



## AMERICAN LEGION

### The Post

The American Legion is incorporated by act of Congress and is organized into local posts, which, for purposes of coordination and administration, are grouped into departments. The post is the combat unit of The American Legion. Depending upon its ability to absorb American Legion policies and properly interpret them to the local people, and to successfully carry out unselfish activities for the community, the state and the nation, our organization will stand or fall.

The responsibility given to the individual post has proved the source of our strength and growth. The post is to a large degree autonomous, restricted only by broad general guidelines carried in the National or Department Constitution and By-Laws. The post must never forget, however, the implied responsibility it has to the veterans and the children of its community and to the community itself.

The post is The American Legion. Its duties are beautifully spelled out in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

Membership is by posts only. Programs are effective to the degree the post adopts and puts them into operation. Mutual helpfulness becomes a reality through the comradeship, social activities, pride of achievement, and the service programs of the post.

### Perception of The American Legion

The word “perception” is merely a shortcut way of referring to the spontaneous and more-or-less subconscious feelings and reactions of people for an institution, other people, products, or ideas.

The perception of The American Legion is the reaction—mental and emotional—which anyone has of the organization. Each individual may have a different mental perception of the Legion, and each post creates its own local perception to a great degree. The local perception is colored to some extent by a department and national perception.

The perception, which the individual Legionnaire—particularly the post officer—has, of The American Legion will determine in large measure what the post is. If the person’s perception of The American Legion is as a bar, the post will be a bar and that is all. If the person thinks the post is doing a good job but it still isn’t attracting new members, then the perception of what The American Legion should be, or is, does not agree with what the majority of veterans in the area want in an organization. There is room in The American Legion for many different personal perceptions of The American Legion.



All posts do not have to be cast in the same mold, although there is a tendency to think they are. We get into membership difficulty in a community when a group with a narrow perception of The American Legion becomes dominant and suppresses any other group with a different perception. The perception which the individual Legionnaire has can prevent the development of new activities which would produce new leaders and new membership, or it can result in the expansion of programs, leadership and, eventually membership.

It can also either help or hinder the establishment of needed new posts, which might attract and serve an entirely new group of veterans.

### Kinds of Posts

Yes, each individual Legionnaire sees The American Legion through personal experiences or desires. The organization is big enough and broad enough to accommodate him (or her), but the post will reflect the composite personality of its members. There are country club-type posts and community posts. There are ethnic groups and all-women posts. There are business and professional posts, company posts, and posts from a fraternal group. There are many different kinds of Posts and all doing the work of The American Legion.

### Goals or Standards

Some posts have several thousand members - others are successful with less than a hundred. What the post wants to do and needs to do, it can do. But only if the membership and the post officers in particular, carefully spell out its goals or standards in terms of service to the community and then translate these goals into action, will the post be successful. Service takes many forms. It's getting the manpower or membership to do a job. It's having fun while doing it. And it's doing something that needs to be done, whether for the members or the community. This means that the post officers must be aware of the likes and dislikes of its members, and equally aware of the needs of the community.

### Developing Leaders

All of this implies that there are active devoted Legionnaires. There are, but The American Legion goes through a terrific amount of manpower. Nearly 15,000 new Post Commanders are needed each year. This goes over the 100,000 mark when other post officers are elected. Some members hold the same office year after year, but there is always a need for replacements.

Where do these replacements come from? First, the veteran becomes a member. Then, experience, education, and exposure through serving on committees, attending leadership schools, conventions and conferences make that person ready for other positions of responsibility.



Over the years The American Legion has played a part in developing a tremendous number of Legionnaires who have gone on to make a mark in other fields, but leadership training, formal or informal, is a never-ending task. Anytime a post has a search for a new Commander, the danger signals are flying.

### **The Post and Its Community**

What the community thinks of The American Legion is just as basic as what a Legion Post thinks of itself. The American Legion exists only with the approval of our society, or at least a large segment of it. This is true whether it's the national organization or a post. Each post is judged by the community. Its success or failure reflects this judgment. A good post will encourage active participation by its members with other civic-minded committees and organizations within the community. It will seek to participate whether or not the activity is initiated by The American Legion.

The good post will know the needs of the community. It will know them by the simple process of planned contacts by representative post members with city officials, educators, welfare workers, community leaders and with other civic and fraternal groups. A Legionnaire who does a good job for the community deserves recognition and thanks from the post, whether it was a post-sponsored project or not.

Veterans' activities alone will not establish The American Legion as an asset in the eyes of the community. These are, however, of particular importance to an organization composed exclusively of veterans.

### **Social Activities**

Someone once described The American Legion as an organization that came to play but stayed to work. The same description pretty well fits a Legionnaire. In fact, two-thirds of our members joined because of the real or expected comradeship, fun, or social activities. A good post will recognize this. It will give as much attention to a social event as it does to planning a more serious project. The Legion Post can and should provide many of the outside social contacts for the Legionnaire and family. All events should be scheduled well in advance and publicized. Each post must determine the type of social activities that will appeal to the greatest number of its members. But more important, each activity should be evaluated as to its acceptance by the community and the eligible veterans.



