplish much more than a number of individuals working alone. Do this by reminding everyone of the group's goals and providing encouragement. Strive to harmonize differences and involve everyone in the process of achieving the group's objectives.

3. *Know The People Around You.*

Everyone has different abilities, wants, needs and purposes in life. To get along with other people and get results, you need to know what makes them tick.

4. *Treat Others as Individuals.*

Put your knowledge and understanding of each group member to work.

- a) Be aware of their expectations.
- b) Be creative.
- c) Provide rewards of your workers and achievers.
- d) Delegate responsibilities. Don't try to do it all yourself!

5. *Accept Responsibilities For Getting Things Done.*

Become actively involved by taking the initiative and make things happen.

- a) Seek help and information as well as offering it.
- b) Most important, know when and how to say, "NO".

6. *Take Time to Analyze Yourself.*

Learn to understand yourself and identify areas of improvement. Before you can interact with others, answer the following two questions:

a) **Who Am I?**

A leader who helps solve problems, a leader who helps people get along, a take-charge leader, one who leads by example or a combination of these different styles. How do others see me as a leader?

b) **What Am I Doing Here?**

What are **my** goals, purposes and expectations in working with this particular group or organization? What are the purposes of the group, as a whole?

After analyzing your own strengths and weaknesses, it's time to take action in pursuit of improved personal leadership skills.

7. *Make Your Own Self-improvement Plan.*

Devise a strategy for upgrading your skills (write down and refer to it from time to time; this is also true of group goals and plans). If you don't write them down, you may forget; or, in the case of a group, a new leader or group will have no reference to aid in maintaining continuity. When this occurs, each new set of group members must start from scratch (sometimes referred to as "reinventing the wheel"). Some examples of areas of improvement might include the following:

- a) Communication Skills (by taking a speech class, observing others, practicing new skills, etc.).
- b) Understanding of Groups and Individuals (by getting to know the people around you).
- c) Willingness to Accept Responsibility and New Ideas (by making an effort to take on bigger, more creative challenges).

Start Today!

1. **WATCH AND LEARN** (from other effective leaders wherever you find them).
2. **READ** (about leadership techniques and practice them wherever you can).
3. **GET INVOLVED** (by making your group's goals and purposes your own).
4. **GET THE JOB DONE!** (This is the common characteristic ability of all leaders).

The time is now, the Plan is real, and mere lip service will not suffice. If you care, really care, you'll back your words with meaningful action.

“If not **YOU**, then **WHO?**”

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Giving a speech to a live audience is one of everyone's most feared tasks – until they learn how to do it! Public speaking is an essential skill for those in leadership positions. There is not enough space in this publication to do justice to this subject. However, a printed resource known as “The Speakers Guide” is available from the Public Relations Division of the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. It provides useful information, suggestions and guidelines on how to improve your speaking skills.

If you are serious about becoming a better speaker, you may wish to consider joining a local Toastmaster's chapter. If you are already an experienced speaker, the information listed below on what to avoid may be helpful to you.

8 GREAT SPEECH BLUNDERS

- Reprinted from “Speakers Idea File” from Ragan Communications Inc. -

1. Dullness itself: Relying on only one or two illustrations to make your points.

Use salient statistics...timely quotes... appropriate industry examples...and personal stories to help your listeners visualize your message – and remember it.

2. NOT repeating your message enough.

Repetition is crucial to retention. Half an hour after a presentation, the average listener has already forgotten 40 percent of what was said. By the end of the week, 90 percent is usually forgotten. The more you repeat and illustrate your message, the more retention you'll get.

3. NOT answering the audience's most major questions, “What's in it for me?”

You must understand the payoff: why your audience is willing to come and listen to you. If you can answer their question, you can tailor-make your speech for them - and reach them in a very personal way.

4. Burying your point.

You can lose your audience, even if you have something that they want to hear, unless you point out the most vital sections for them, in advance. Use signal phrases (like “What's important here,” or “This can't be overemphasized”) to focus people's attention on the most important parts of your message.

5. Forgetting to practice (and time) your speech out loud.

This little item can cause major embarrassment on stage. A short spoken rehearsal will eliminate tongue twisters...make sure the speech's spoken length is appropriate...ensure that your opener is no more than the recommended three minutes long...and that you close snappily, in 30 seconds or less.

6. Forgetting to check visual aids for readability.

You can only have yourself to blame if you lose your audience over this. Look at all your visual aids in advance. If anything you present cannot be read from the back of the room, get rid of it.

7. Answering hypothetical questions after the speech.

You can get into real hot water on this one, because these questions have no boundaries, no budget or time constraints, and can pin you down to a future you'd rather not have. Turn the question, instead, back to reality by saying, “Based on these facts and the existing situation, this is how I would handle the situation.”

8. Getting distracted before you speak.

Very few speakers can answer a phone call or deal with some minor emergency before they speak, and NOT have it distract from their presentation. Always take five minutes (or more) to collect your thoughts, focus on your message, and breathe before stepping up to the podium. Don't allow distractions to ruin what you've taken days to prepare.

Understand and make better use of words that...

IRRITATE

Understand? You don't say?
Get the point? See what I mean?
But honestly now! Not really.....?
I, me, my, mine. Old friend. Old pal.
Don't you know...? I'll tell you what!

MOTIVATE

Will you help me? I'm so sorry.
It was my fault. Thank you. Please.
Gee, I'm proud of you. Congratulations!
You were very kind. I beg your pardon.
It's been a real pleasure.

PROBE

What is your opinion? What do you think? Why?
Can you illustrate? What do you consider? How
do you feel about...? Could you explain? What
happened then? What were the circumstances?

INVITE ACTION

You, your.....Money.....
Save.....Guarantee....
New.....Results.....
Health.....Easy.....
Love.....Discovery.....
Proven.....Safety....

SOME SUGGESTIONS TO CELEBRATE THE AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY AND INCREASE MEMBERSHIP AT THE SAME TIME

- 1.) **POST OPEN HOUSE:** Invite the public to your Post home to explain programs and activities of The American Legion and services being provided to your community. This should dispel any false image or stereotype. Put up tabletop booths with promotional materials on the various commissions and activities of The American Legion. Have enough materials for distribution. Invite someone from a local VA hospital regional office, Vet Center, the SBA or the PTA to assist in answering questions and to provide appropriate handouts where indicated. Invite the public to meet and greet your sponsored Special Olympics Team, American Legion Baseball Team, National High School Oratorical champion, a well recognized local hero who is a member of The American Legion, etc. It is also important to have your committee chairman and Post Service Officer available to explain their operations. Schedule your Open House so it doesn't conflict with other community events. Publicize widely and well in advance (i.e., newspaper, radio, TV, all appropriate public places, posters and neighborhood leaflets). Conduct a special raffle night (for guests and members).
- 2.) **“APPRECIATION” DINNER:** Hold a special dinner (and social event) to show your support and appreciation of all veterans by having your members invite/sponsor a guest who is an eligible veteran. Have a distinguished member of your community be the guest speaker (preferably a veteran – definitely a veteran’s advocate). Help ensure the evening’s success by preparing a brief but appropriate agenda. Distribute promotional materials and publicize properly.
- 3.) **V.I.P. INVOLVEMENT:** Enlist the aid of local or state personalities in promoting the good works of your Post and District. If possible, try and relate their appearances to your local or state projects you have decided to undertake (i.e., Mayor and Governor proclamations, appearances, speeches and events).
- 4.) **BLOOD DRIVE:** Contact your local agency and arrange to have your Post sponsor a blood donor program. (If you do not have a Post home, secure an appropriate public place and supply a volunteer work force to assist). Make sure your volunteers wear their Legion caps for visibility. Don't make a membership pitch at the actual drive – but why not send thank you notes to the donors afterwards and include an invitation to join your Post if they are eligible. As always, schedule wisely and publicize widely.
- 5.) **SPONSOR COMMUNITY SERVICE SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS:** Contact local social service and educational agencies (such as evening schools, colleges, the Small Business Administration (SBA) office, etc.) and offer to host an informational workshop. Your emphasis could be on re-training and assistance for unemployed veterans.

- 6.) **ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:** As part of ongoing outreach program to raise awareness and improve the image of The American Legion in your community; contact other fraternal and civic groups. Ask for time on their meeting agendas to address their membership on some aspect of your Post’s programs. (Many of these groups are looking for guest speakers and would most likely be glad to oblige).
- 7.) **DISPLAY PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS IN HIGH TRAFFIC AREAS:** Approach supervisors of these places diplomatically and request display space. Point out advantages of cooperative efforts for mutual benefit (i.e., announce their help at meetings and encourage your members to consider doing business there). Some typical high traffic areas include: banks, supermarkets, medical facilities, shopping malls, town halls, civic centers, stadiums, and auditoriums, etc. Materials may be placed in some places unattended, but the best method is to have them available at an attractive booth manned by your best recruiters (note: if a booth is not possible for some reason, a simple folding table will do).
- 8.) **COMMUNITY ACTION TEAMS:** Develop 5-10 member teams comprised of the best go-getters from surrounding Posts and make them an American Legion Community Action Team. Have them canvass the immediate community (emphasizing the local or state project you have chosen to underscore your effort) and ask them to join your Department Headquarters Post initially, then let them decide which local Post they would like to be associated with.
 Related projects could be in the form of:
 - Telephone Membership Round Up (new members and/or renewals). Half of the team makes calls while the remaining members stand by with vehicles to go pick up the dues immediately.
 - Door-to-Door Membership Drive: Target one or more neighborhoods in your community; divide up the streets and conduct a door-to-door canvassing effort. Good planning and organization (advance publicity, prepared introductory remarks for all canvassing and a follow-up report listing the results) will greatly aid your chances for success providing an evaluation of your effectiveness.
- 9.) **FULLY UTILIZE NATIONAL TOOLS AND PROGRAMS:** Supplement your efforts to increase awareness and membership through greater use of materials available from Department and National Headquarters. Additionally, you may wish to have billboards strategically placed in your community. This can also be handled through your Department at a minimal cost.

PUFL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM A Good Deal for Department, Post, Member

The American Legion's Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) membership plan is a good deal for all parties involved – the National Organization, the Department, the Post, and most important, the individual Legionnaire. Affirming the fact it is a good deal are the nearly 250,000 Legionnaires who have taken advantage of the PUFL plan.

American Legion Posts with a high participation in the PUFL plan have successfully stabilized their membership base. They don't have to spend so much time and effort on renewals and can concentrate on their new membership recruitment program.

Many posts are finding the PUFL plan an effective way to assure uninterrupted payment of dues for those Legionnaires honored with a Life Membership. A post can waive its per capita and figure the PUFL rate using the total of

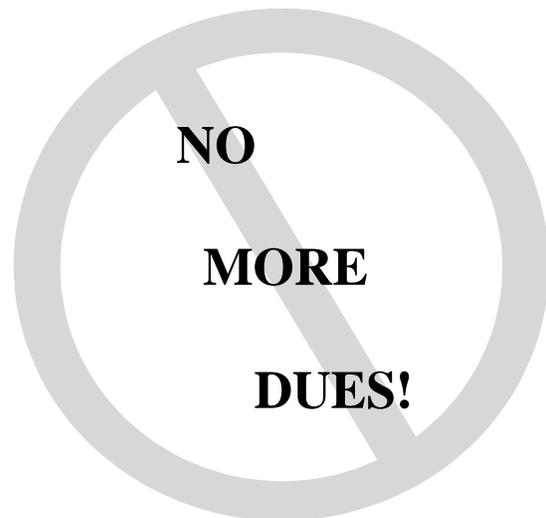
Department and National per capita to determine the final cost.

