THE AMERICAN LEGION

A NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR POST COMMANDERS AND POST ADJUTANTS . . .

Advance

Vol. XIV December, 1971 No. 12

Initiation, Analysis of Activities Help Post to Retain New Members

IF YOURS IS AN AVERAGE American Legion Post, between 10 and 15 per cent of your members will be new members. How they are received into the post will determine in a large measure whether or not they renew next year and the years thereafter.

Because The American Legion is not a secret society, it has been all too easy to think that initiations and other ceremonies are not important. But they are! The new member needs to be shown, officially and formally, that he is indeed a part of the organization. He deserves the courtesy of being introduced to the organization which has accepted his membership application and his dues payment.

This is the purpose of the initiation ceremony.

Two Forms

The *Post Commander's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies* offers two forms of initiation—one known as the "long form," and the other as the "short form." For the long form, which is, of course, more detailed, you will need an initiation team of six, and you will need to practice before conducting the ritual. The short form can be presented by the Post Commander and the Sergeant-at-Arms with little advance preparation.

Although the long form is, naturally, more impressive, either will help to convince the new member that he really does belong to The American Legion.

The next step in converting a dues payer into a Legionnaire is to see that he gets what he thought he was buying when he accepted an invitation to join.

For business or personal reasons, some members do not wish to be active. They merely want to support the Legion through their membership and their payment of dues. But even these non-actives should know that they are welcome at meetings and social events and that there is a spot for them in the various programs of the post any time they might wish to take part.

Social, Recreational Benefits Attract

Professional opinion polling surveys have consistently shown that 50 per cent or more of our members joined initially because of expectation of social or recreational benefits. The attitude of your officers and members in greeting new members and making them feel at home is important to them. Treat the new man as you would want to be treated if you were coming to your first meeting among strangers in an organization that you didn't really know anything about.

So, after the new member has been initiated and has established a friendly relationship with at least a few of the older members (older in point of length of membership, that is), the next step is to get him involved in the activities of the post. This can happen naturally and easily if you or some of the other post leaders take the time to get acquainted with him and find his interests.

All of us like to feel important. We like to do things that get us favorable notice among our fellows. So use the new member's talents, abilities, and interests. But don't impose on him. Don't give him a job in the post just because none of the older members want it.

Vietnam Era Veterans

Many of the Vietnam era veterans are busy going to school, getting started in a new job, establishing homes and families. They may not have a lot of time for extra activities. They may be a little short on funds and not really able to afford some of those activities that require a member to spend some of his own money. Be-

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COMMANDER'S CALENDAR

December

2-4	Western Area Conference on Children and Youth, Seattle, Wash.
7	Pearl Harbor Day—Civil Defense Day. Opening day of Holiday Blood Donor Drive.
15	Bill of Rights Day.
25	Christmas.
31	Deadline for payment of American Legion Life Insurance premiums. Insured Legionnaires must report their 1972 membership card numbers with premium payments.

January, 1972

1	New Year's Day.
3	Closing date of Holiday Blood Donor Drive.
6-8	Southern Area Conference on Children and Youth, Orlando, Fla.
20-22	New England Area Conference on Children and Youth, Boston, Mass.

February

	Americanism Month.
1	1971 members who have not paid for 1972 are now delinquent.
6	Four Chaplains' Day.
6-12	Religious Emphasis Week.
12	Abraham Lincoln's Birthday.
21	George Washington's Birthday.
27-Mar. 3	Annual National Commander's Conference, Washington, D.C.
29-Mar. 2	National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference, Washington, D. C. **(Plan ahead for next two months' big events—American Legion's 53rd Birthday in March, and Children and Youth Month in April.)**

New Members . . .

(Continued from preceding page)

sides, it has to be an extremely self-confident man who thinks he is qualified to take over a really top job in a post the day he joined.