### **American Legion Buildings**

All of the foregoing presumes that something will take place somewhere. Frequently this is an American Legion activity center or post home, a familiar but varied sight across America. Some are country clubs, others are community centers. Some are primarily bars; others simply meeting halls. Some are current models representing an up-to-date post; others haven't been renovated or changed since before World War II. Some appeal to a particular type of veteran; others have a general appeal. Some are landscaped and painted. Most are just a non-descript building.

To assist an American Legion Post in its plans to build a new post facility or improve its existing building, a publication - *Post Operations Manual* - has been prepared. This booklet contains basic information which is pertinent to a building program—Standards, Planning Criteria, Financing and Related Administration Suggestions, etc. - plus some success stories of actual post-building programs. Sketches of floor plans are also included in the publication. The *Post Operations Manual* may be obtained by writing to the Membership and Post Activities Section, The American Legion, Indianapolis Office.

### **Post Clubroom - It's Your Decision**

It's up to the individual post also to decide whether it is to have club room facilities. If your post decides it wants a clubroom and/or bar, then it calls for the best possible operation. To assist the post officers charged with the supervision of the post club room facilities, the *Post Operations Manual* has been prepared. This manual covers such topics as the duties of a club manager, labor costs, beverage control, food service, etc. It also contains a guide on how to use proven principles of financial accounting. The *Post Operations Manual* is available from the Membership and Post Activities Section.

### **Evaluating Post Programs**

Perhaps the best way to evaluate the changes that have taken place in the Legion programs is to review its history. For example, in the field of childcare, The American Legion has been an innovator. Many nationwide programs first saw the light of day as a Legion resolution. But Children and Youth programs of today bear little resemblance to the programs of the twenties or the thirties. No longer is the emphasis on establishing orphanages. Now the emphasis is on the whole child and the retention of as near a normal family life as possible. The programs have changed over a period of years, but . . .

Don't be surprised if at your first post visit the entire program consists of a discussion on whether to enlarge the club parking lot. And don't be too shocked if at the second, you are greeted with, "Well we didn't have any program for tonight, so we'll just turn it over to the District Commander." Perhaps at the third, someone will report, "We've had the same program with the school since



World War II. Now the school officials want to change it. Well, they won't get away with it. I've got an appointment with the school board."

All of this is business as usual, but today that is not good enough. Your job is to search out and help your post officers find programs that have meaning today. Opportunities are all around you. The American Legion National Emergency Fund Program is a good example.

There are new and old veterans eager for a visit from someone who realizes there are problems in readjusting, in retaining a pension, in finding work, or in getting training to make a decent living. Every community needs a good recognition program for its veterans. Through the press, TV and radio, use it as an example for others. Perhaps the posts could take on the job of building support.

Leading authorities feel the best way to combat increasing drug abuse is in public education. Urge your posts to find out what your schools are providing; organize a public meeting with an authoritative speaker; and take the lead in developing a community drug education council.

What happens after your delegates return from Boys State? Perhaps they could help organize a Junior Lawman program copied after one now sponsored by the Department of Nebraska. This involves bringing high school juniors into the state patrol-training center for a week of instruction involving all branches of law enforcement.

There is a need for the promotion of old-fashioned patriotism - an activity that remains timely.

You could be surprised and delighted by the enthusiasm generated by properly planned and conducted district promotions.

### **Analysis Of Post Operations**

Abe Lincoln is credited with the remark that "a man's legs need to be long enough to reach the ground." The membership of a post needs to be big enough to carry on the work of the post - and it will be. For a post's activities cannot be greater than its membership can support. So, before we talk about the membership of a post and how big the post ought to be, we need to ask - and answer - a few other questions.

- What does the post do that would make a veteran want to belong?
- Is it looking to the future?
- What further activities could it reasonably expect to carry out?
- How many members can the post expect to handle?
- How many does it actually want?
- Maybe it is satisfied with what it already has.
- What kind of post is it or does it want to be?
- Or just what is the reason for the existence of this particular post?



The answers for every post will be different.

While the answers may be different, they can be revealing and will certainly show which posts are capable of membership growth and which posts must have improved and modernized programs before a healthy membership growth can be supported.

In any given post, there is a rather constant percentage of the members who do the bulk of the work. This manpower pool is the one around which practically all posts build their programs.

The percentage of active members is rather constant, but it does not need to be. Ideas for increasing the number and quality of active Legionnaires are available in department and national planning manuals. Use this material as a base for your own presentation to make your post more effective.

#### **Limits of Authority - - - Methods of Securing Information**

Many posts resent what they infer to be interference in the operation of their post. At the same time, the department is counting upon the District commander to have detailed knowledge and understanding of each post in the district. This conflict can usually be resolved by use of proper methods of working with the posts both toward obtaining information and toward improving post operation. A sample Post Analysis Sheet appears later in this section. This particular sheet is quite similar to the one used by many of our departments. Experience in the field has shown the actual sheet can be left in the briefcase while the information is being gathered.