The post that uses the PUFL plan to take care of Life Memberships saves money and avoids the possibility of embarrassment should someone in the future fail to pay the Life Member's dues.

Note 1: The National PUFL program is not available in the Department of Kansas. They have their own program.

Note 2: The National PUFL program is designed to be a convenient way for a member to pay membership dues. It was never intended to be a discounted membership.

PAID-UP-FOR-LIFE



FOR A PUFL APPLICATION, WRITE TO - PUFL, BOX 1055, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206
OR CHECK The American Legion WEB SITE @ www.legion.org
(Please provide your name, address, post number and department)

THE AMERICAN LEGION
Paid-Up-For-Life
Rate Schedule - effective January 1, 2004

DUES	AGE GROUP													
	24 & Under	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85 & Over
\$14	\$488	\$464	\$438	\$410	\$378	\$345	\$309	\$272	\$234	\$197	\$163	\$130	\$101	\$82
\$15	\$523	\$497	\$469	\$439	\$405	\$369	\$331	\$291	\$251	\$211	\$174	\$139	\$108	\$88
\$16	\$557	\$530	\$500	\$468	\$432	\$394	\$353	\$310	\$267	\$225	\$186	\$148	\$116	\$94
\$17	\$592	\$563	\$532	\$497	\$459	\$419	\$375	\$330	\$284	\$239	\$197	\$158	\$123	\$100
\$18	\$627	\$597	\$563	\$527	\$486	\$443	\$397	\$349	\$301	\$253	\$209	\$167	\$130	\$106
\$19	\$662	\$630	\$594	\$556	\$513	\$468	\$419	\$369	\$317	\$268	\$221	\$176	\$137	\$112
\$20	\$697	\$663	\$626	\$585	\$540	\$492	\$441	\$388	\$334	\$282	\$232	\$186	\$145	\$118
\$21	\$732	\$696	\$657	\$614	\$567	\$517	\$463	\$407	\$351	\$296	\$244	\$195	\$152	\$123
\$22	\$766	\$729	\$688	\$644	\$594	\$542	\$485	\$427	\$367	\$310	\$255	\$204	\$159	\$129
\$23	\$801	\$762	\$719	\$673	\$621	\$566	\$507	\$446	\$384	\$324	\$267	\$213	\$166	\$135
\$24	\$836	\$795	\$751	\$702	\$648	\$591	\$529	\$466	\$401	\$338	\$279	\$223	\$174	\$141
\$25	\$871	\$829	\$782	\$731	\$676	\$616	\$552	\$485	\$418	\$352	\$290	\$232	\$181	\$147
\$26	\$906	\$862	\$813	\$761	\$703	\$640	\$574	\$504	\$434	\$366	\$302	\$241	\$188	\$153
\$27	\$941	\$895	\$845	\$790	\$730	\$665	\$596	\$524	\$451	\$380	\$313	\$251	\$195	\$159
\$28	\$976	\$928	\$876	\$819	\$757	\$689	\$618	\$543	\$468	\$394	\$325	\$260	\$202	\$165
\$29	\$1,010	\$961	\$907	\$848	\$784	\$714	\$640	\$563	\$484	\$408	\$337	\$269	\$210	\$171
\$30	\$1,045	\$994	\$938	\$878	\$811	\$739	\$662	\$582	\$501	\$422	\$348	\$278	\$217	\$176
\$31	\$1,080	\$1,027	\$970	\$907	\$838	\$763	\$684	\$601	\$518	\$436	\$360	\$288	\$224	\$182
\$32	\$1,115	\$1,060	\$1,001	\$936	\$865	\$788	\$706	\$621	\$534	\$451	\$372	\$297	\$231	\$188
\$33	\$1,150	\$1,094	\$1,032	\$965	\$892	\$812	\$728	\$640	\$551	\$465	\$383	\$306	\$239	\$194
\$34	\$1,185	\$1,127	\$1,064	\$995	\$919	\$837	\$750	\$660	\$568	\$479	\$395	\$316	\$246	\$200
\$35	\$1,219	\$1,160	\$1,095	\$1,024	\$946	\$862	\$772	\$679	\$585	\$493	\$406	\$325	\$253	\$206
\$36	\$1,254	\$1,193	\$1,126	\$1,053	\$973	\$886	\$794	\$698	\$601	\$507	\$418	\$334	\$260	\$212
\$37	\$1,289	\$1,226	\$1,157	\$1,082	\$1,000	\$911	\$816	\$718	\$618	\$521	\$430	\$343	\$268	\$218
\$38	\$1,324	\$1,259	\$1,189	\$1,112	\$1,027	\$936	\$838	\$737	\$635	\$535	\$441	\$353	\$275	\$223
\$39	\$1,359	\$1,292	\$1,220	\$1,141	\$1,054	\$960	\$860	\$757	\$651	\$549	\$453	\$362	\$282	\$229
\$40	\$1,394	\$1,326	\$1,251	\$1,170	\$1,081	\$985	\$882	\$776	\$668	\$563	\$464	\$371	\$289	\$235
Other *	\$34.84	\$33.14	\$31.28	\$29.25	\$27.02	\$24.62	\$22.06	\$19.40	\$16.70	\$14.08	\$11.61	\$9.28	\$7.23	\$5.88

* If the annual Post dues are an amount not shown in the above table, compute the cost by multiplying the actual dues by the amount shown on the "Other" line, according to age.

TIME PAYMENTS NATIONAL PAID-UP-FOR-LIFE MEMBERSHIP PLAN

Applicants may use the Time Payment Plan to purchase their Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) membership in The American Legion, with no additional interest or service charge added to the fee. Below are rules to follow:

1. You must be a member in Good Standing to apply for a PUFL. Good standing means that the member must have a valid membership card for the current Legion membership year.
2. The total PUFL membership fee must be paid within twelve (12) months from the date you apply for the PUFL membership.
3. There are no provisions for refunds in the PUFL program.
4. Check the appropriate box on the application that you wish to purchase.
5. When you submit the application to your Post Adjutant or Finance Officer for certification, an initial remittance must accompany the application.
6. After receipt and approval of the application, National Headquarters will provide Time Payment applicants with coupons and envelopes to be used for submitting monthly payments until the entire PUFL fee is paid-in-full. The monthly payment due will be at least 10% of the total fee. *(Note: Monthly statements will not be sent from National.)*
7. Your permanent PUFL membership card will be issued to you when the fee is paid in full.

If you need assistance or have any questions, please contact your Post Adjutant or Finance Officer, or write:

The American Legion
National Paid-Up-For-Life Plan
PO Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206

ANSWERS TO MOST FREQUENT INQUIRIES CONCERNING PUFL

1. The National Constitution gives the member the right to pay dues annually or for life.
2. A member in good standing may purchase a Paid-Up-For-Life Membership only through his/her own Post. The Post Adjutant or Finance Officer will certify applicants for such a membership.
3. A permanent, distinctive membership card will be sent to each PUFL member upon receipt and acceptance of the application by National. Thereafter, an annual membership card will be sent to each PUFL member.
4. Each year National Headquarters will print a register for Posts and Departments of their National PUFL members and will issue checks in payment for the Department per capita and the Post share of the annual dues.
5. A Department so desiring may exclude itself from the National plan by action of the Department Executive Committee or the Department Convention and notification to the National Adjutant.
6. A PUFL membership plan is necessary to retain a competitive position with other major national organizations.
7. Many members, particularly those approaching retirement age, wish to purchase a PUFL membership to assure the continuance of their membership.
8. Paid-up members may transfer from a Post in one participating Department to a Post in another participating Department. The PUFL member may continue to be not only a member, but an active member after changing residences.
9. Rates are actuarially established at a level that anticipates further inflation.
10. The National Treasurer will annually withdraw from the trust account an amount equal to each Post's share of the per capita dues when application was made plus the sum of National and Department per capita dues in effect at the time of withdrawal.
11. A Post cannot charge less than National and Department per capita.
12. Transfer procedures have been established. Posts would retain the right to be the judge of its own membership and acceptance would not be mandatory. However, once approval to transfer has been secured from the new Post and the Department, both are obligated to honor the PUFL membership.
13. No refunds are planned in the event of the member's death. However, provisions have been made for refunds to be made when a charter is cancelled or a member cannot complete a transfer, or has a membership revoked.
14. Distinction will clearly be made between PUFL membership and Life Membership.



DIRECT MEMBERSHIP SOLICITATION

Research studies have shown that many veterans would consider joining The American Legion, but they have never been asked. In an attempt to reach as many veterans as possible, who have not been previously asked to join, we have been soliciting new members through the mail since 1982. This membership program is called Direct Membership Solicitation (DMS).

The DMS program is a form of direct marketing used to solicit membership in The American Legion. Although we are primarily using direct mail to solicit new members at this time, direct marketing includes one of, or a combination of, direct mail, television, radio, magazines, newspapers or telephone. The best way to determine which of these media will work the best is to test them. Previous tests have shown that direct mail is very successful.

Briefly, this is how DMS works. We rent mailing lists from commercial list brokers. We then compare these lists with our membership files in an effort to remove our members' names from these commercial lists. This is done to ensure that our members do not receive an invitation to join. After this step is completed, we mail out a letter with the National Commander's signature, which lists many of The American Legion's past accomplishments, our current concerns, and reasons why we need this prospective member's support. After reading the letter, if a prospective member wishes to join, they complete the enclosed application form certifying their dates of active duty and separation from the armed forces, their character of discharge, their branch of service, and their birth date. They then sign the application and return it with a payment for \$20.00 in the envelope provided. There is also an option for the prospective new member to charge their membership dues to their Visa or Master card account.

When responses are received at National Headquarters, the paid new members are keyed into our computer

system. These new members are then assigned directly to the Department Headquarters Post in the state in which they live. National Headquarters then sends the new member a membership card signed by the National Adjutant, a congratulatory letter, information on The American Legion Family Benefit Plan and a branch of service lapel pin or other premium.

A list of all the new members of a specific Department is then forwarded to the Department Headquarters to inform them of the new members. The Department also receives a set of mailing labels for these new members to be used to send a communication to each member informing them of any specific Department benefits, welcoming them to The American Legion, and informing them of their option to transfer to a local Post or remain in the Headquarters Post. The Department also receives a set of 3 x 5 cards for these new members which can be used to distribute to Districts and or Posts in the new member's area. It should be noted that the computer list, the mailing label, and the 3 x 5 cards are all supplied in Zip Code order for ease of mailing and distribution at no cost to the Department.