But once in a while, you will find a fairly new member who really takes fire. He's sold on the Legion and sees in it a channel for accomplishment. Use this man. From his personal zeal and enthusiasm, he can be a highly successful membership worker. The younger veteran is particularly effective in making contact with other young veterans, talking to them, and showing through his own experience and attitude the value of membership.

Expand Area of Activities

Larger posts in particular need a great variety of activities to hold members who come from many different walks of life and have many different interests. Small groups of six, eight, ten, or even twenty members with a common interest can band together to carry on almost any project in the name of the post. The post provides the common ground for them to get together. It gives them an audience and recognition.

The Legion's serious programs offer the ambitious member a tremendous opportunity for public experience—learning how to handle himself in front of an audience, how to get things done through working with committees, getting acquainted on a first-name basis with community and business leaders. The chances are that in your community there are top public officials or community leaders who actually got their start through the Legion Post, perhaps 40 or 50 years ago.

Prominent Local Legionnaires

So it doesn't hurt to have on the walls of your meeting room the pictures of some of your members who have achieved prominence in the community. The young man who has his eye set on a public career will get the message when he sees that the current mayor was post commander 15 years ago.

What this all boils down to is that each of us is an individual, the most important individual in the world to ourselves. We want to be treated as individuals, and we are going to be sold on The American Legion to the extent that our post offers avenues for the satisfaction of personal needs.

Legislative Team Needs Post Support

ONE OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES of each Post Commander is to develop within the post an interest in the legislative program of The American Legion and support for its objectives. These objectives are based on resolutions that frequently originate in Legion Posts and later become mandates to the National Legislative Commission and its staff.

Your legislative team presents the Legion's program to the Congress and works to insure its success. Sometimes, however, we cannot do the job alone, and must turn to you and your members for help. It is then that active participation of every Legion Post is vital to our success.

Legislative Objectives

Despite the efforts of this First Session of the 92nd Congress to meet the needs of our veterans, much remains to be done. The American Legion wants improvements in the compensation and pension programs to keep pace with the cost-of-living increase and to make certain that pensioners will not suffer a loss of income next January because of the last Social Security increase.

We want a modern, well-equipped armed force prepared to meet any emergency. We are asking the Congress for specialized education and training for the handicapped child—and legislation to assure that none of our children lack the necessary medical attention because of parental inability to pay the costs. We are seeking further improvements of the VA hospital and medical program—and extension of outpatient care to non-service-connected veterans who otherwise would require hospitalization.

We want an increase in educational benefits for the Viet-Time Veterans—and help for these young men upon their return from service in meeting their housing, health, and employment needs.

National Legislative News Bulletin

These are some of the things which are receiving priority attention at present. The *National Legislative News Bulletin* reports to its readers on these and other objectives as developments occur.

Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units are the most important elements in our legislative organization. Members of the Congress listen to their constituents back home. In order to have **your** team ready when called upon for help, be sure that your post has an active legislative chairman—and that your members know the Legion program and legislative issues before the Congress which affect them and their community.

Up-To-Date Information

The *National Legislative News Bulletin* is the only American Legion publication dealing exclusively with legislation affecting veterans and their dependents. This publication provides brief, up-to-date information on our program and is an invaluable tool for post legislative activities.

Your post should be on the mailing list for this valuable publication in order for you and your officers to stay on top of the program. Be ready for the action ahead—use the form below and join the national legislative team for 1971-72.

National Legislative Division
The American Legion, 1608 K St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

Date_____

Enclosed is Check..... Money Order ..... (check one) for Four Dollars ($4.00 for subscription to **National Legislative News Bulletin.** (Make Checks or Money Orders payable to The American Legion.)

NAME_____
(print or type)

ADDRESS_____
(street, box, route no.)

_____
(city, state, zip code)

POST/UNIT NAME_____ **NUMBER**_____

VAVS Provides 'Action Time' Program

WHEN WORLD WAR II ended, the spotlight of America was on her veterans—especially the disabled veterans confined to Veterans Administration hospitals. To these hospitals came people—people asking how they could volunteer their free time in behalf of the hospitalized veterans.

