THE AMERICAN LEGION

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

Advance

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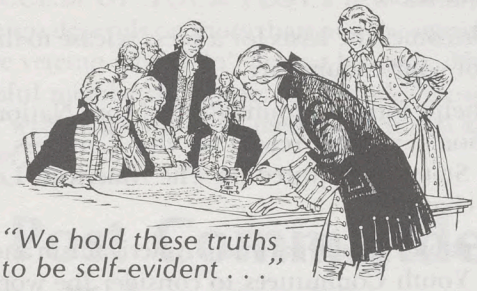
U.S.A. at 203 Years . . .

Celebrate Independence Day



"We hold these truths to be self-evident . . ."

AS THE NATION approaches the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, American Legion Posts everywhere should be preparing adequately for an appropriate observance of the occasion.

The Declaration of Independence is more than a great document in the framework of American history — it is an expression of the loftiest objectives of all mankind.

This excellent statement originated with the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia. All of its signers had made their commitment by July 4, 1776. The historic Declaration was the responsibility of a committee appointed by the Continental Congress. It was written mainly by Thomas Jefferson with the assistance of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston.

Briefly, the Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal; that God has given them the right to live, to be free, and to work for happiness; and that it is the duty of the government to secure these rights for its people. The government however, must get its power from the consent or the agreement of the people governed.

While the concepts stated in the Declaration of Independence are taken for granted by too many living in the free world, there are millions still under the yoke of tyranny and oppression who yearn for the rights set forth in that historic document.

There are several ways by which an American Legion Post can show respect for the founders of our great nation by observing appropriately a July 4th Independence Day holiday. Regardless of the type of observance, the necessary ingredient is a plan.

Birthdays are family occasions, and the nation's 203rd birthday should be no exception. Make your post's observance of Independence Day a real family event — a picnic, barbecue, family outing, etc. Perhaps the event could be enlarged to include golf and/or tennis for husbands and wives.

Many posts celebrate the Fourth of July with activities which are open to the entire community. One of the more traditional formats is a community fireworks display with suitable preliminary activities.

Some posts use the occasion of Independence Day to establish in some significant area an "avenue of flags." To see a major thoroughfare lined with flags can be a dramatic and lasting impression on Americans of all ages.

If your post is one which has been the traditional sponsor of the community celebration of Independence Day, you have the responsibility of upholding that tradition with outstanding performance.

Each Post Commander has a heavy responsibility to lead the post and its community in an expression of universal and unanimous pride, making the observance of Independence Day a truly memorable occasion.

Approach this special day with a special commitment. As in any endeavor, you can only gain from it what you put into it. The more detailed your plan, the more talent you enlist, the better will be your results.

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COMMANDER'S CALENDAR

June	*Is your Department Convention this month? Be sure your post is represented!*
6	35th anniversary of D-Day, 1944.
14	Flag Day.
17	Father's Day.
20	Deadline for 1979 National Convention uniformed groups contest entries.
25	29th anniversary of U.S. entry into Korean War, 1950.
July	*Is your Department Convention this month? Be sure your post is represented!*
1	All delinquent memberships now forfeited.
4	Independence Day.
13-21	American Legion Boys Nation, Washington, D.C.
23	Deadline for 1979 membership transmittals to reach National Headquarters, Indianapolis, to be counted in determining National Convention delegate strength. Be sure your post has all its 1979 memberships transmitted to department in accordance with the department's schedule.
August	*Is your Department Convention this month? Be sure your post is represented!*
5	15th anniversary of Gulf of Tonkin Incident, 1964, changing U.S. role in Vietnam.
17-23	61st National Convention, The American Legion, Houston, Texas.
22-26	Regional Tournaments, American Legion Baseball.
30-	National Finals, World Series of American Legion
Sept. 3	Baseball, Greenville, Miss.

The American Legion **ADVANCE**

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Editor: Frank L. Megnin

June, 1979 Vol. XXII, No. 6

Post Reporting Deadline Near

JUNE 15 (or earlier, if your department says so) is the deadline date for your post to file its Consolidated Post Report.

This report is a vivid illustration to the people of this great nation on how The American Legion is performing. It is extremely vital in helping our organization improve the quality of its program.

And, more than that, this essential account serves several other uses:

1. It becomes the basis for a press release to the news media of your community.

2. It helps form the foundation of your National Organization's annual report to the Congress of the United States as required by The American Legion's federal charter.

3. It enables your department Americanism and Children & Youth Committees to consider the work your post is doing in determining its possible qualification for national recognition awards.

4. It provides the source material for a fact brochure of Legion activities for distribution to Congressmen, Senators, and their administrative staffs.