Listed below are some of the most commonly asked questions pertaining to the DMS program:

1. How do you know if someone is eligible?
Answer: Initially, a new member provides his/her service dates and character of discharge and signs the application certifying their eligibility. However, the ultimate responsibility for verifying the new member's eligibility, using Form DD214 or other official proof of separation, lies with the local Post. It should be mentioned that of over 3 million new members that have been acquired through the DMS program, National Headquarters has been informed of less than 300 instances where an individual was found to be ineligible at the local Post level. Therefore, the eligibility question does not appear to be a problem at this time.

2. Who signs the card?

Answer: The National Adjutant.

3. Does the local Post have to accept transfers of these newly acquired DMS members from the Headquarters Post?

Answer: No. The Post still remains the judge of its own membership. But, why would you not accept a new member in your Post?

4. What should a local Post do if a prospective new member walks in with one of these letters inviting them to join?

Answer: Sign them up using normal procedures.

5. How often does National Headquarters send out these mailings?

Answer: Primary mailings will be done between July and February.

6. What is the potential of the DMS program?

Answer: There are currently over twenty (20) million eligible veterans who do not belong to The American Legion yet.

7. Why does National Headquarters ask for membership dues of \$20.00 through the DMS program?

Answer: This price was established as follows: \$13.50 is national per capita as established by the National Constitution. The remaining \$6.50 is needed to offset the first year's cost of acquiring the new member through the DMS program.

8. Is a member who signs up through DMS different from any other member?

Answer: No! He or she is a member of The American Legion in good standing!

9. Why do current members receive these DMS mailings inviting them to join? Doesn't National know who its own members are?

Answer: Every precaution is taken to ensure our own members do not receive these mailings. However, if one of our member's name and address is listed on a commercial mailing list with a different spelling or abbreviations, or mailing address as compared to his/her listing on our database file, then the computer cannot remove it.

Subsequently, he/she will receive an invitation to join. It should be mentioned that this unfortunate situation does not occur frequently, when compared to the millions of letters sent out annually.

As mentioned previously, the DMS program is, in fact, direct marketing. Direct marketing is the most disciplined of the marketing theories. The key word, in fact, the foundation of direct marketing, is measurability. Direct marketing's complex mathematical formulas provide a strict account of expenditures and exact methods of measuring response. For example, The American Legion must receive a 1.18% response rate to each mailing in order to cover the first year cost of the program. Simply, this means that for each 1,000 letters mailed, we must acquire twelve (12) new members in order to break even for the first year.

In summary, the DMS program is an effort on the part of National Headquarters to help our traditional word of mouth recruiters in the field reach these millions of veterans who are eligible for membership in The American Legion. There is no valid reason why we cannot re-establish our membership base and begin to experience a true positive growth. The National organization has made tremendous strides by establishing a direct marketing program (DMS) utilizing the various media such as direct mail, television, and telephone to reach out to those potential members. DMS is a valid approach and one that will require continuous support and communication at all levels of The American Legion. District Commanders and Post officers are of critical importance in this program. They will, more than likely, be the first to personally contact a new DMS member. That contact may be the determining factor as to whether or not that new member will stay a member.

It is also interesting to note that the distribution of veterans by war eras is more equal in the DMS program. That is, we are basically signing up the same percentage of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam veterans. In comparison, our traditional word of mouth efforts signed up approximately 60% WWII, 23% Korea, and 17% Vietnam veterans. The challenges are many and the opportunities are great. Through the DMS program and increased efforts through our traditional word of mouth membership recruiting, The American Legion is again experiencing positive growth.

One final point. Every effort should be made to contact these new members personally and urge them to transfer into a local Post in their area. Although an increase in the number of members alone does give us more strength in our lobbying efforts, **these new members cannot become active while they remain in the Department Headquarters Post.** Your Post needs new members and the fresh ideas they bring with them, if it is to remain a viable force in your community.

PART IV
SUCCESSFUL
MEMBERSHIP
*(IDEAS, BROCHURES,
HANDBOOKS &
TECHNIQUES)*

SUCCESSFUL MEMBERSHIP

In this section you will find copies of letters, agendas, selling techniques and other items which could enable you, at any level of membership, to promote and be actively involved in a successful membership program.

The items are in this guide as they were submitted to National Headquarters. This is done to allow the reader the opportunity of contacting the originator if more information is required and as a means of recognition for those who supplied the information.



Prospects Are Everywhere!

LEGION MEMBERS

Referrals
“DMS” member
Department Headquarters Post members
“Stay Active” members

ASK PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Your friends and relatives
Your neighbors
Your landlord
Service customers
Club members
Your doctor or dentist
Your banker or grocer
Your druggist or mail carrier
Local police and fire department members
Your business associates

PRINTED LEADS

Newspaper articles
People who have joined the military
People who have transferred in the military
People who moved to town
People who are promoted
Civic leaders
Marriages, engagements

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Civic leaders
Service station personnel
Real estate agents
Service and trade people
(plumbers, brick layers, carpenters,
laborers, telephone crew, mechanics, etc.)
Bank clerks
Store clerks and sales people
Insurance agents
Volunteers

LIST –DIRECTORIES

Telephone books
City directories
Chamber of Commerce lists
Credit service list
Direct mail list
Organization directories
Public information on file with county recorder
Cold Canvassing
Tax Exempt list

**“GET INVOLVED IN MEMBERSHIP
RECRUIT – RETAIN – REINSTATE”**

MEMBERSHIP TOOL – PROSPECT CARD FILE

Maintaining an active membership program for The American Legion takes commitment and hard work. Finding a new member for your American Legion post can be likened to the old prospector looking for “gold in them thar hills.” You can find membership gold for your post, but just as a prospector needs a pick, shovel and gold pan, you need the proper tools.

Your post Prospect Card File will soon become your “tool box,” and with a minimal amount of effort!

Maintaining a prospect card file will provide your post with a **system** assuring:

- a. Contacts are being made with Legion eligible veterans.
- b. That all known eligible veterans are asked to join.
- c. Current members will have a way of referring potential members to your membership team.
- d. A system to “follow up” on leads is available year after year for each membership chairman.

Instructions

Post Adjutant/Membership Chairman:

- a. Begin your prospect card file by recording the names, addresses, etc., of every delinquent member onto a prospect card.
- b. Make a card for all potential transfers from The Department Headquarters Post and Project Stay Active leads.
- c. Make a card of all known eligible veterans you personally know.
- d. Distribute cards to your post membership and ask them to fill in the names and address of prospective members and return the card to you.
- e. Sort through your cards, and distribute them to membership workers for future contact. Establish deadline dates for return of the cards. Keep track of who has them, and when they are required to be returned to you.
- f. Establish a “suspense” file for prospects that should be contacted at a later time, and keep it current.
- g. Refer to your prospect card file to determine if new names provided to you have previously been contacted, or if they are ineligible.

Membership Workers:

- a. Make every effort to contact the prospects you have been asked to call.
- b. Write down on the cards why you contacted them and the results.
- c. Not home? Away for vacation? At work? Use suspense dates and times to remind when to make another contact.
- d. Wants to think about it? Have literature mailed, and call your prospect in another week or so.
- e. Get correct information! If your prospect has moved, card is ineligible, is out of town, etc., update the card and return to the post.

Your prospect card file may be established in any way you wish, but it is suggested you use three categories for storage of your cards:

Active – prospects needing initial contact or follow up within a short length of time.

Suspense – filed according to day or month for future contact.

Inactive – those cards of deceased, ineligible, hostile, etc.

Sample Prospect Card

(Size/revise as appropriate for needs of Post)

Front side

Suspense Date: _____

Legion Prospect Card

Last: _____ First: _____ MI: _____

Addr: _____

City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Employed by: _____

Prospect source: _____

Dues Last Paid: _____

Veteran Status Confirmed: Yes / No (circle one)
Dates of Service _____

WW1 WW2 Korea Vietnam Lebanon/Grenada
Panama Gulf War (circle one)
Thru _____

Recruiter: _____

Phone _____

E-mail: _____

Backside

Contact Date: _____ Time: _____
Result: _____

VARIOUS SAMPLE LETTERS (DMS/Headquarters Posts and more)

The following are but a few samples of the many letters, which have been shared with us by Department Headquarters and Posts around the country.

Feel free to use them as a model to create your own and tap this under-utilized resource for new members in your Post. Lists of the Headquarters Post members in your state can be obtained from your Department Headquarters.



SUCCESSFUL MEMBERSHIP

In this section you will find copies of letters, agendas, selling techniques, promotional flyers and other items that will enable you, at any level of membership, to promote and be actively involved in a successful membership program.

The following letters and press releases should be retyped, double-spaced (ideally), on Post letterhead. Be sure to include the local information and try to make the letters as personal as possible.

SAMPLE LETTER TO MEMBERS FOR A PROSPECTIVE NEW OR REVITALIZED POST

Date:

Mr./Mrs./Ms. Doe
(Address)
(City, State, Zip)

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. Doe:

I invite you to attend a meeting to discuss an ongoing program to develop an American Legion Post in your area. As a member of The American Legion, we know you are supportive of the many programs sponsored and supported by this organization. Your participation in the upcoming meeting would be a valuable addition to our efforts.

The meeting will be held on *(day/date)* from *(time)* at *(name of location and address)*.

I also invite you to bring family, friends and guests. Our objective at this meeting is to hear your ideas regarding how an American Legion Post can benefit our community and what it will take to get one started or revitalized. As you know, the support provided by The American Legion does not just pertain to its membership but to all veterans and their families. There are many veterans who are eligible, but don't realize the benefits they share today, such as the GI Bill, were all made possible by members like you and me. We are volunteers who care about what happens in our community. We think an American Legion Post is just the thing our community needs.

The support of this program has been tremendous. Even though we currently have *(number of Posts in the city)*, they are not in convenient locations for members residing in this area.

We hope you will be able to attend the meeting to learn firsthand about this new Post and provide us with your ideas on its future direction in your community.

Please RSVP to *(phone number)*. We appreciate your continuing support of the programs and activities of The American Legion. It is an example you are **"Still Serving America."**

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Title)



COMMANDER
Jerry Howard

FIRST VICE COMMANDER
Butch Miller

SECOND VICE COMMANDER
Mike Cutting

THIRD VICE COMMANDER
Jim Kessel

ADJUTANT
Bob Bowen

FINANCE OFFICER
Lloyd Stacy

CHAPLAIN
Mike Cutting

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS
Gene Ferguson

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

John Saupp
Bill Huntington
Bill Thomas
Jerry Howard
Bob Bowen
Clyde Fisk
Pat Marques
Pete Maligranda
Fred Geary
George Chakurda

JUDGE ADVOCATE
Jorge Martinez

HISTORIAN
Bill Thomas

SERVICE OFFICER
Butch Miller

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
Carroll Brett

PUBLIC RELATIONS
George Chakurda

AMERICANISM
Gene Ferguson

CHILDREN & YOUTH
Mark Kramer

BUILDING & GROUNDS
George Chakurda

MEMBERSHIP
Bob Bowen

BINGO
Butch Miller

HOUSE COMMITTEE
Bill Woleslagle
Jorge Martinez
Butch Miller
George Chakurda

(SAMPLE)
WOODBIDGE POST 364
THE AMERICAN LEGION
P.O. Box 2121
Woodbridge, Virginia 22193

Dear Legionnaire _____ NAME _____ :

Welcome to *The American Legion!*

When *The American Legion* initiated its Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) program for new members, it did so in the hopes those responding would eventually transfer their membership to a local post. Your name was provided to us by National Headquarters and the officers and members of Woodbridge Post 364 are happy to extend that opportunity to you.