Perhaps the most effective method yet devised is for the District Commander to be prepared with several key questions on programs or activities; they may be your own pet interests. Give these to all District officers to use during post visitations. If a meeting with post officers can be arranged, these key questions can be the start of a good discussion, allowing the District Commander to obtain all of the information needed and at the same time offer numerous suggestions for improvements. It has been conclusively proven there is no value in handing an analysis sheet to one or more post officers and asking them to complete it without consultation with the District Commander or whoever is having the form completed.

#### **Use of Information Obtained**

As important as it is for the District Commander to know the internal operation of each post, it is equally important this information is put to proper use. Certainly it has no value if the District Commander simply obtains this information for information's sake. First, the information should be put to work to assist the post in improving its overall programs and procedures. Second, the information must be passed on to the department as part of that vast amount of knowledge that makes for a growing department. Third, District officers can be better informed.



Today, too often The American Legion is guilty of focusing on the needs of the organization rather than on the needs of the veterans or the community. American Legion Posts need to wholeheartedly adopt an approach geared to the ideal of satisfying the needs of potential Legionnaires and communities, thus causing The American Legion to be a vehicle for service, and this would make for easier acceptance. The logical conclusion is that the posts would become more flexible. There would be a variety of types of posts - the possibilities are endless if the primary thought behind continuing or forming a new post is to provide service.

Many like a post that has a good clubroom. They like the sociability that develops around a good bar, but this doesn't appeal to a lot of veterans. Some of them are leaders in our communities, who are needed in The American Legion. A clubroom can add to a post, but think of the many posts where the meetings are held in the bar room or members must go through the bar to get to the meeting room. It doesn't matter how good a salesman you have on your membership team, the market is limited. Sure, the first sale may be made, but you probably aren't gaining a continuing or active member.

There need to be people within our organization whose primary responsibility is analyzing the post structure, particularly those located in metropolitan and urban areas. Their purpose would not be to make the individual contacts, but rather helping posts toward the filling of present or developed needs of the veteran or the community.

We must further build a task force of people capable of making contact on the highest level within the community and developing with community leaders a marketable American Legion for the area. ***"What can this post and its membership do to better serve the local veterans and the community?"*** and then did something about it. The Post Responsibility Audit, which follows, is an attempt to answer such questions. This tool will amaze you with its ability to determine the quality of a post operation and its relationship to membership growth.

### **Post Responsibility Audit (PRA)**

A "PRA" anticipates an organization will participate, through its members, in meaningful activities within the community where its members reside. But it also means one thing more - and this is important - it means you should also be able to measure the results of its activities.

The American Legion has developed programs primarily in response to pressure. These pressures can take many forms - it may mean a drop in membership, acceptance by communities, being available to all veterans, changing economic factors, or a new generation of veterans. These are all conditions or pressures that directly affect The American Legion. There are many more. Unfortunately, the post response has been one of reaction rather than one of action. As individuals, and in our personal life, we do plan ahead - some with more success than others - but when a person gets active in a post, "blinders" with "tunnel-vision" may also occur. Then you see general



statements like, “Be Active, promote community service” and post members usually react rather than act ahead of any emergency.

Perhaps this is because no one has spelled out the one-two-three items to show a post is doing its share, or another post is not doing its share. And perhaps the reason for this is that as movement is made up the scale from Post to District, to Department, to National, it becomes increasingly hard to get action and, as Legionnaires, there is trouble getting a proactive/proper response except to a crisis.

There are no precise standards already developed that gives a qualitative as well as a quantitative analysis of a post, but a start has to be made and perhaps the accompanying charge can be used as a barometer which actually measures the effectiveness of a post.

This whole presentation has been put together not necessarily to indicate how you could quickly rate your posts, although this could be a very valuable tool. The primary purpose is to indicate how by evaluating what the post is doing you can show whether it is fulfilling a useful function, whether it is an organization attracting veterans, and whether it is truly a community asset.

If you honestly evaluate your posts, you are going to be surprised. More important, the evaluation will indicate where improvement is most needed.

Perhaps the social aspects have been underplayed, although it would be easy to cover all such activities under the 5th item, “Post is a Community Center” or the 8th item, “Is a Friendly Place to Be.” It’s entirely possible if this type of audit is used, there will have to be increased emphasis on a planned social recreational program. In the meantime, do not lose sight of the very fundamental question, “Is this post doing the things that justify its continues existence in the community or for your veterans?”

A score of 24 probably should produce a post that’s doing a respectable job of hanging on to old members. It’s doubtful many would be coming out to meetings, and it’s more doubtful it would be attracting the necessary new blood to make the post grow.