The report form is structured for rapid computer compiling, so be sure to leave blank any space where information is not available or does not pertain to your post. Please restrict your answers to the spaces allocated.

If you need to expand upon a particular subject in detail, attach a narrative report to the National and department copies. Your narrative will be reviewed by National Headquarters staff for possible consideration and use in *The American Legion Magazine.*

Don't be discouraged if your post doesn't have something to report in every blank. Very few posts participate in every Legion program. Many outstanding posts dedicate their energies and resources to just one or two programs and, as a result, the quality of these efforts is first rate.

You may be surprised at just how much was accomplished by your post in the last 12 months.

Remember — June 15 is the deadline, or it may be earlier, if your department has set an earlier date for the reports to be filed at department headquarters.

Post's Care Keeps New Member

Editor's Note: As The American Legion stands at the threshold of the vast leadership changeover which will occur during the next 90 days in most of our 16,000 posts, it becomes necessary for articles aimed at the Post Commander and Post Adjutant for 1979-80 to appear in this and subsequent issues of the **ADVANCE.** Once the officers are chosen for next year, would you help us by passing on this and any future issues you receive to your successor? Thanks!

SUCCESS OF YOUR POST's new member campaign depends on more than just the signing of an eligible veteran who didn't belong last year. The really successful membership program includes those efforts which will make the new member want to stay as a member.

What does your post do with a new member once his or her dues have been paid for the first time?

Has that new member been invited, and personally escorted, to the post to be introduced to others and to see the facilities the post offers?

Each new member should not only be shown the post facilities, but also be given some historical background of the post, its accomplishments, and some of the achievements and contributions of individual members.

As Post Commander, you should see to it that an appropriate initiation ceremony is arranged on a periodic basis during your term of office in order that new members (plus those who have never been initiated) are properly inducted into the organization. (See your copy of the *Post Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies* for complete details and instructions pertaining to the initiation ceremony.)

As soon as possible after the initiation, the Post Commander or his designated representative should sit down with each new member on an individual basis to determine the new member's needs and interests. See whether the new member has an interest and desire to participate in any existing program or activity areas now functioning in the post — Boys State, Baseball, Scouting, Oratorical, Hospital Volunteer, Sons of The American Legion, etc.

Perhaps that new member has an area of interest which could become a new program or activity for the post's involvement.

Does the new member need assistance in securing veteran benefits or in need of low-cost insurance?

Just a few minutes with each new member could be the difference between retaining or losing this very same member next year. A new member who is properly oriented and initiated becomes a positive step toward the continued success of your post's membership program.

25 Post Commanders Win Trips to Houston

HERE ARE THE 25 Post Commanders who have been awarded expenses-paid trips to Houston for the 1979 National Convention in August:

Homer L. Pippin, Post 76, Alabama
James M. Vincent, Post 517, California
Charles H. Crimm, Post 19, D. of C.
Russell J. Stevens, Post 339, Florida
Bill Hatcher, Post 264, Georgia
Robert Gibbons, Post 44, Indiana
Randy C. Freerks, Post 316, Iowa
James L. Young, Jr., Post 121, Kentucky
L. L. Tyler, Post 388, Louisiana
Alvie E. Wallace, Post 220, Maryland
Ralph Hester, Post 32, Michigan
Charles E. Waddle, Post 46, Mississippi
William R. Quarton, Post 2, Missouri
Henry Mihal, Post 484, New Jersey
George J. Gillen, Post 1893, New York
Flake C. Huggins, Post 217, North Carolina
Melvin Enzminger, Post 295, North Dakota
Wade O. Tucker, Post 29, Oklahoma
William W. Rearick, Post 923, Pennsylvania
Jack Mathis, Post 166, South Carolina
William R. Henderson, Post 187, Tennessee
Oscar A. Larson, Post 522, Texas
L. E. Nomett, Post 108, Virginia
Lorin Huber, Post 61, Wisconsin
Clarence E. Parrish, Post 64, Wyoming

To be eligible for the drawing, Post Commanders had to record a 1979 membership, as of March 15-17, which exceeded the final total for any year since 1960. More than 1,300 Commanders qualified.