Our Post Home is located on 27 wooded acres off Davis Ford Road between Lakeridge and Dale City. *You may have seen our BINGO sign on the corner next to Countryside Autos.*

As with many veterans and civic-minded organizations, BINGO provides the main source of revenue for our community projects. These include annual scholarships to Woodbridge and Gar-Field Senior High Schools and the Richard M. Milburn High School for Adults, an annual American Legion School Awards program and oratorical competition at Woodbridge and Gar-Field, and we sponsor between 15 and 20 high school juniors from Woodbridge and Gar-Field to attend the one-week American Legion Boys State program at Lynchburg College. (*Our Ladies Auxiliary has similar programs for the girls.*)

We also sponsor a Boy Scout troop that meets at the Post Home; an American Legion Baseball team; youth teams in Little League baseball, basketball, soccer, and football; youth activities at Christmas, Halloween and Easter, and a host of other programs too numerous to mention.

With so much emphasis on the community you might get the idea we have no time for the members. Wrong! We have picnics at the Post Home each Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day. Dances are scheduled several times each year. The Post is open each evening so members and their spouses can relax with friends after a hard day's work. A new Game room is nearing completion with a dartboard and pool table. We have dinners every Friday night and breakfast is available each Sunday morning. We are very proud of the family-like environment at the Post which has earned us the statewide reputation of being *The Friendly Post*.

Our membership represents a wide range of interests and occupations with the common denominator being that each of us served in the armed forces during a time of national need. How can you affiliate? Simple! Just complete the enclosed transfer form and return it to the Post. Bring it by one evening or use the enclosed envelope and return it by mail. If you currently hold a (date) membership card, the transfer to Woodbridge Post 364 costs you nothing. If your present card is dated (date) you should enclose a check for (\$\$) with the transfer form. That will bring your dues current and you will be issued a (date) card. In future years, when you receive your renewal notice from National Headquarters you will be instructed to send (\$\$) dues to Woodbridge Post 364.

Why do we charge (\$\$) when National charges (\$\$)? Each Post established its own membership dues. Dues associated with the DMS program help defray the cost of buying mailing lists, special printing, promotional items, etc. Post 364 does not keep the entire (\$\$). We keep (\$\$) and forward the remaining (\$\$) to our Department Headquarters in Richmond. They, in turn, forward the national per capita to Indianapolis. The (\$\$) we keep helps offset the cost of sending our members a monthly newsletter.

Last year, more than 100 men and women who joined The American Legion through the DMS program took advantage of our offer and transferred their membership to Woodbridge Post 364. And, 80% of them have already renewed their membership for the (date) Legion year. In fact, our (date) membership now stands at (Post #'s) an all-time high, and new applications are being received each week. We hope to find your application to transfer among the next batch of mail we receive.

For God and Country,

Bob Bowen
Adjutant and Membership Chairman

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE TRANSFER FORM

1. If the transfer form does not show your (date) membership card number, please put that number in the appropriate block.
2. Your continuous years of service is indicated by a number inside the star in the upper right hand corner of your current membership card. Please place that number in the appropriate block on the transfer form.
3. Sign the transfer where indicated.
4. Return the transfer form to the Post, either in person or by using the enclosed envelope. You will be issued a supplemental Blue Membership card indicating your transfer to Post 364.
5. If your latest card is for the (date) Legion year, include a check for (\$\$) to bring your dues current. You will be issued a (date) membership card.
6. PLEASE DISREGARD THE INSTUCTIONS LISTED ON THE TRANSFER FORM. THEY ARE FOR THE POST ADJUTANT TO FOLLOW IN PROCESING THE FORM FOR DEPARTMENT AND NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS.



Woodbridge Post 364

The American Legion

The Friendly Post Family

Brick Mason...Attorney...Computer Engineer...Bartender...Auditor
International Radio Broadcaster...Housewife...Car Salesman...Cook
Electrician...General Contractor...Physical Science Technician...Printer
Truck Driver...Soldier...Sailor...Airman...Marine...Coast Guardsman
Legislator...Newspaper Route Manager...Computer Scientist...Heavy
Equipment Operator...Retired Government Employee...Paramedic
Locksmith...Retired Military Computer Systems Analyst...Security Guard
Avionics Information Specialist...Security Systems Manager...Computer
Specialist...Mechanical Engineer...Personnel Specialist...Heating & Air
Conditioning Engineer...County Supervisor...Professional Bowler...Mail
Carrier...Financial Consultant...Electronics Technician...Audio Visual
Specialist...Building Maintenance...Swimming Pool Consultant...Business
Executive...Radio Broadcast Engineer...Accountant...Barber...Policeman
Payroll Specialist...Deputy Assistant Labor Secretary...Caterer...Real
Estate Broker...IRS Auditor...Telecommunications Technician...Plumber
Intelligence Agent...City Manager...Hollywood Actor/Director...Security
Clearance Investigator...Carpet Contractor...Veterans Benefits Specialist
Steel Fabrication...College Instructor...Indian Affairs Specialist...Cabinet
Maker...Fortune 500 Company Vice President...Veterans Employment
Counselor...Food Management...Bank Teller...Photographer...Surgeon
Clergyman...Equipment Rental...Writer/Author...Conservation Officer
Airline Pilot...Chemical Engineer...Graphics Designer...Librarian
Aeronautical Engineer...TV Personality...National Guardsman...Student
Truck Driver...Nursing Home Caretaker...Parks & Recreation Specialist

If your occupation is not represented, let us know.



WELCOME MEETING LETTER FOR NEW POST

Date:

Mr./Mrs./Ms. Doe
(Address)
(City, State, Zip)

Dear Legionnaire/Veteran:

This letter is to inform you The American Legion is forming a new Post in your neighborhood. We wish to take this opportunity to personally invite you to become a **charter member** of this new Post.

The first meeting will be at the following address; veterans may meet Legionnaires at (*INSERT ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER at this address, TIME AND DATE OF MEETING*).

Please bring a fellow veteran and become a **charter member** of our new Post.

The American Legion best serves the community by having an active Post working with community programs, especially children and youth programs, and providing assistance to all veterans and their families.

We would be honored if you would visit with us and share your ideas on building this new American Legion Post.

For more information about American Legion benefits, please contact (*NAME*) at:

ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP
PHONE NUMBER

We are looking forward to hearing from you on how this new American Legion Post can best serve our community.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Title)

WELCOME MEETING NEWS RELEASE – NEW POST

News Release

Immediate Release (*DATE*)

Contact: (*NAME AND PHONE NUMBER*)

(POST CITY) AREA VETERANS SOUGHT BY THE AMERICAN LEGION

(*DEPT. HQ CITY*) – (*POST CITY*) area veterans are invited to meet with American Legion representatives who are planning a new American Legion Post in (*POST CITY*). Veterans may meet the Legionnaires at (*INCLUDE CONTACT INFORMATION, LOCATION, TIME, AND ANY OTHER NECESSARY INFORMATION*).

Through a new Post, The American Legion can best serve (*POST CITY*) with Children and Youth programs, and provide veterans' assistance information to veterans and their families.

Statewide, American Legion membership is (*STATE MEMBERSHIP NUMBER*) with a national membership of nearly three millions veterans from all 20th and 21st century wars.

The Congressionally chartered American Legion, created in Paris, France in 1919, has always been a driving force behind veterans benefits legislation in Washington, DC, and (*STATE CAPITOL*), and is the largest veterans' service organization in the world.

Any honorably discharged wartime veteran, regardless of their location of service or gender, is eligible for membership, and is welcome to meet with The American Legion representatives.

American Legion membership eligibility dates are:

- ◆ **Gulf War/War on Terrorism** – August 2, 1990, until cessation of hostilities as determined by the US Govt.
- ◆ **Panama** – December 20, 1989 – January 31, 1990;
- ◆ **Grenada & Lebanon** – August 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984
- ◆ **Vietnam War** – February 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975;
- ◆ **Korean War** – June 25, 1950 – January 31, 1955;
- ◆ **World War II** – December 7, 1941 – December 31, 1946; or
- ◆ **World War I** – April 6, 1917 – November 11, 1918

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING LETTER

Date:

Mr./Mrs./Ms. Doe
(Address)
(City, State, Zip)

Dear Legionnaire:

Thank you for joining The American Legion and creating (*DEPARTMENT NAME*) newest Post (#) in (*CITY*).

I am pleased to invite you, your family and guests to your Post Organizational Meeting (*INSERT TIME, DATE, AND LOCATION OF MEETING HERE*).

In additional to the normal excitement and festivities of a Post's first meeting, (*CITY*) will have the unique privilege of (*SPECIAL GUEST; COULD BE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER*) officiating over the installation of your officers.

Joining (*NAME*) will be (*OTHER DIGNITARIES*), and (*MORE DIGNITARIES*). (*NAME*), (*BRANCH OF SERVICE*) is making your Post installation a part of his/her official tour of the State.

On behalf of your (*STATE MEMBERSHIP NUMBER*) American Legion counterparts statewide, I congratulate you on your new Post, invite you to attend this unique meeting, and look forward to your participation in The American Legion and your community.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Jane Doe
3rd District Committeeman

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING NEWS RELEASE

News Release

Immediate (DATE)

Contact (*POINT OF CONTACT NAME & PHONE #*)

(CITY NAME)

Area Veterans to hold New American Legion Post Organizational Meeting

(*DEPT HOME CITY*) (*DATE*) – (*CITY NAME*) area veterans successfully created American Legion Post (#) in (*CITY*) last month. These veterans, with State and National American Legion participation, will hold their first organizational meeting (*INSERT TIME, DATE, AND LOCATION AND ANY OTHER NECESSARY INFORMATION*).

All area veterans are invited to attend as Legion officials, including (*DIGNITARIES COULD BE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER*), install the Post's first Officers and discuss programs. There will be a professional State American Legion Veterans Service Officer available to answer and assist veterans with any benefits questions.

Any honorable discharged wartime veteran, regardless of location of service or gender, is welcome to attend and to join The American Legion. American Legion membership eligibility dates are: Gulf War/War on Terrorism – August 2, 1990 until cessation of hostilities as determined by the United States Government; Panama – December 20, 1989 – January 31, 1990; Grenada & Lebanon – August 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984; Vietnam War – February 28, 1961- May 7, 1975; Korean War – June 25, 1950- January 31, 1955; World War II – December 7, 1941 – December 31, 1946; and World War I – April 6, 1917 – November 11, 1918.