Most average posts, with a little effort, can be changed to become outstanding posts. By improving each item listed on the chart, this improvement should come about. One area where a better performance would be most easily seen would be in attendance at post meetings. A second would be the enthusiasm displayed by the members. A third would be a brightening of the membership picture.

Evaluate what the Post is doing...use the following form to audit post activities. First, run a beginning audit, with periodic follow-ups for comparison, such as each quarter, to see whether the Post has made any improvements in specifically identified areas.



### The Value of Organized Posts

Each District Commander will have under the district jurisdiction posts ranging from the highly successful to dormant ones. Your success is going to depend to a large extent upon how effectively you can get the greatest number of Legion posts to cooperate during your year in office.

When a post has a completely successful operation, it needs a minimum of supervision. But the District Commander will still want to be familiar with the procedures followed by the post, so ideas and programs used there can be presented to the less successful posts in the district's jurisdiction. On many occasions, new post officers are eager to do a job but lack the background.

The District Commander has several options as to how best to help the post. You may want to call a Post Officers' seminar early in the Legion year, at which time the district chairs and officers can be utilized to present the program for the coming year. Use regular district conventions for the same purpose, but here time limitations prohibit an effective presentation. Maintain a list of phone numbers of all district and county (if any) and post officers to reach them quickly in an emergency. District officers should make post visits. Using electronic *e-mail* is another fast way to reach key officers.

On other occasions, it is going to be necessary the District Commander go directly to a post and sit down with whatever officers available and offer some type of procedure the District Commander knows will work. Here is an outline of a proven plan for organizing the individual posts. This outline can be used in the district seminars, or it can be used in meeting with individual posts.

### Step Up To A Better Post

As a new commander, first looking at the overall operation of a post of The American Legion; you may feel you are facing an insurmountable wall. You probably are, unless, step by step, the wall is climbed through organization and leadership.

**Step I** - Obtain post records and get new material from department headquarters so the commander and adjutant can become familiar with the policies and traditions of the post, district, department and national.

**Step II** - Call an early meeting of your newly elected officers. Invite the outgoing commander and adjutant and other influential Legionnaires to meet with you.

A suggested agenda should include:

- A. Budget
  - a. Old, and possibly new sources of income
  - b. Estimated expenditures
  - c. Possible methods of financing selected programs with other than post funds



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- B. Assignments and outline of duties of elected officers
- C. Discussion of individual programs and committees in post organization chart, Section 1 to determine the following:
  - a. Qualifications and suggestions for committee chairs and members (See Section 1)
  - b. Established programs
  - c. Possible new programs (use available handbooks and department material as guides)
  - d. Schedule programs (see Program Reminders—Section 1)
  - e. A program of recognition and service for all veterans.
- D. Discussion programs unique to your particular post
- E. Initiate study of post and community for possible additional programs. Make Post analysis—See the previous page of this section.

**Step III - Activate Committees**

- A. Select chairperson and members
- B. Make personal contact with each chair to determine willingness to serve
- C. Arrange meeting of committees to formulate program
- D. Instruct chairmen as to programs, material available, post reports, etc.
- E. Build timetable for each committee to fit into the overall post calendar
- F. Add a young member

**Step IV - Coordinate with the Auxiliary.** Many programs depend on Auxiliary support to be successful.

**Step V - The Post Meeting**

- A. The first post meeting tends to set a pattern for the entire year
- B. Work closely with adjutant, officers and committee heads
- C. Run a formal meeting—follow the ritual in Manual of Ceremonies
- D. Post business should be attended to as briefly as possible—Use executive committee members to resolve post business
- E. Department and National material should be digested in advance and items of interest reported to the membership
- F. Committee reports should be brief and to the point
- G. Consider qualified speakers at some or all meetings for briefing on some phase of Legion program
- H. Don't neglect the social side
- I. Announce main business of next meeting
- J. Have the "Welcome Committee" working



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**Step VI** - Public Relations Committee Meeting

- A. Ways and means
- B. Formulate instruction to post officers and committee chairs on standard procedure for keeping PR chair and editor of your paper or bulletin informed

**Step VII** - Plan for a better informed membership

- A. Talks at post meetings
- B. Give all a job
- C. Encourage enrollment/completion of The American Legion Extension Institute
- D. Pass on information
- E. Have a monthly post newspaper or bulletin
- F. Acquaint active members with veteran benefits

**Step VIII** - Appoint coordinating committee for patriotic observances. America wants and needs old-fashioned patriotism

- A. Work with standing committees. Include younger members
- B. Work with community, particularly in recognition of our active military personnel, as well as all veterans.
- C. Uniformed groups

**Step IX** - Give proper credit

- A. Awards & Citations
- B. Thank you notes
- C. Credit at meetings

**Step X** - The voice of the Legionnaire and the post is only heard by active participation in meetings, whether district, department or National.