Their services were welcomed, but something was lacking. There was no centralized, coordinated plan which was needed in order for the VA to make best use of these volunteers, to make their activities more meaningful. This plan was born in the establishment of the Veterans Administration Voluntary Service (VAVS).

Under the VAVS program, men and women throughout the country volunteered their services in VA hospitals, knowing that they were members of a single team, all pulling together.

Importance of Program

The VAVS program brings new hope to the hospitalized veteran. It provides the volunteer an organized opportunity to help his less fortunate fellowman. It brings to the VA hospital a priceless ingredient—a touch of home, a touch of the community, both of which are so essential to the welfare of the veteran.

If a member of your family is ill, your friends and neighbors come over and ask what they can do to help. It is the same in any VA hospital. This is the reason for VAVS. The program provides regular volunteers to assist the hospital staff in caring for the veteran, making it possible to answer many more of his needs.

Hospital volunteers come primarily from the ranks of veterans, welfare, and service organizations. However, there are also participants who are not affiliated with any organized group.

How to Become a Volunteer

The process of becoming a VAVS volunteer is quite painless. Your first step is to contact the VAVS representative at your nearest VA hospital. (Even if you don't live near a VA hospital, there is a place in this program for your efforts. VAVS also has a "community rehabilitation activity" to help the veteran patient back into the community.)

After your selection by the organization, you receive interviews and instructions and work a short probational period. You will be given the opportunity to do the things you do best and enjoy the most.

The scope of volunteer activities continues to widen. There are jobs that just suit your talents in one of the many services of the hospital (or needed during the period of convalescence in the community).

Post Participation

Here are some things an American Legion Post can do to give even greater meaning to the VAVS program:

1. Encourage participation and cooperation with other civic groups and agencies in your locality to provide such care for hospitalized or convalescent veterans.

2. Ask your Legionnaires to share their hobby interests with hospitalized or convalescent veterans.

3. Ask appropriate VA staff personnel to attend a post meeting to explain the opportunities of volunteer service.

4. Keep your Legionnaires informed about those volunteer assignments which have a unique appeal to men, and ask for assistance in recruiting for fulfilling these assignments.

5. Devote a post meeting to VAVS and invite the local VAVS representative to talk to post members about the program.

Legion, Auxiliary Leaders In Area

Through the years, The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary have come to be recognized as leaders in the field of rehabilitation to America's war veterans. This has been especially true where it concerns the sick and hospitalized veteran.

Today, because of advances in modern medicine and medical care programs, we are being confronted with a greater need than ever before to reinforce and expand our rehabilitation services. No longer can we advance at our own choosing, but must meet the demands imposed on us to provide the type of rehabilitation services that can and will help the veteran. To meet our responsibilities we must recruit more Legionnaire volunteers into this most vital program.

There are many rewards offered to the participant in the VAVS program. To be sure, none of these "rewards" are material in nature; however, the program provides its participants with that feeling of contentment and satisfaction that accompanies service to others in time of genuine need. Volunteer work is the source of expansion of our lives. Whatever we possess in the way of skills, property, and joy is enhanced by sharing it with others.

TFA Means Cash to Needy Children When No Other Aid Source Available

TEMPORARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE is the name given to the program by which an American Legion Post calls upon the National Children & Youth Division for cash assistance to meet the needs of veterans' children when it has established that there is no other source to provide needed aid.

The American Legion has been actively engaged in the Temporary Financial Assistance Program since 1926. Closely allied with the concern for disabled veterans is the Legion's interest in the welfare of the children of deceased and disabled veterans.

TFA Bridges 'Gaps' in Aid Picture

Meeting the maintenance and health needs of children is as vital today as when the program of Temporary Financial Assistance was first conceived. True, there are many local, state, and national programs functioning today, because of efforts of the Legion and similar organizations, devised to meet these same needs. But to those children who "fall through the slats" and don't qualify, their needs are just as real as the needs of children decades ago.