Post (#), one of the newest of (#) American Posts created in (*DEPARTMENT NAME*) this year, can now serve the area with Children and Youth programs and provide veterans assistance information to veterans and their families. (*DEPARTMENT*) has more than (#) Posts Statewide. (*DEPARTMENT*)'s American Legion membership is (#) with a national membership of nearly three million from all 20th & 21st century wars.

The Congressionally Chartered American Legion, created in Paris, France, in 1919, has always been a driving force behind veteran's benefits legislation in Washington and (state capitol city name). It is the largest veterans' service organization in the world.

(*SAMPLE*)



LEYDEN-CHILDES-WICKERSHAM POST NO. 1

◆◆◆◆THE AMERICAN LEGION◆◆◆◆

4500 E. Alameda Ave. 321-1919 Denver, Colorado 80222-1296

Dear Legionnaire:

We, the members of Post 1, Denver, would like to welcome you to The American Legion. We recently received notification from our Headquarters that you are a member of our holding Post 211.

As a member of Post 1, I would like to extend to you an invitation to become a member of our Post. The real work of The American Legion occurs at the local Post level. We would welcome you with open arms to become a member of our Post and help us in our endeavor to better serve God and Country.

If you should decide to unite with us, and I hope you will, please return the enclosed form by mail or drop it off at the Post. Our office hours are 8:00 AM till 4:00 PM, Monday thru Friday. If you have any questions you may call me at home during the evening at 756-2366.

We will provide you with a formal initiation, a lapel pin, a certificate of membership and the camaraderie of fellow Legionnaires in our Post. We would certainly love to have you as a member of our Post and can assure you that the Community, State and Nation is better off since you united with our cause.

For God and Country,

Bill Thomas

Bill Thomas
Membership Committee, Post 1

THE AMERICAN LEGION

P.O. BOX 2324

HARRISBURG, PA 17105

DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Office of the STATE ADJUTANT

(717) 730-9100

KIT D. WATSON

Fax (717) 975-2836

Dear Legionnaire:

Enclosed is your (year) membership card. We are happy you have renewed your membership in Headquarters Post 945 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

This year your form for the \$1,000 accidental death and dismemberment insurance will be forwarded directly to you by Legionnaire Insurance Trust. You should complete the form and mail it directly to the Legionnaire Insurance Trust in the envelope provided. Make certain you retain the certificate, record the date that you mailed the enrollment form on it and place the certificate with your other insurance papers.

I would like to remind you that we have service officers available throughout the state to assist you with any claims for veteran's hospitalization, compensation, and pension. All you need to do is write to this office and we would be happy to assist you.

As a member of Post 945, you will be receiving a copy of The American Legion "Keystone State News" each month. This monthly newspaper will give you detailed information on benefits and changes in the laws that affect veterans.

We ask you to invite fellow veterans who are eligible to become members of The American Legion to join us by giving them the enclosed application and ask him or her to return it with a check made payable to Headquarters Post 945 in the amount of (\$----). He or she can mail it to Post 945 at the address above.

Also please find enclosed a form to order "The History of the Pennsylvania American Legion." If you need any further information or assistance, please feel to write to us at the above address.

Sincerely yours,

Kit D. Watson
Department Adjutant

KDW: Im
Enclosures

FRANK R. STILES POST 125 AMERICAN LEGION
American Legion Drive P.O. Box 251 North Adams, MA 01247



Richard Bresette
355 River Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Dear Comrade Bresette:

On behalf of the Post Commander Dick Ameen and all of our members, I would like to welcome you to Post 125. We are pleased to have you as a member, not only of the largest veterans' organization in the world, but also of the largest Post in Berkshire County.

Post 125 currently has over (#s) members, many with 20, 30, 40 and more years of continuous membership. Some have moved away to Florida, California, Arizona and other places, yet maintain their membership in our Post. Some are very active, some less so, and others, who do not have the time or inclination, are not so active, but do maintain their membership. Some come to meetings to add their ideas to the running of the Post for the good of all the membership and our many programs, occasionally or regularly. Others come only at nominating and election time, to participate in the government of the Post. What you will do as a member is your decision, and will undoubtedly be governed by your working and family commitments, your other interests, as well as your personal feelings. Naturally, we would like you to participate as much as you can, help us run our many children and youth programs, community action and members' programs, but we also understand that the choice in the extent of your participation must remain yours alone. Whatever you decide, we are happy to have you aboard.

Post 125 is one of 15 Posts in District 1, which encompasses all of Berkshire County. The District, in turn, is part of the Department of Massachusetts, which has its headquarters in the State House in Boston. The National Headquarters of The American Legion is in Indianapolis. It was in great measure the tireless efforts of the National Officers, backed by a membership of almost 3,000,000 Veterans, which obtained for us Veterans a Cabinet Post for Veterans' Affairs as well as Court of Law Adjudication Veterans' claims on appeal, rather than vesting irrevocable decisions in the hands of VA administrators. You see, membership in The American Legion is important to the maintenance of health and other promised benefits to the Veterans of our country and their families.

The American Legion has many wonderful programs for the future of America – our Children and Youth – as well as participation in Community affairs. For instance, every year Post 125, on Christmas Day, offers a free turkey dinner with all the trimmings to all comers, including area home delivery to those not able to come to the Post. Some of our members, as well as helpers from other Posts, come only once a year to the meeting, just to assist in this program. If you are interested in our activities and programs, come to the monthly meetings, or get in touch with me (23 Wall St., North Adams – 664-6453). Our meetings are on the third Tuesday of every month, beginning promptly at 7:00, at which time the doors are closed until the meeting is adjourned.

Enclosed is: Your membership card, the Post Constitution and By-Laws, and a form for FREE insurance, which needs only to be filled out, signed and mailed. So, once again, welcome to Post 125.

Sincerely yours in Comradeship,

Ruben W. Shay, Sr.

Ruben W. Shay, Sr. Vice Cmdr.

SELLING MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

(Sales Techniques)

1. **THE MEMBERSHIP RECRUITER-**
Outgoing personality, Aggressive, Desire, Determination, Enthusiasm, Capable of Independent Action
2. **LEAD-**
Definition – A name, a reference or any piece of information that leads or pertains to a potential prospect
3. **PROSPECT-**
Definition – A lead who is qualified (eligible) and is available
4. **TYPES OF PROSPECTING-**
List of names, Advertising, Center of Influence, Using the Member (Buddy or Referral System)
5. **STEPS IN PROSPECTING-**
Getting the leads, Refining or qualifying leads, Recovering the information, Using the information
6. **FACTORS INFLUENCING ELIGIBILITY-**
 - a. Types of Discharge
 - b. Dates of Service
 - c. Types of Active Duty
7. **FIVE BUYING QUESTIONS-**
(Buying Motives)
Which, Why, Where, When,
How Much (Cost)
8. **SALESMANSHIP-**
Definition – The art of persuading people to Accept an idea
9. **PHASES OF A SALE-**
 - a. The Sale
 - b. The Follow-up
10. **THE INTERVIEWER-**
Role of a Membership Recruiter
Salesman, Communicator, Problem Solver, Planner, Persuader, Public Relations Expert, Educator, Market Analyst, Negotiator

Approaches (see #7 and #13)
Preparation (see #12)
Environment (see #12)
Consideration (see #12)
Closing (see #16)
Handling Objections (see #15)
11. **BASIS FOR INTERVIEWING-**
 - a. understanding
 - b. acceptance
 - c. communication
12. **PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW-**
evaluate yourself – know your product, prospect market; provide for privacy, eliminate personal bias; personal appearance; develop an interest in people; consider timing and scheduling
13. **STEPS OF AN INTERVIEW-**
contact, rapport, communication control, interaction, cues
14. **ATTITUDE-**
Definition – An attitude is a tendency or predisposition to evaluate an object, person, idea or situation in a certain way
15. **HANDLING OBJECTIONS-**
anticipate the objection; find the real objection; answer clearly but briefly; do not argue; turn the objection to your advantage; above all, continue to sell
16. **METHODS OF CLOSING-**
single question; double question; already joined; “if;” summing up; buying question; challenge; third party (buddy)

PUBLICATIONS AND BROCHURES

INTERNAL AFFAIRS – MEMBERSHIP & POST ACTIVITIES

Post Adjutant's Manual (downloadable from www.legion.org)	A supplement to the Officer's Guide especially for Post Adjutants. General introduction and guide to routine procedures for a Post Adjutant, including membership card processing, direct renewal, Paid-Up-For-Life Membership, address changes, and transfers.
Post Operations Manual And Post Building Guide (downloadable from www.legion.org)	Comprehensive guide to lounge operation and Post financial accounting – government restrictions, manager duties, labor costs, beverage control, and food service. Also contains material all Posts should review when considering a new Post home or renovation of an existing structure – lists information on standards, location, construction, design and plans for future expansion.
Paid-Up-For-Life Brochure	Answers questions about the PUFL program (available only in participating Departments) and includes rate chart.
Why You Should Belong	The membership brochure to give to prospective members. Overview of Legion programs and reasons to join, contains membership application and space for Post address and telephone number.
Recruiting Posters	Posters can be downloaded from the web site (www.legion.org) and edited to allow local contact information. See sample on inside back cover.
Certificate of Initiation	Attractive 8 ½" x 11" certificate for new members with space to personalize by filling in member and Post information.
The American Legion Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies (downloadable from www.legion.org)	Handbook describing information all American Legion Officers need to know – all official ceremonies prescribed by Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Committee; simplified eligibility guide; parliamentary procedures; suggested Post Constitution and By-Laws; National Constitution and By-laws. This manual contains a complete listing of available periodicals, brochures, manuals, and the like.
Sons of The American Legion Handbook	S.A.L.'s counterpart to The American Legion Officer's Guide.
Sons of The American Legion Handbook Brochure	Promotional brochure for S.A.L. which lists eligibility, program and activities, and contains membership application.
A New Squadron	Intended to assist those wishing to start a new Squadron; designed so it may be carried in your pocket and used as a quick reference.
S.A.L. Flag Brochure	Contains historical highlights, suggested patriotic activities, and listing of publications regarding the U.S. Flag.
S.A.L. Say No To Drugs Brochure	Contains information on suggested activities, American Legion brochures, toll-free information numbers and other material related to the S.A.L. "Say No to Drugs" program.
S.A.L. VA & R Brochure	Contains information on activities involving Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services.

Note: All of the above can be obtained from your Department Headquarters with the exception of the posters, which you can download from the web site.

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE & BROCHURES

Why You Should Belong to The American Legion
Your American Legion Member Benefits – Good Reasons to Join
Know Your Benefits – Learn What You Have Earned
Legion Membership Applications
Auxiliary Membership Applications
SAL Membership Applications
Children & Youth Brochures
Americanism Brochures
Citizens Flag Alliance Literature
Department, District, County or Post Information
The American Legion Magazine & Dispatch Newspaper
Public Relations Handbook – 21st Century Edition

***NOTE:* ENSURE EACH BROCHURE HAS A POINT OF CONTACT IDENTIFIED ON IT WHERE APPLICABLE. PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW HOW TO REACH YOU OR YOUR POST!**



MEMBERSHIP TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES

When working Membership (new member prospects or renewals) the question often comes up as to which is better – personal phone call or written contact.