- A. Plan election of delegates as part of the post timetable
- B. Attend district, department and National Conventions and conferences
- C. Present sound resolutions of concern to The American Legion
- D. Report back to the post

**Step XI** - Follow standard procedures and schedule for the year around. Keep post meetings planned three months' ahead, social activities six months.

**Step XII** -It is never too early to evaluate possible post officers for next year.



### **AMERICAN LEGION COMMITTEES**

People, time, effort, and organization are required to carry out the programs of The American Legion. Whether those programs are continuing services for disabled veterans or a dance, most of your work will be accomplished through committees. There are listed here committees, which posts normally have, together with a brief statement on the usual duties of these committees. Your post constitution and/or your department constitution may require additional committees or may have other names for some of the committees, and the following list is not intended to be mandatory or complete for every American Legion Post.

No post can stand still. New programs are needed from time to time, old programs need to be changed, revitalized, and in some cases, dropped. Early in your term of office, you and your post officers should take time to review the programs and activities, which have been carried on in the past, and to decide on desirable changes or additions. The activities that are to be carried on determine the committees that are needed. The next task is to review the membership of the post and even nonmember eligible. From this review, a list can be set up of potential committee heads and members. Frequently a nonmember eligible will want to become a member of your post if the post has an activity or is planning an activity in which the person is personally interested. Whoever makes a contact with such a nonmember eligible must be able to point out the need for the program and the reason why this particular person is desired to assist in it.

Each committee chair needs to know how the work of the committee fits into the overall program of the Post and he needs to know what is expected, and when.

Here's the list of what might be called standard post committees and their usual duties:

- **Americanism**

*Purpose:* To inspire patriotism and good citizenship through patriotic observances, patriotic and civic instruction in schools, Americanization of aliens, information on anti-American propaganda, youth activities such as Boys State, Scouts, Oratorical Contest, School Award Medals, baseball, flag etiquette, and other similar community services, as well as provide a listing of available scholarships through the "Need A Lift?" booklet.

- **Children and Youth**

*Purpose:* To insure that any child of a veteran in need of care and protection shall receive proper and timely service and aid; to strengthen the family unit; extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth; and to maintain a well-rounded program that meets the needs of the young people in their respective community.



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- **Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

*Purpose:* To assist veterans in obtaining needed hospitalization, in the pursuance of claims and in obtaining other veteran's rights and benefits; to visit comrades who are sick or disabled; to visit and comfort members of their families when sick or bereaved. (The head of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee may be the post service officer of the post veterans affairs and rehabilitation chair. In addition, the post chaplain may serve as chair of the Visiting Committee.)

- **National Security and Foreign Relations**

*Purpose:* To organize the post membership in support of national or civilian defense projects in the community; to organize the post and to assist in organizing the community for readiness to meet any emergency.

- **Membership and Post Activities**

*Purpose:* To obtain, retain and increase the membership of the post with specific responsibilities for renewals, enrollment of new members, transfers and reinstatements. (The first vice commander frequently serves as chair of the Membership Committee.)

- **Public Relations**

*Purpose:* To increase awareness among the veteran's community and the community at large of The American Legion's advocacy of Veterans issues, national security and foreign relations, Americanism, and children & youth. Your goal is to define The American Legion in the public eye by the values for which it stands. Your technique is two-fold: (1) Placing radio and television advertisements and public service announcements produced by the National Public Relations Division where they can be seen and heard, and (2) Developing relationships with editors and journalists serving the post community so that they cover those programs supported by the organization's founding pillars.

The High School Oratorical Contest is the reporter's "news peg" but The American Legion's support for a "one hundred percent Americanism" is THE story that must be told. Why The American Legion is "Still Serving America?" is the question you, as the Post public relations officer, must ensure is answered in every form of media coverage obtained. Public Relations is a membership multiplier.



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- **Legislative**

*Purpose:* To promote the official legislative mandates of The American Legion; disseminate monthly legislative updates; establish, maintain and promote proactive grassroots lobbying activities; and establish and maintain liaison with elected officials and their staff. All activities must be in compliance with Section 2, Article II of the Constitution of The American Legion: *"The American Legion shall be absolutely non-political and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment."*

However, voter education is a critical element of the electoral process. This does not prohibit your post from holding town hall meetings, "Meet the Candidate Nights," or allowing candidates to address post meetings, district conferences, or state conventions. Candidates may be allowed to participate, as long as an invitation is extended to all candidates affording them an equal opportunity to participate. The American Legion cannot endorse or oppose any candidate, even if the candidate is a Legionnaire and Post member. A Post home should be free of any political materials that would appear to be an endorsement of a particular candidate. If the position of one candidate is posted, the position of all candidates must be posted. **Every effort must be made to remain nonpartisan.**

Note: *IF IN DOUBT, CONTACT THE NATIONAL / DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE FOR CLARIFICATION, BEFORE PROCEEDING.*

- **Finance**

*Purpose:* To supervise the receiving, disbursement, and accounting of all post funds; to prepare annual budget recommendations for the post; to advise the post on all financial policies. (The post finance officer is normally the chair of the Finance Committee.)