Post Officer Installation Charges

EDITOR'S NOTE: To assist American Legion Posts in the development of an effective and meaningful ceremony of installation of officers, the **ADVANCE** has reproduced on these two pages the charges given by the installing officer to each of the newly elected officers. A good year begins with officers duly installed. For complete instructions concerning the installation ceremony, see your copy of the *Post Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies.*

Installing Officer (to all officers as group): "My comrades, you have been chosen by your comrades to fill the various offices of _____ Post No. _____. You will, I know, vindicate the trust that has been reposed in you, and fulfill in every way the obligations which that trust entails. You shall at once familiarize yourselves with the duties of your particular offices, and you shall proceed upon those duties in the same spirit of devotion and endeavor which characterized that service out of which arose The American Legion. You must know that the wefare and success of this Post depends largely on you; and you must know also that upon your shoulders equally rests the burden or preserving the integrity of The American Legion. You must protect its good name before the people of the United States. You must exalt it in their eyes. You must make them know as we know its purposes and its policy. Ever remember the tolerant spirit that animates its members. There is no rank among us, for each serves as the equal of his comrade; and all strive toward the same goal, which is the realization in the life of the Republic of the ideals of Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. Ever remember that the cardinal purposes of The American Legion are the rehabilitation of our disabled comrades; the care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call, and of those who are now suffering the ravages of wounds, disease and want; rightful education of the children of our Country, and devoted service to the community, state and nation.

"You will raise your right hands and repeat after me, giving your names: 'I, _____, do solemnly pledge myself to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office in The American Legion I am about to assume, and I further pledge I am not a member of, and do not subscribe to the principles of, any groups opposed to our form of government.' "

* * *

Installing Officer to Sergeant-At-Arms: "You are the sentinel or tyler, the outer guard of this Post. You will guard especially against the loss of one of The American Legion's greatest possessions — our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship. You will learn the identity of and introduce to the Commander all visiting comrades and guests of the Post. You are responsible that no one shall remain a stranger in our midst. Be ready at all times to assist your Commander. Into your hands is given charge of the stand of colors which you will properly display at all Post meetings and on ceremonial occasions."

* * *

Installing Officer to Service Officer: "You have been signally honored by this Post by your election to perform fundamental, unselfish work, not only for the benefit of the members of this Post, but for those War veterans particularly in need of your service. Yours is the choice responsibility of looking out for the welfare of all concerned. The duties of a Service Officer are highly important and exacting, and while your accomplishments will be deeply appreciated by those immediately concerned, the work itself will not be sufficiently conspicuous to catch the headlines in the newspapers. Depending upon satisfactory performance of duty there will come to you the heartfelt gratitude of each and every member of this Post. I congratulate you upon the opportunity to serve so constructively and so unselfishly."

* * *

Installing Officer to Historian: "Your office is an important one. To you is given the responsibility of preserving and compiling the records of this Post. The future can only be judged by the past. Be mindful that the lamp of recorded experience may do much in guiding the footsteps of those who follow. Ever remember that without the recorded history of this Post, its policies and accomplishments will be a blank to the ones who come after we are gone."

* * *

Installing Officer to Judge Advocate: "To you, my comrade, is assigned a most important duty for which your legal training and/or past Legion experience so aptly prepare you. You are the interpreter of the Constitution and By-Laws of your Post, and may at any time be called upon by the Commander and other officers and members of the Post to rule upon the legality of their actions and decisions insofar as they affect the good of The American Legion. You are also charged with protecting the integrity of our organization and keeping alight the torch of truth and fidelity that symbolizes the high and ennobling ideals under which our great American Legion was founded. Protect wisely that heritage."

* * *

(Continued on next page)

Installation . . .

(Continued from preceding page)

Installing Officer to Chaplain: "To you is given the spiritual leadership of this Post. You will, I know, lend dignity and respect to your office. You should be in close confidence with the Commander and the other officers of this Post, and should attend all meetings of the Post. You should be ready upon occasion to take your part in the initiation of new members, the dedication of halls, monuments or colors, and the funeral services for a comrade. All such ceremonies are made more commemorative by the use of our Ritual. Into your keeping we place the spirit of comradeship of this Post. May harmony and unity prevail."

* * *

Installing Officer to Finance Officer: "You are the keeper of the monies and in you is reposed the financial policy of the Post. To you is given charge of the year's budget and to you is given the duty of the payment of all obligations when proper authorization has been given for such payment. Your position is an important one, demanding integrity and honesty. Your election to this office signifies that your comrades have implicit trust in you. Guard well that trust."

* * *

Installing Officer to Adjutant: "My comrade, you have been chosen to assist your Commander in the wise and effective administration of his office and to serve not only your fellow Legionnaires, but also those whose relationship to our organization has led them to look to us for guidance and relief. You will find your duties many, varied, and at times taxing of your crowded hours and resources. The successful accomplishment of our program depends, to a great extent, upon you and your performance of the duties of your office."

* * *

Installing Officer to Second Vice-Commander: "Into your helpful hands are placed the important responsibilities of assisting the Commander in all of his duties. Particularly should you be interested in patriotic observances of all kinds, in developing Post activities, and in the entertainment features which mark all meetings. Help to observe strict tolerance among your members on all political, religious and industrial matters. The application of Justice will be your particular concern."