We all realize face-to-face contact is best but contacting members or prospects by phone or letter has advantages and disadvantages. In all cases Membership workers should consider the pros and cons of each method.

Telephone communication is faster and more personal than written correspondence. The sound of a voice rather than a signature humanizes the contact.

A telephone call might be considered an intrusion or inconvenience where as a letter may be read at the recipient's convenience.

If permanency of a record is important then a letter provides such, but this is usually not the case on our quest for membership.

If cost is a factor this must also be considered. Especially in some areas where most phone calls become long distance calls. However, writing letters also takes time, and time is money.

Another question each individual must ask is, "Do I communicate better orally or in writing?"

Perhaps one thought might be the written word unpublished can be corrected or destroyed, but the spoken word can never be recalled.

Most sales organizations use a letter with a telephone follow-up. You must decide what will work best and be cost effective in your membership efforts.

Remember in an effective membership program communication is paramount and you should evaluate the members of your Team and assign them to the area they do best – knock on doors – write letters – make phone calls – etc.

While the use of the phone is only one method of communication, this particular article refers to its use in Membership.

The following pages contain scripts to be used by Membership workers as they telephone prospects/members.

Professional sales people follow a script to keep them on course. They make minor adjustments to fit their style. Eventually they are using the script without looking at it.

Use of a script develops consistency in our message. No one expects you to follow the script exactly because you could sound artificial. To use a script well you must rehearse. Delivery of the same message doesn't mean you can't personalize it. You can rephrase the script so it is in

your own words and phrasing and you will feel more comfortable with it.

Whatever you do, DON'T read the script to the prospect/member. It could be detected as impersonal or insincere and cause a negative reaction.

Scripts cannot answer every question nor will they solve problems. If they could, we would use recordings instead of Membership workers like you and me.

Since nothing can be signed, or proof of eligibility cited, nor dues be submitted over the telephone lines, it must always be remembered the purpose of the phone call is to make an appointment to accomplish one or all of these tasks.

The phone call to a prospect/member is actually divided into two sections:

1. Pre-call Planning
2. The Telephone Call

PRE-CALL PLANNING

1. Establish Criteria for Qualifying Prospects/Members
2. Develop a List of Prospects/Members
3. Prepare and Practice an Opening Statement
4. Prepare and Practice Fact Finding Questions
5. Prepare and Practice Your Sales Message
6. Prepare and Practice Your Request for an Appointment

NOTE: The purpose of qualifying your prospect is to check on their eligibility, if they are not a member. If they are not eligible for The American Legion, check their eligibility for Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion membership as applicable and proceed as necessary.

THE TELEPHONE CALL

1. Identify Yourself and The American Legion
2. Establish Rapport with Prospect/Member
3. Make an Interest Creating Comment
4. Ask Fact Finding Questions
5. Deliver Your Message
6. Ask for an Appointment
7. Overcome Objections
8. Confirm the Appointment – Time and Location
9. Express Your Thanks

Because you have prepared, you can approach the actual call with confidence. No matter how skillfully you have prepared, you need as much skill putting your plan into action. Each step is vital to the success of the call. All of the steps come into play "on the firing line" with the prospect/member on the phone. Even though you are well prepared, you will need to be alert and flexible, particularly if any objections are raised when you ask for an appointment.

DO's

Always speak distinctly, at a moderate pace.

Use everyday language. Avoid jargon and acronyms.

Always repeat information as you sum up. Include name, address, phone number and specific appointment time, place, etc., and any other pertinent information (i.e. Service Number, DD-214, Dates of Service).

Be specific.

Encourage questions.

Sit upright. When your body is slumped over you constrict your chest and strain your voice and the listener will have trouble hearing or understanding you.

Think about only the one call you are making. Not all the other calls you have to make today, tomorrow or next week. One challenge at a time is enough.

Rehearse before you get on the phone. Use the provided scripts, prepare one of your own or use a combination of the two.

Speak in a strong confident but pleasant voice.

Practice, use your script, make calls and your confidence will soar.

Smile – it's carried in your voice.

DON'Ts

Lean on your elbow while holding the phone in your hand. This will tense your throat and affect your speech.

Link words together. Say those short words such as "To," "And," and "The" quickly. That stresses the main words of the sentence.

Be a monotone. Fluctuate your voice so you don't sound depressed, bored, flat, or tired. Put a smile in your voice. Sound excited, sincere and interested all at the same time.

TIPS:

Write out or type your script.

Practice what you are going to say.

Keep script and information in front of you.

Record pertinent information.

Be prepared.

Have available information on Local, State and National American Legion Programs, i.e. Agent Orange, Flag Issue, Veterans Administration, Local Service Officer, Addresses, Phone Numbers, Current Issues, American Legion's stand on those issues, Meeting Dates, etc.

The scripts included in this text are a sampling of the many types of phone calls you and your membership team will be making.

The "*Membership Survey*" script can be used for all prospects.

The "*Female Veteran*" script, although similar to the "*Membership Survey*" script, stresses a few notes of interest concerning the "Female Veteran" and their membership in The American Legion.

The "*DMS Phone Talk*" script is directed at those members who have discontinued their membership.

The "*Renewal Phone Call*" is directed at those members who have not renewed their American Legion Membership and can be found in the "Membership Retention & Renewals" section of this guide.

These scripts are not all inclusive, but they contain the basic introduction and message, which can be used by the membership worker. They may also be modified to fit the needs of the individual caller, Post, District or Department.

Remember, keep on dialing for **MEMBERSHIP – GET THAT APPOINTMENT!**

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Hello, I'm _____ from American Legion Post No. _____
Your Name

here in _____. We are in the process of contacting all
Location

the veterans in this area and would like to ask you a few questions.

1. Are you or is any member of your household a veteran?

(If no, discontinue survey.) (If person answering the phone is not a veteran but there is one in the household, ask to speak to him/her, repeat your message and ask his/her name.)

2. _____ Are you a member of The American Legion?
Prospect Name

(If yes, thank them for their membership, ask for a referral, discontinue survey.)

3. What years were you (they) in military service?

AUG. 2, 1990 - cessation of hostilities (as determined by the U.S. Government)

DEC. 20, 1989 - JAN. 31, 1990

AUG. 24, 1982 - JUL. 31, 1984

FEB. 28, 1961 - MAY 7, 1975

JUN. 25, 1950 - JAN. 31, 1955

DEC. 7, 1941 - DEC. 31, 1946 (Merchant Marines eligible ONLY during this time)

APR. 6, 1917 - NOV. 11, 1918

(If dates of service are not included in this list, discontinue survey. Thank them for their time.)

4. Have you ever been a member?

(If yes) Why did you drop out?

- a. (If attitude is good about The American Legion, ask about a visit now to his or her home to tell them about your Post.)

(If no) Could we make an appointment with you at your convenience and discuss our organization? Perhaps tonight at 7:00 p.m. or tomorrow at 6:00 p.m.

- b. (If the person has a negative attitude about The American Legion, ask them if there is a reason he or she has not joined or would not consider joining. Ask if you could send or bring some literature on some of the programs of The American Legion. Listen to the person's misgivings and ask if a personal visit might clear the air.)

Visit Appt. Time

Date

Name

Address

5. Repeat appointment time and date – let prospect acknowledge same.

Thank you for your time, Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

“FEMALE VETERAN”

Hello, I'm _____ from American Legion Post (District,
Your Name

Department, etc.) here in _____ . We are contacting all the
Location
veterans in this area and would like to ask you a few questions.

1 Are you or is any member of your household a veteran? (If no, thank them and discontinue call).

2. _____ are you/they a member of the Legion?
Prospect's Name

3. What years were you (they) in military service?

AUG. 2, 1990 - cessation of hostilities (as determined by the U.S. Government)

DEC. 20, 1989 - JAN. 31, 1990

AUG. 24, 1982 - JUL. 31, 1984

FEB. 28, 1961 - MAY 7, 1975

JUN. 25, 1950 - JAN. 31, 1955

DEC. 7, 1941 - DEC. 31, 1946 (Merchant Marines eligible ONLY during this time)

APR. 6, 1917 - NOV. 11, 1918

(If dates of service are not included in this list, discontinue survey after explanation and offer thanks.)

4. _____ are you aware you are eligible to join The
Prospect's Name

American Legion? The reason I ask is many times women, like yourself are often told – “Oh, you can join the Auxiliary,” when in fact you are eligible for membership and welcome in The American Legion. This is not a change; eligible veterans, male or female, have always had the opportunity to join our organization.

5. Have you ever been a member or considered being a member?

A. (If yes) Why did you drop out or what kept you from joining?

(If attitude is good about The American Legion, ask about a visit now to her home to tell her about your Post.)

B. (If no) Could we make an appointment with you at your convenience and discuss our organization? Perhaps tonight at 7:00 p.m. or tomorrow at 6:00 p.m.

(If the person has a negative attitude about The American Legion, ask them if there is a reason she has not joined or would not consider joining. Ask if you could send or bring some literature on some of the programs of The American Legion. Listen to the her misgivings and ask if a personal visit might clear the air.

Visit Appt. Time

Date

Name

Address

6. Repeat appointment time and date – let prospect acknowledge same.

7. Thank you for your time, Mrs./Miss/Ms. _____

“FORMER MEMBER”

Hello, I'm _____ from American Legion Post _____
Your Name Number

here in _____. Are you _____?
Location Former Member's Name

_____ we are contacting former members of our Post to see if
Name

you still belong to The American Legion at another Post or if not, if you would consider joining our Post once again.

1. If the answer is “I belong to another Post” ask which one, thank him/her for his/her membership and his/her time.
2. If the answer is “I want to rejoin” set up an appointment or go to his/her home and sign him/her up.
3. If former member wants to explain why he/she quit – listen with an open mind – discuss problem – resolve or smooth-out problem – ask him/her to come to the Post and see the difference, etc.
4. If the former member is interested in rejoining:
 - A. (Make an appointment) Could we make an appointment with you at your convenience to discuss

_____ _____ _____
A B C

B. (Record the appointment)

TIME - DATE - NAME - ADDRESS

C. (Repeat appointment time, date and location) – Let former member acknowledge same.

D. (Again, Thank person by name for his/her time and cooperation).

POST MEMBERSHIP TELEPHONE RESPONSE PLAN

What happens at your post when a prospect or a current member comes in or calls for membership or renewal information?

Is there a point of contact which can be given by anyone answering the phone?

“Name, Position, Address, Phone Number”

Is there material readily available which can be mailed by person answering the phone?

Is there an information card available, near the phone, for anyone to copy down the necessary information and pass it on?

What kind of a message do you give to any member of your post who might answer the phone to pass on concerning membership?

Is there a post “SOP” (Standard Operating Procedure) for phone calls concerning membership?

Are callers told to call back or come in 3 weeks from tonight “that’s our meeting night?”

– OR –

“You’ll have to talk to Joe and he ain’t here?”

Have you ever called your post to see how some of these inquiries might be answered? You might be unpleasantly surprised.