Inflation, increased numbers of families needing assistance, and diversity in the administration of welfare programs in many areas has compounded the problem of gaining needed assistance, emphasizing the reason for continuing the Temporary Financial Assistance Program.

$1.5 Million Direct Aid Last Year

Expenditures reported during 1970-71 by 47 per cent of all Legion Posts for direct aid of food, clothing, medical care, and other necessities amounted to $1,417,768. Departments added another $105,642 and the National Children & Youth Division expended $31,181, bringing the grand total to more than $1.5 million for financial assistance to children of veterans during the last program year.

Since the National Children & Youth Division (formerly Child Welfare) started administering the Temporary Financial Assistance fund in 1926, a total of just under $2.4 million has been used to support this program.

Most Families of World War II Parents

An analysis of those cases assisted by the National Children & Youth Division in 1970 shows that in one out of every two cases, the veteran parent saw service during World War II. In about one-third of the cases there was a Korean War veteran parent, and the remainder involved a Viet-Time Veteran parent.

The need in the vast majority (nearly 84 per cent) of the cases was a result of illness of the wage earner. Most of the veterans were hospitalized. Six per cent of the cases reflected need arising from death. The remaining cases had a number of reasons for need such as desertion and divorce.

Mental illness was the leading cause of the veteran's disability. This was followed by heart and circulatory disease, ulcers, disc and back problems, cancer, and kidney disease.

More Than 30 Per Cent Had Turned to AFDC

About one in eight cases (13.28 per cent) were receiving VA compensation or pension. Another 17.03 per cent had an application for benefits pending with the VA. More than 30 per cent had turned to the Public Welfare Department and its Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program as a means of assisting families during this emergency period. Only one in twelve cases had applications pending with the Social Security Administration and its Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance.

One in five cases reported that the wife and mother was disabled or mentally unable to work or contribute to the family's support. There were mothers disabled because of mental illness, pregnancy, heart disease, diabetes, and just poor health.

The average number of children was 3.5 per family. The Korean veterans averaged 3.8 children, the World War II family had 3.7 children while the Viet-Time Veteran's family had 1.9.

The average age of the veteran parent at time of application for aid was 43.4 years. The World War II veteran averaged 49.5, the Korean veteran averaged 40.2, and the Viet-Time Veteran averaged 26 years.

Needy Cover Broad Skills Range

Most of the veterans needing the help of the Temporary Financial Assistance Program were employed in an occupation normally considered semi-skilled. However, there were a few applications for aid in which the veteran parents held such professional positions as teaching, engineering, and (one case) physician.

Temporary Financial Assistance provides a lift to those veterans who, for one reason or another, lose the ability to provide for their families.

There is a continuing need for this program. The degree of its effectiveness depends in part on the appointment of a children and youth chairman in each post.

Mr. Post Commander: Does your post have a children and youth chairman? If not, look around for a Legionnaire who's interested in children and willing to devote the time to assist all children and youth in the community. One facet of his responsibility will be to help the children of veterans with maintenance and health needs.

National Commander John H. Geiger (left) and National Adjutant William F. Hauck hold the George Washington Honor Medal, one of the Freedoms Foundation's top awards of 1970, which was presented to The American Legion's publication, *Firing Line*.

At no other time in our Nation's history has it been so imperative that the public be aware of and knowledgeable concerning the destructive elements so rampant in this country today. Use the handy coupon below to subscribe for a friend, or a school or public library in your community. You can give even wider circulation to *Firing Line* by ordering a bulk subscription, twenty (20) or more copies mailed to one address for only $1.00 each per year.

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National Awards Honor Legionnaires, Posts For Membership Work

IN RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING service in the area of membership enrollment during his 1972 "It's Action Time" year, National Commander John H. Geiger is providing two distinctive awards to American Legionnaires.