The matter of finance is one of great importance to any Post, Unit, Squadron, District or Department. A successful month-to-month program depends to a large degree on the ability to pay the expenses incidental of it. Therefore, it is essential that a well-planned budget be one of the first objectives of the administrative year.

An adequate budget assures monies earmarked for all purposes necessary for the participation in the various programs and events throughout the year.



For God and Country

- **Economic**

*Purpose:* To serve and assist veterans in meeting and overcoming economic problems such as employment, veterans preference, housing, civil service appeals, employment of handicapped and older workers.

- **House**

*Purpose:* To supervise the operation of physical facilities of a post such as a clubroom, American Legion Center, meeting room, etc. Supervision includes administration, responsibility for equipment, hiring and direction of employees, as authorized by Post Executive Committee and general rules applicable to the conduct of members while on the premises of the post.

- **Service**

*Purpose:* The Service Committee is a key component of every successful post. Its duties and operations are especially important during the period immediately following the termination of hostilities. The Service Officer may be the chair; however, the responsibilities of the committee go beyond the day-to-day functions of a good Service Officer in filing claims, securing hospitalization, etc. The Service Committee also is concerned with jobs, with veteran contact, with visits to ailing comrades, with on-the-job training, and with pensions. This committee should also be responsible for maintaining contact with any members of the armed forces from the community served by the post. With the nation's defenses depending upon all-volunteer armed services, it becomes absolutely essential that the man or woman in uniform be assured of the community's respect and support.

**Other Committees**

In addition to the above, your post may have need for other committees, depending on the specific programs and activities being sponsored. Some of the other committees that you might need include:

- **Graves Registration and Memorial Committee**

*Purpose:* To record, mark and decorate graves of deceased veterans; to render service and comfort to bereaved families; to provide American Legion funeral services when requested.

- **Sons of The American Legion**

*Purpose:* To act as a supervisory committee for the Sons of The American Legion Squadron in connection with its organization, activities, recreational and educational programs.



For God and Country

- Uniformed Groups

Purpose: To organize, train, promote and supervise a uniform group, such as a drum and bugle corps, color guard, chorus, firing squad, etc.

- Visiting or VAVS

The purpose of the visiting committee is to give comfort and assistance to members and their families when sick or bereaved, and to visit hospitalized veterans. It is recommended the Post Chaplain be chair and all post members share in this vital function by taking their turn as committee members.

### Committee Work

#### Committee Functions:

1. Unless specified, the first named member is Chairman.
2. Research tasks may be divided among the members and results pooled in discussion.
3. Consider all possible solutions to any given problem.
4. Formulate a resolution or motion that embodies the “best” solution.

#### How Committees Report to the Membership:

1. Chairman reads the report to the membership.
2. The report is received and subsequently may be either adopted or rejected.

#### Unique Characteristics of Committee Work:

1. Committees ordinarily possess “recommending power” only. They report to the membership who takes action. If appointed, with “power”, they may plan and follow through on the action.
2. Committee work is by free, unlimited discussion. Under parliamentary rules, you may speak only twice on a motion.
3. Committee can settle matters by the principle of general consent.
4. A chairman may speak on the subject, but must not infringe on the rights of other members to speak openly.



5. The President / Commander is an ex-officio members of all committees except the nominating committee.
6. Motions do not require a second in committee.
7. A committee has no power to punish its members, but to report facts and recommendations to the membership.

### **Courtesies in the Assembly**

Members contribute to the success of a meeting when they—

1. Come to order at once when the commander opens the meeting.
2. Give thoughtful attention throughout the business meeting and the program.
3. Rise to address the Chair, and wait to speak until recognized by the Chair.
4. Sit down at once when someone else has been given the floor.
5. Rise to make a motion, but remain seated in small assemblies when seconding the motion.
6. Write a long or involved motion and give to the adjutant, when asked to do so.
7. Rise when a rising vote is requested and remains standing until the vote is taken.
8. Vote on every question.
9. Limit their remarks to their rightful share of the time of the meeting and do not infringe upon the right of others. The floor should be given to one who has not spoken on the question, in preference to one who has spoken, if there is any question as to precedence.
10. Rise to make reports, remain seated during the discussion of the report.
11. Refrain from conversation during the meeting.
12. The courtesy of the floor may be granted to one who is not a member when it is desired to have such one speak during a business session.



### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. The ceremonial services of The American Legion must be conducted with the solemnity befitting the dignity of this organization.
2. No one shall be admitted during opening, initiation, or closing ceremonies of an American Legion meeting.
3. Comrades shall be careful never to pass between the Flags and the station of the Commander.
4. A member entering the hall after the meeting has begun shall advance to the center of the room, salute the Colors and be seated.
5. Any member desiring to be excused from the hall while the meeting is in progress, except during a prayer, or the obligation, or during the period of silence, shall advance to the center of the room, salute the Colors, and then leave.
6. All officers are instructed to memorize their parts between the dates of their election and installation. It shall be the duty of each officer to memorize that portion of the Ritual assigned to that particular office and the printed Ritual should not be read during any ceremony.
7. The National Colors and Post Flag, when in position, should be in position at either side and just in advance of the Commander's station; the National Colors on the right of the Commander, the Post Colors on the left when facing the audience, even though the Commander is on a platform and the Flags are posted on the ground level.
8. Each officer shall be equipped with the official overseas cap and with proper official badge of the respective office. Such badges may be purchased in sets by the post or singly by the individual officer through Emblem Sales, National Headquarters.
9. Legionnaires standing in silent tribute in memory of departed comrades during meetings or ceremonies will face the Flag of our country. Legionnaires are advised of the following action by the National Executive Committee (Resolution No. 33): 'RESOLVED' by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 5-6, 1971, "That The American Legion shall, at functions within Legion buildings and at all levels, cease all activities whatsoever for a period of sixty seconds as a tribute to our comrades who have passed on and in honor of those now serving in the Armed Forces and that this minute of silence shall be preceded by an appropriate announcement and message, if desired."
10. In addressing an officer of The American Legion, preface the title with the word "Comrade."



### **American Legion Name and Emblem**

The name and emblem of The American Legion are registered service marks in the U.S. Trademark Office and are protected by criminal and civil enforcement provisions of federal law (18 U.S.C.S. 705 and 36 U.S.C.SS 44 and 48). By authority of May 1947 Resolution 71, the National Adjutant or his designated representative (Director, National Emblem Sales), may grant limited permission to use the name and emblem in accordance with Resolution Number 71, other Resolutions and U.S. Trademark Law. In order to gain permission for limited use of the name or emblem, complete this form and forward it to your Department Headquarters, attn: Department Adjutant. Your Department Headquarters will forward the completed form to National Emblem Sales. Please note that permission must be requested by the member or Post purchasing the merchandise and permission is granted directly to U.S. Manufacturers only.

Any permission given will be granted on a one-time basis for a given quantity. Additional orders will require new authority and the manufacturer must not produce more items than being ordered. Permission will be given with the caveat that all material used will specifically identify the Post. If the merchandise requested is available through National Emblem Sales, you will receive a quote for the merchandise or a one-time limited permission. If the merchandise is not available through National Emblem Sales, you will receive a one-time limited permission or denial of permission.

### **MEANING OF AMERICAN LEGION EMBLEM**

1. THE RAYS OF THE SUN form the background of our proud emblem, and suggest that the Legion's principles will dispel the darkness of violence and evil.
2. THE WREATH forms the center, in loving memory of those brave comrades who gave their lives in the service of the United States, that liberty might endure.
3. THE STAR, victory symbol of WWI, signalizes as well; honor, glory and constancy. The letters U.S. leave no doubt as to the brightest star in the Legion's star.
4. TWO LARGE RINGS. The outer one stands for the rehabilitation of our sick and disabled buddies. The inner one denotes the welfare of America's children.
5. TWO SMALL RINGS set upon the star. The outer pledges loyalty and Americanism. The inner is for service to our communities, our states and the Nation.
6. The words AMERICAN LEGION tie the whole together for truth, remembrance, constancy, honor, service, veterans affairs and rehabilitation, children and youth, loyalty, and Americanism.



For God and Country

Every part of The American Legion Emblem has a meaning, a rich symbolism that a glance does not reveal. The Emblem is laid upon the rays of the sun, giver of life, warmth and courage; foe of the cold, of the darkness, of fear, of apprehension. In turn, each of the Emblem's many parts signifies a meaning which no American Legionnaire who wears the Emblem should take lightly, and which he/she should know from the first moment the Emblem's put on. Why does the star signify constancy of purpose? Because the stars are fixed in the heavens. As the stars do not wander, so should The American Legion not wander from its fixed purposes. Here, in pictures, the meanings of all the symbols of The American Legion Emblem are indicated.

### Publication List

Listed below is Program Material available for the Programs of The American Legion.

#### **Americanism - Free Items:**

Action Programs of Americanism  
Adult Literacy  
American Education Week  
American Legion Policy on Education  
American Legion School Award Medal Program  
Americanism Manual  
Baseball Handbook  
Boys State Program  
Department Americanism Chairman's Guide  
Eight and Forty Nurse Scholarship Fund  
Junior Shooting Sports Program  
National High School Oratorical Rules  
PACT in Education Handbook  
The American Legion and Scouting  
Chairman's Guide to the Oratorical Contest  
Saga of Four Chaplains  
Veteran of the Month Program  
Questions & Answers About Your First Resume

#### **Americanism - Cost Items:** (See National Emblem Sales Catalog)

Chaplains Prayer Manual  
Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States of America  
Firing Line (11 issues - subscription, \$7.00 per year)  
Flag of The United States (code)  
Guide for Parents and Students