How do you feel about a first impression? The response of a phone inquiry to your post by that prospective member could form his/her first and last impression.

If you were the person seeking membership information how would you like to be treated and what would you hope to accomplish?

Then put that plan into action – NOW –

No one expects anyone to know everything or everyone to know anything about membership – BUT – anyone who may or will answer the phone must know what to say and what to do to oblige the caller/prospect/member.

Likewise there must be a plan for those who visit the post seeking membership information.

How many members has your post lost due to a lack of a plan?

“MEMBERSHIP IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS”

‘Media Advisory’ effective PR tool

The weather conditions outside are ideal as the dedicated volunteer takes up a position behind the typewriter, feeds a piece of paper into the machine, and then stares blankly out the window. Beads of perspiration pop out and trickle down the forehead. Suddenly, clammy air seems to permeate the room. Is there an unseen danger lurking in the shadow?

No! The need to write a news release about an upcoming post event is the cause of this sudden onset of nervousness.

As the Post Public Relations Officer, it’s your job to tackle the challenge of communicating with the media. But getting the important information to the news media should not be a “life threatening event.”

Experience has shown that the professional news media staffs of the 1990’s don’t need to receive a completely written story. Instead, they prefer a “Media Advisory.”

And that simple, effective tool can put an end to those behind-the-typewriter jitters that have plagued volunteer writers for years.

A “Media Advisory” needs just basic information to answer the six important questions about the event: Who? What? When? Where? Why? And How? A brief paragraph of “Background Information” fills in some other details. Add your name and phone number, or the person to contact for more information, and the job is done.

Media workers prefer an “Advisory” because it furnishes important information for assignment of a reporter out to the event – or to write a brief pre-event story for their paper or broadcast facility.

The accompanying sample advisory, concerning a post’s Boys State sponsorship, presents information that is straight forward, easy to digest and helps media managers

evaluate to determine their level of coverage.

This format works well for a variety of events. It eases the burden of writing a story. And, for the most part, a “Media Advisory” increases the coverage of your post.

If your volunteer assignment in the post is public relations, the “Media Advisory” will change the nail-biting, nerve- jangling scenario to read:

The weather conditions outside are ideal as the dedicated volunteer takes up a position behind the typewriter, slips a sheet of post letterhead paper into the machine, and swiftly prepares a “Media Advisory” about the post’s sponsorship of a Boys State representative. The volunteer completes the challenge in little time, puts the Advisory in an envelope, and smiles broadly. There’s time to enjoy the weather and friends once again, thanks to the “Media Advisory.”

Public Relations Handbook can be downloaded @ www.legion.org, or call 317-630-1253 or requested by e-mail at: pr@legion.org

MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: _____

WHO: Robert J. Student, Junior, (Our Town) High School.
WHAT: Named representative to (Our State) Boys State.
WHERE: (Our State) University, Capitol City
WHEN: Monday, July xx, 20xx
WHY: To participate in a resident program teaching the inner workings of the American form of government.
HOW: Sponsored by (Our Town) Post 1000, The American Legion.
BACKGROUND: The American Legion Boys State program was founded in 1935. It is a week-long program that permits young high school juniors to participate in developing government from the precinct level to the Governor’s office, and to learn the political processes and lawmaking procedures in our State.

This is the 45th year a resident of (Our Town) has been sponsored to Boys State by (Our Town) Post 1000. Members of the Post will also host Student at a Post dinner after his return from (Our State) Boys State. The Post dinner provides a forum for Student to discuss his experiences and goals for the future.

CONTACT: Leonard Legionnaire, 555-1212 (office) or 555-1313 (home).

DATA SHEET FOR VETERAN'S SURVIVORS

DATE _____ 20 _____

BE PREPARED: Complete this form and keep in a personnel file. When needed, this information will prove most valuable in establishing veteran's benefits and rights at some future date.

Veteran's full name _____

Birthdate _____ Place _____

Social Security No. _____ VA Claim No. C- _____

GI Insurance File No. _____ Service Serial No. _____

Entered active duty/service dates _____

Place of Entry _____

Branch of Service _____

Place of Separation _____

Discharge (or Form DD214) record at: City _____

County _____ State _____ Vol. _____ Page _____

Wife's full name prior to marriage _____

Date of marriage _____ Place _____

Previous marriages of veteran (names, dates, places)

1. _____

2. _____

Children (names, dates and places of births – include additional pages/entries if necessary)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

If either you or your spouse had a previous marriage, it is important you list how these marriages ended (death, divorce, annulment) and that you list the dates and places of termination, as the VA needs proof that your marriage to the veteran was legal. If possible, attach a copy of veteran's discharge or separation paper for your file.

In order to have a record of this information to establish eligibility for veterans and widows benefits in the future, it is suggested a copy be furnished the Veterans Service Agency in your area and a copy of your discharge, and this document should be filed in your County Clerk's office.

Form provide by Mineola Memorial Post 349, Inc., 132 Jericho Turnpike, Mineola NY 11501 (516) 746-8910

INSTRUCTION AND INFORMATION SHEET FOR SF 180, REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

1. **Information needed to locate records.** Certain identifying information is necessary to determine the location of an individual's record or military service. Please try to answer each item on the SF 180. If you do not have and cannot obtain the information for an item, show "NA", meaning the information is "not available". Include as much of the requested information as you can.
2. **Restrictions on release of information.** Release of information is subject to restrictions imposed by the military services consistent with Department of Defense regulations and the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974. The service member (either past or present) or the member's legal guardian has access to almost any information contained in that member's own record. Others requesting information from military personnel/health records must have the release authorization in Section III of the SF 180 signed by the member or legal guardian, but if the appropriate signature cannot be obtained, only limited types of information can be provided. If the former member is deceased, surviving next of kin may, under certain circumstances, be entitled to greater access to a deceased veteran's records than a member of the public. The next of kin may be any of the following: unremarried surviving spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, or brother. Employers and others needing proof of military service are expected to accept the information shown on documents issued by the military service departments at the time a service member is separated.
3. **Where reply may be sent.** The reply may be sent to the member or any other address designated by the member or other authorized requester.
4. **Charges for service.** There is no charge for most services provided to members or their surviving next of kin. A nominal fee is charged for certain types of service. In most instances service fees cannot be determined in advance. If your request involves a service fee, you will be notified as soon as that determination is made.
5. **Health and personnel records.** Health records of persons on active duty are generally kept at the local servicing clinic, and usually are available from the Department of Veterans Affairs a week or two after the last day of active duty. (See page 2 of SF180 for record locations/addresses).
6. **Records at the National Personnel Records Center.** Note that it takes at least three months, and often up to seven, for the file to reach the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis after the military obligation has ended (such as by discharge). If only a short time has passed, please send the inquiry to the address shown for active or current reserve members. Also, if the person has only been released from active duty but is still in a reserve status, the personnel record will stay at the location specified for reservists. A person can retain a reserve obligation for several years, even without attending meetings or receiving annual training. (See page 2 of SF180 for record locations/addresses).
7. **Definitions and abbreviations.** DISCHARGED – the individual has no current military status; HEALTH – Records of physical examinations, dental treatment, and outpatient medical treatment received while in a duty status (does not include records of treatment while hospitalized); TDRL – Temporary Disability Retired List.
8. **Service completed before World War I.** National Archives Trust Fund (NATF) forms must be used to request these records. Obtain the forms by e-mail from inquire@nara.gov or write to the Code 6 address on page 2 of the SF 180.
- 9.

PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

The following information is provided in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(3) and applies to this form. Authority for collection of the information is 44 U.S.C. 2907, 3101, and 3103, and E.O. 9397 of November 22, 1943. Disclosure for the information is voluntary. If the requested information is not provided, it may delay servicing your inquiry because the facility servicing the service member's record may not have all of the information needed to locate it. The purpose of the information on this form is to assist the facility servicing the records (see the address list) in locating the correct military service record(s) or information to answer your inquiry. This form is then filed in the requested military service record as a record of disclosure. The form may also be disclosed to Department of Defense components, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Transportation (Coast Guard), or the National Archives and Records Administration when the original custodian of the military health and personnel records transfers all or part of those records to that agency. If the service member was a member of the National Guard, the form may also be disclosed to the Adjutant General of the appropriate state, District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico, where he or she served.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT

Public burden reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be five minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of the collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to National Archives and Records Administration (NHP), 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001. **DO NOT SEND COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND COMPLETED FORMS AS INDICATED IN THE ADDRESS LIST ON PAGE 2 OF THE SF 180.**

REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

To ensure the best possible service, please thoroughly review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. Please print clearly or type. If you need more space, use plain paper.

SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much as possible.)

1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, and middle)	2. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.	3. DATE OF BIRTH	4. PLACE OF BIRTH
5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that all service be shown below.)			
BRANCH OF SERVICE	DATES OF SERVICE		CHECK ONE
	DATE ENTERED	DATE RELEASED	OFFICER ENLISTED
			DURING THIS PERIOD (If unknown, write "unknown")
a. ACTIVE SERVICE			
b. RESERVE SERVICE			
c. NATIONAL GUARD			
6. IS THIS PERSON DECEASED? If "YES" enter the date of death. <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES _____		7. IS (WAS) THIS PERSON RETIRED FROM MILITARY SERVICE? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	

SECTION II - INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. REPORT OF SEPARATION (DD Form 214 or equivalent). This contains information normally needed to verify military service. A copy may be sent to the veteran, the deceased veteran's next of kin, or other persons or organizations if authorized in Section III, below. NOTE: If more than one period of service was performed, even in the same branch, there may be more than one Report of Separation. Be sure to show EACH year that a Report of Separation was issued, for which you need a copy.

An **UNDELETED** Report of Separation is requested for the year(s) _____

This normally will be a copy of the full separation document including such sensitive items as the character of separation, authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and dates of time lost. An undeleted version is ordinarily required to determine eligibility for benefits.

A **DELETED** Report of Separation is requested for the year(s) _____

The following information will be deleted from the copy sent: authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and for separations after June 30, 1979, character of separation and dates of time lost.

2. OTHER INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED _____

3. PURPOSE (Optional - An explanation of the purpose of the request is strictly voluntary. Such information may help the agency answering this request to provide the best possible response and will in no way be used to make a decision to deny the request.) _____

SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

1. REQUESTER IS:

Military service member or veteran identified in Section I, above

Next of kin of deceased veteran _____ (relation)

Legal guardian (must submit copy of court appointment)

Other (specify) _____

2. SEND INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO:
 (Please print or type. See item 3 on accompanying instructions.)

3. AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE REQUIRED (See item 2 on accompanying instructions.) I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the information in this Section III is true and correct.

Name _____

Street _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Signature of requester (Please do not print.) _____

() _____

Date of this request _____ Daytime phone _____

Email address _____

** This form is available at http://www.archives.gov/research_room/obtain_copies/standard_form_180.pdf on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) web site.**

LOCATION OF MILITARY RECORDS

The various categories of military service records are described in the chart below. For each category there is a code number which indicates the address at the bottom of the page to which this request should be sent. Please refer to the Instruction and Information Sheet accompanying this form as needed.