In addition, there are several awards for which your post may qualify by meeting certain membership achievement requirements.

To each Legionnaire who signs up 15 or more new or renewal members for 1972 by Dec. 31, 1971, National Commander Geiger will award his personal appreciation card, a billfold-size card signifying the Legionnaire's accomplishment.

The National Commander's Cap Ornament, as illustrated here, will be presented to those Legionnaires who sign up 25 or more new or renewal members for 1972 by The American Legion Birthday, March 15-17.

This colorful cap pin, in the form of a shield, consists of red and white vertical stripes and white stars on a field of blue. It will readily identify and help others to recognize the Legionnaire who has worked diligently to help give meaning to the National Commander's "Action Time" Theme for the year.

Awards which may be earned by American Legion Posts are as follows:

Certificate of Most Distinguished Service, for enrolling by Nov. 11, 1971, a membership for 1972 equaling or exceeding the 1971 membership total.

Honor Ribbon for the post colors, in recognition of a 1972 membership as of Dec. 31, 1971, exceeding or equaling the 1971 total.

Certificate of Meritorious Service, for enrolling by Dec. 31, 1971, a membership for 1972 equaling or exceeding its previous all-time high.

American Legion Birthday Award, for (1) enrolling a 1972 membership by March 17, 1972, equaling or exceeding the total 1971 membership; (2) observing the Legion Birthday; and (3) carrying on throughout the year basic American Legion programs.

All awards described here, both individual and post, are available only on application and certification to department headquarters.

Legion Life NEWS

American Legion Life Insurance Plan — Chicago, Illinois

Viet-Vet Legionnaires Qualify For Low Cost Life Insurance

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For Only	Total Coverage thru 1972
$96 per year (thru age 29) (thru 25 in Ohio and New Jersey)	**$40,000.00**
$72 per year (thru age 29) (thru 25 in Ohio and New Jersey)	**30,000.00**
$48 per year (thru age 29) (thru 25 in Ohio and New Jersey)	**20,000.00**
$24 per year (thru age 29) (thru 25 in Ohio and New Jersey)	**10,000.00**

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Plan Excellent Value To Young Legionnaires

CHICAGO—American Legionnaires through age 29 (25 in Ohio and New Jersey) can have $40,000 in decreasing term insurance coverage for a $96 yearly premium under The American Legion Life Insurance Plan. Young Legionnaires who are purchasing homes find this insurance is well-tailored toward the protection of their investment on their home in the event of death.

★ ★ ★

DEADLINE FOR PAYMENT OF '72 PREMIUM—DEC. 31, 1971

CHICAGO—Certificate and policy holders of The American Legion Life Insurance Plan are reminded that Dec. 31, 1971, is the deadline for paying premiums. Post Adjutants are urged to have membership cards in the hands of all paid-up members for 1972 well ahead of the end of December. Insured Legionnaires must report their 1972 membership card numbers with their premium payments.

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$11 Million Claims

CHICAGO—More than $11 million has been paid to the designated beneficiaries of insured Legionnaires since the plan was first adopted in 1958 as the Legion's official life insurance program. The $11 million represents more than 8,000 claims. Such claims have varied in amounts from $250 to $11,500.

A Viet-Time Legionnaire Writes—

Kenova, W. Va.

Dear Sir:

I am a new member in The American Legion. I am a Viet Vet in good health and would like to have this low-cost insurance plan. I just recently joined Ceredo-Kenova Post 93. I think I am going to enjoy being a Legionnaire.

Thank you,

Samuel Hughes

Card No. WV2-0093-0177

(The above letter accompanied Legionnaire Hughes' application for four units of life insurance protection.)

★ ★ ★

MR. COMMANDER OR ADJUTANT:

COMPLETE THIS COUPON AND ORDER APPLICATIONS NEEDED TO SEND IN A FUTURE MAILING TO YOUR POST MEMBERSHIP.