I Pledge Allegiance (comic book)  
Know Your America  
Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette  
Light of Liberty (Citizenship comic book)  
Need a Lift? (Financial Aid and scholarship information)  
Our Country's Flag (comic book)  
Service to God and Country  
World Geography Coloring and Activity Book

**Children & Youth - Free Items:**

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Brochure - Awards  
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Brochure - "Precious Moments"  
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Brochure - Grant Guidelines  
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Contribution Envelopes  
Annual Children & Youth Program Brochure  
April is Children & Youth Month  
Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Brochure  
Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Fund Raising Guidebook  
Gateway Drugs - It's Your Choice (Drug Prevention)  
Make Halloween A Safe and Fun Night  
Make Halloween A Safe and Fun Night Project Guide  
National Family Week  
National Resources Directory - Children & Youth Programs and Service  
Play It Safe Booklet (Child Safety)  
Temporary Financial Assistance  
Unit Children & Youth Report Form  
Warning Signs (Teen Suicide Prevention)  
We Want A Children & Youth Report From Your Unit or Salon

**Children & Youth - Cost Items:** *(See National Emblem Sales Catalog)*

Nathan's Visit (Safety Comic Book)

**Economics:**

Employment Service Awards - booklet containing rules and official nomination forms  
Employer Awards Program - booklet containing rules and official nomination forms  
A Resource Guide For The Homeless Veteran - pamphlet  
Questions and Answers About Your First Resume - pamphlet  
Questions and Answers About Veterans Preference - pamphlet  
The National Economics Chairman - pamphlet introducing the commission and discusses its activities



★ **MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** ★  
★ **2008 COMMANDER'S TRAINING – AMERICAN LEGION MODULE** ★

Manual for Employment Chairmen - 90-page handbook for Post, District and Department Employment Chairmen

Job Fairs for Veterans - pamphlet which explains how Posts and Departments can plan and initiate job fairs

**Foreign Relations:**

Foreign Relations Statement of Positions and Resolutions  
POW/MIA Fact Book

**Legislation:**

Legislative Handbook (\$6.00 per 100 copies)

“How a Thought Becomes a Bill - How a Bill Becomes a Law” (\$9.00 per 100)

“How To Make a Difference Through Effective Grassroots Lobbying” (\$1.50 per copy)

**Membership/Internal Affairs:**

Post Adjutant's Manual

Post Officers Guide & Manual of Ceremonies

Welcome to The American Legion - an information booklet for new members

Post Operations Manual - Guidelines To Post Building Program

Why You Should Belong - new member promotional material

Paid Up For Life Brochure and P.U.F.L. Applications

Membership Team Training Guide

You Have a Friend in The American Legion

**National Security:**

The American Legion Blood Program

The American Legion ROTC Achievement Program

Your Friend - The Policeman

The American Legion Fire Protection/Prevention Program

The American Legion National Crime Prevention Program

National Security Statement of Positions and Resolutions

The American Legion Certificate of Commendation, Post Officers

The American Legion Certificate of Commendation, Fire Fighters

The American Legion Certificate of Appreciation, Civil Air Patrol

**Public Relations:**

Public Relations Handbook (available on our web site)

Speakers Guide (available on our web site)

Message Points (available on our web site)

American Legion Fact Sheets

Suggested Speeches (available on our web site)



(Speeches are available for The American Legion Birthday, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, American Education Week, Civic Groups, GI Bill of Health, Post Dedication, Women Veterans, and Salute to Veterans)

**Audiovisual Loan Catalog**

(The following videotapes are free: Flag Etiquette, This Is The American Legion, What If There Was No American Legion, Pre-Planning Eases a Veteran's Death, POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony, American Legion Boys State: Insuring Democracy's Future, The GI Bill of Health, How to Conduct the National High School Oratorical Program, Still Serving America Video Element Collection, WWII Commemorated, & The American Flag: More Than A Piece of Cloth. Membership Radio (audiocassette) – Television Commercials (VHS)/Public Service Announcements – Free).

**Sons of The American Legion:**

SAL Squadron Handbook  
SAL "Say No To Drugs" Brochure  
SAL Flag Brochure  
SAL Why I Belong Brochure  
SAL VA & R Brochure  
SAL Brochure

**Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation:**

The American Legion – Who are we? What do we do? What can we do for you?  
The American Legion guide: Women Veterans – *Identifying Risks, Services, and Prevention*  
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  
Veterans: The War Against Hepatitis C  
What To Do Before A Veteran Dies  
Know Your Benefits – *"Learn What You Have Earned"*  
Post Service Officer Guide  
The American Legion Debt Management guide  
Decade of Service - *Sourcebook for Military Personnel and Veterans*  
Gulf War Benefits and Programs: A Guide for Veterans and Families  
Vietnam Veterans – Guide to Agent Orange Benefits  
The American Legion Guide to Filing Military Discharge Review Board and Boards for Correction of Military Records Applications  
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Code of Procedure