BRANCH	CURRENT STATUS OF SERVICE MEMBER	ADDRESS CODE	
		Personnel Record	Health Record
AIR FORCE	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 5/1/1994	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 5/1/1994	14	11
	Active (including National Guard on active duty in the Air Force), TDRL, or general officers retired with pay	1	
	Reserve, retired reserve in nonpay status, current National Guard officers not on active duty in the Air Force, or National Guard released from active duty in the Air Force	2	
	Current National Guard enlisted not on active duty in the Air Force	13	
COAST GUARD	Discharge, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1898	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1898 – 3/31/1998	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 4/1/1998	14	11
	Active, reserve, or TDRL	3	
MARINE CORPS	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1905	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1905 – 4/30/1994	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 5/1/1994	14	11
	Individual Ready Reserve or Fleet Marine Corps Reserve	5	
	Active, Selected Marine Corps Reserve, TDRL	4	
ARMY	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 11/1/1912 (enlisted) or before 7/1/1917 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 11/1/1912 – 10/15/1992 (enlisted) or 7/1/1917 – 10/15/1992 (officer)	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 10/16/1992	14	11
	Reserve; or active duty records of current National Guard members who performed service in the U.S. Army before 7/1/1972	7	
	Active enlisted (including National Guard on active duty in the U.S. Army) or TDRL enlisted	9	
	Active officers (including National Guard on active duty in the U.S. Army) or TDRL officers	8	
	Current National Guard enlisted not on active duty in Army (including records of Army active duty performed after 6/30/1972)	13	
	Current National Guard officers not on active duty in Army (including records of Army active duty performed after 6/30/1972)	12	
NAVY	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1886 (enlisted) or before 1/1/1903 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1886 – 1/30/1994 (enlisted) or 1/1/1903 – 1/30/1994 (officer)	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/31/1994 – 12/31/1994	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/1995	10	
	Active, reserve, or TDRL	10	
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE	Commissioned Corps – active, inactive, terminated, retired	15	

ADDRESS LIST OF CUSTODIANS (BY CODE NUMBERS SHOWN ABOVE) – Where to write/send this form

1	Air Force Personnel Center HQ AFPC/DPSRP 550 C Street West, Suite 19 Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4721	6	National Archives & Records Administration Old Military and Civil Records (NWCTB-Military) Textual Services Division 700 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20408-0001	11	Department of Veterans Affairs Records Management Center P.O. Box 5020 St. Louis, MO 63115-5020
2	Air Reserve Personnel Center /DSMR HQ ARPC/DPSSA/B 6760 E. Irvington Place, Suite 4600 Denver, CO 80280-4600	7	Commander U.S. Army Reserve Personnel Command ATTN: ARPC-ZCC-B 1 Reserve Way St. Louis, MO 63132-5200	12	Army National Guard Readiness Center NGB-ARP 111 S. George Mason Dr. Arlington, VA 22204-1382
3	Commander CGPC-Adm-3 U.S. Coast Guard 2100 2nd Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20593-0001	8	U.S. Total Army Personnel Command ATTN: TAPC-MSR-S 200 Stoval Street Alexandria, VA 22332-0444	13	The Adjutant General (of the appropriate state, DC, or Puerto Rico)
4	Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps Personnel Management Support Branch (MMSB-10) 2008 Elliot Road Quantico, VA 22134-5030	9	Commander USAEREC ATTN: PCRE-F 8899 E. 56th St. Indianapolis, IN 46249-5301	14	National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel Records) 9700 Page Ave. St. Louis, MO 63132-5100
5	Marine Corps Reserve Support Command (Code MMI) 15303 Andrews Road Kansas City, MO 64147-1207	10	Navy Personnel Command (PERS-313C1) 5720 Integrity Drive Millington, TN 38055-3130	15	Division of Commissioned Personnel ATTN: Records Officer 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 4-36 Rockville, MD 20857-0001

NEW AND CONTINUING PROGRAMS **FOR 2008**

The American Legion Riders—The Legion Family on Motorcycles

Today there are nearly 1,000 American Legion Riders groups, organized by posts, districts, or departments, supporting American Legion programs worldwide. One of the fastest growing and most highly visible of the many activities offered by our Posts, The American Legion Riders are as diverse as the programs that they support.

What do American Legion Riders do? Here are a few examples:

- Local American Legion Riders' chapters and districts have become some of the most generous supporters of the American Legacy Scholarship Fund, some raising as much as \$10,000 or more in a single charitable event.
- Legion Riders form a new, very visible tribute to veterans at every National Convention Parade.
- Riders participate in the annual POW/MIA Rally held each Memorial weekend in Washington D.C. known as "Rolling Thunder".
- Riders meet and provide escorts for military convoys returning our service members to their home stations all over the country.
- Riders ride to raise money for such organizations as The American Legion (for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship or National Emergency Fund), local American Legion post, unit, and squadron programs, regional VA centers, children's hospitals, schools, daycare centers, children and youth programs, veteran's relief, needy families and many, many others.
- Riders in Kansas started a national movement, called "Patriot Guard" (www.kspatriotguard.org) that honors our fallen comrades and protects the sanctity of military funerals and memorial services across the country.
- Riders in many states have formed special motorcycle Honor Guards and ceremonial teams highlighting the special bonds formed in military service and the motorcycling community.
- Legion Riders teach motorcycle and driver safety in the community and in schools in cooperation with ABATE and other national motorcycling organizations.

The American Legion Riders are composed of members of The American Legion Family of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion. So if you ride a motorcycle and are a Legion member, an Auxiliary member, or member of the Sons of the American Legion, you are also eligible for membership in the Legion Riders.

Contact a Riders group in your state, or e-mail The American Legion Riders at legionriders@legion.org.

OPERATION OUTREACH



Operation Outreach is a national effort of The American Legion at all levels. The DC National staff provides information to our Department of Defense liaisons in the Pentagon about the kinds of services that Legionnaires can provide to support active duty, National Guard and reserve personnel and their families.

Department Commanders in every state will brief The Adjutant Generals (TAGS) and state-level senior military and civilian leadership.

District and county commanders will be coordinating regional awareness efforts.

Your mission, in addition to assisting your local military veterans and their families, will be to contact the commander at a local military base, National Guard armory or Reserve center in your community. Arrange a meeting with him or her to explain the support services your post can provide.

For additional information, please contact The American Legion Public Relations Division at 317-630-1253. You can also download a PDF version of Operation Outreach booklet at <http://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/operationoutreach.pdf>

TROOP SUPPORT SERVICES (TS2)

Everyday communities are seeing increasing numbers of units and military personnel being activated and deployed stateside or overseas. In many cases they leave families and jobs behind them. Therefore, we need to be there for them as a support base by welcoming them home and back into their communities. As veterans and veteran advocates, The American Legion family knows from experience just how valuable a helping hand can be in times of need.

To capture this whole process from activation to discharge, we have combined several brochures (Reconnect, Family Support Network and Welcome Home) into one pocket-sized durable Troop Support Services (TS2) Resource Guide. This guide is designed to be placed in the "troops'" hands prior to deployment. One section of the guide is for the "troop" and the other for the family as a stay behind to use in calling for assistance.

We have also made available a Post Program Guide that provides more extensive information about the TS2 Resource Guide. In-depth information is readily available on our web site or through the Internal Affairs & Membership Division. Order your pamphlets and labels on-line (www.legion.org) or by calling (317) 630-1335. With each order, you'll receive stick-on labels tailored to your needs that can be attached to the last page of the guide for distribution.

HEROES TO HOMETOWNS (H2H)

The American Legion's commitment to continue serving America is especially evident in our willingness to help our severely injured troops and their families. As our injured veterans transition to face the challenges of civilian life, the Legion is there every step of the way to help. As the only Veterans' Service Organization in partnership with the Department of Defense, The American Legion's **Heroes to Hometowns** program is a network at the national and state levels to better identify the extraordinary needs of the wounded and their families. We are dedicated to work with local communities and coordinate government and non-government resources necessary for long term care of our returning heroes.

Our Heroes to Hometowns committees connect military and VA hospitals to the state and local communities to support the severely injured members and their families. Various types of supports have included:

- * child care support
- * help with paying the bills
- * finding and adopting suitable homes
- * adapting vehicles
- * transportation to medical appointments
- * finding employment
- * educational assistance
- * arranging welcome home celebrations
- * assistance with VA benefits
- * sports and recreation opportunities
- * holiday dinners

For more information please contact Heroes to Hometowns program manager at 703-908-6250.

INNOVATIVE IDEAS/VIRTUAL AMERICAN LEGION POST

In order to reinvent the way we do membership recruiting, program implementation, innovative volunteerism, redefine and communicate of The American Legion as a 21st century veterans' service organization, we need to identify the type of technology that will allow us the authenticity to communicate with our members and the public. Implementing some online activities and engaging the 'virtual community' along with a fully integrated website helps reestablish the prestige of The American Legion with our newest generation of veterans. This prestige will generate a more involved membership force; redefine our sense of volunteerism; and most of all, enrich our associations with each other as veterans.

We recommend that each post and its membership think innovation in three steps to develop a comprehensive and successful strategy for the purpose of 'virtual development'.

First, we need to research and integrate, with our websites, any relevant technologies: such as blogging, video streaming, podcasting, Real Simple Syndication, online social networks, e-news letter, and various mass media technologies that can reinvent our online presence.

Second, we need to redefine grassroots developments to reinforce our traditions of activism and advocacy. Our grassroots reinforcement can serve as a 'virtual' rally point, with visible online outreaches and activities addressing identifiable issues. It must incorporate peer to peer interactions, mentorship, personal feedbacks, welcome mechanisms to newly acquired members and virtual interactions to indoctrinate American Legion missions.

Third, we must integrate the technologies with grassroots development for the success of the overall goal. While blogging and e-news letters are great ways to communicate with our current and prospective members, it can also help a post redefine activity and participation. Online social networks can be integrated with legislative issues and interest groups to further the cohesion among veterans in your community. Second Life can assist post officers mentor and train and identify volunteers for future leadership roles. The key is to understand the advantages of a specific technology and implementing it with the needs of the post.

For more information please contact The American Legion Department of Florida at: 407-295-2631 or e-mail: mail@floridalegion.org.

Still Serving America



Children & Youth Programs



Scholarship & Financial Aid



Veterans Legislation & Benefits

National Security & Protection of Our Flag

Do You Qualify to be a Legion Family member

To Learn More, Contact:

Eligibility Dates

Gulf War/War on Terrorism
Aug. 2, 1990 – present*

Korean War
June 25, 1950 – Jan. 31, 1955

Panama
Dec. 20, 1989 – Jan. 31, 1990

WWII
Dec. 7, 1941 – Dec. 31, 1946

Lebanon/Grenada
Aug. 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984

WWI
April 6, 1917 – Nov. 11, 1918

Vietnam War
Feb. 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975

* if currently serving on active duty today, ***you are eligible.***

Be part of the world's largest veterans organization!



Printed June 2008

Artwork # 271A0608 (A)

Stock # 30-002



THE AMERICAN LEGION