American Legion Life Insurance Plan
P. O. Box 5609, Chicago, Ill. 60680

Please rush the following items, free of charge:

(How Many?)

..... Insurance Applications

..... Question and Answer Brochures

..... 1 ..... Prepared talk for a Post meeting

YOUR NAME..... POST NO.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY ..... STATE ..... ZIP .....

Aerospace Education Vital in Space Age

RECOGNIZING THE MAGNITUDE of the challenges of the space age faced by our nation's youth, The American Legion joined the Civil Air Patrol and the National Aerospace Education Council to stimulate interest in the aerospace age and, more importantly, to provide youth with the opportunity to satisfy this interest.

An attractive new booklet, *A National Aerospace Education Program,* has been prepared to assist in implementing the program. Copies can be obtained early in 1972 by writing: National Security Division, The American Legion, 1608 K St., N. W., Washington, D. C. 20006.

Because NAEC activities are directed primarily to educators, the Post Commander should select a Legionnaire who perhaps is on the school faculty or enjoys a good working relationship with the faculty to serve on the post's aerospace education committee.

Post participation in this program can include the encouragement of aerospace education in local schools, assistance to teachers to attend aerospace education workshops, promote school aviation and space clubs, etc.

Also, see if your post can be of any assistance to the local Civil Air Patrol. Many posts have "adopted" CAP units and provided CAP cadets with uniforms, meeting places, etc.

Legion, Boys' Clubs Fight Delinquency

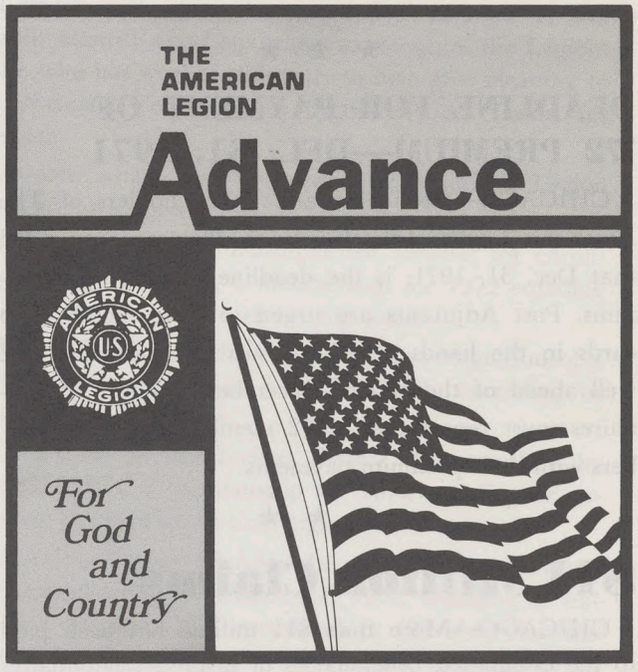
AMERICAN LEGION co-operation with the Boys' Clubs America was described by A. Boyd Hinds, national director of Boys' Clubs, at the Legion's 53rd National Convention in Houston.

Speaking for the 940 clubs serving some 950,000 youngsters, Hinds said that "the phenomenal growth rate of Boys' Clubs would not be possible without the unselfish support of organizations such as The American Legion."

The "mortar and steel" portion of that support is being realized at Boys' Clubs throughout the nation. In recent years, local Legion Posts have made direct contributions to Boys' Club building funds and expansion projects in such diverse communities as Auburn Heights, Mich.; Greenville, S. C.; Depew, N. Y.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Cleveland, Tenn.; and Hobbs, N. M.

In addition, Legion Posts in dozens of communities are directly involved with Boys' Clubs camping programs by awarding camp scholarships to young members and by helping to maintain, repair, and equip the camps.

Whatever form Legion support has taken, Hinds added, "The American Legion has been instrumental in helping our organization maintain its widely recognized reputation as a powerful antidote to the spreading disease of delinquency."



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