* * *

Installing Officer to First Vice-Commander: "To you is given the responsibility of an active cooperation between yourself and the Commander. Particularly should you interest yourself in the membership of the Post. You should be assisted by the most active and devoted members. No single factor has so important an influence on the Post's success as membership. You will be the exponent of means of safeguarding the honor of the Flag of our Country. To you are committed these endeavors with the expectation that you shall fulfill each and every one of them. You are the teacher of 'Democracy'."

* * *

Installing Officer to Retiring Commander: "My comrade: You have just completed a year of impressive service to The American Legion and to _____. The record of your Post indicates the quality of that service. Through your earnest performance of the duties of leadership, you have truly justified the great trust which your comrades reposed in you. Although the mantle of leadership is now being passed to another, a great responsibility remains with you. You possess a great wealth of knowledge gained through your leadership experience. Place this wisdom at the disposal of your successors in order that your comrades may benefit therefrom. Through your station maintain the principle of 'Freedom' within this Post.

"On behalf of the _____, I thank you for the spendid service you have rendered The American Legion."

* * *

Installing Officer to Commander: "To you, my comrade, is entrusted a very important duty, that of teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of The American Legion throughout your entire Post. To you is entrusted supervision of the duties of all other officers of the Post. To you may come the needy and the distressed and it is your duty to see that no worthy comrade is turned away without full justice. It is your duty to see that Freedom is ever the watchword of those with whom you may come in contact. Loyalty to your Post, to its membership, to the state and to the National Organization, are obligations which you now assume. You are more than the presiding officer for meetings. You are guided by the Constitution and by the decisions of the Post as a body, yet the responsibility for the success of the year's program is largely on your shoulders. You must initiate and carry through programs to completion. You must thoroughly familiarize yourself with the policies and traditions of your Post and of The American Legion. By your sincere acceptance and earnest performance of these duties, may the great trust which your comrades have reposed in you be justified. To you I extend the congratulations of the Department, and I wish you well as you assume the responsibilities of your office. I present to you a copy of the Post Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies to serve as your guide during the coming year."

Uniformed Group: Post Asset

UNIFORMED GROUPS — their public performance and competition participation — have been a part of The American Legion scene since 1921. Early on, the Legion found the uniformed group as an excellent way to express its love of country and to contribute to the elevation of American pageantry.

As a result, Legion uniformed groups have provided enjoyment for millions, and have become a valuable public relations vehicle. These groups show The American Legion to be visually active locally and nationally.

Measure Post Interest

Is there interest in your post in the organization and support of a uniformed group? One of the best ways of finding out is to poll the membership, using a questionnaire which should include the following types of questions:

1. What type of group?
2. Is the membership interested in participating in a senior group — or sponsoring a junior group?
3. What type of support will the membership provide the group?

If the results of the questionnaire show favor on the part of the membership, the next step is a committee to put together a workable organizational plan. It should consider the following points: (1) Purpose of unit; (2) Use of unit; (3) Managerial and staff recommendations or nominations; (4) Suggestions regarding unit's constitution and by-laws; and (5) Realistic budget, including recommended ways and means.

Leadership Positions

Once the plan is approved by the post, the next step is the election or appointment of officers for the uniformed group. The following positions should be filled: Manager, assistant manager, secretary, and treasurer. An additional position is also recommended for one qualified to handle promotion, public relations, and advertising.

The next step, recruiting, is one of the most important tasks in the formation of the group. And that recruiting involves more than the participants. You will also need qualified instructors, drill masters, and, in the event of a musical group, musical directors.

A constitution and by-laws should be developed — either by the group or by the post. If the group writes its constitution and by-laws, these should be submitted to the post membership for final approval.

These documents should contain the name of the group, a statement of its purpose, eligibility requirements, provisions and procedures for elections, regular meeting dates and times, a definition of duties and powers of the officers, grievance procedures, disciplinary measures, and provision for revision of the constitution and by-laws.

Financing

Financing is another important aspect. The cost of fielding a uniformed group will depend on the size and type of unit, but it should be understood that the inflationary pressures of recent years have had their impact here as well. Ample funds must be available for the unit if it is to be effective as a "display case" for the post and The American Legion. In most posts, the methods to finance post activities are already established and based on local conditions. It is the membership's responsibility to support the uniformed group in the same manner other Legion programs are funded.

In some instances it may be necessary to institute additional controls over and above the constitution and by-laws to ensure that the group remains under the sole jurisdiction of the sponsoring post, and does not waiver from the purpose for which it was created. The post membership and the members of the uniformed group should work together as one to enhance The American Legion.

Emphasize Quality

A major expense factor in fielding a uniformed group is cost of uniforms and equipment. Be sure to check with local merchants as a source to obtain uniforms in order to ensure good service. Seek the merchant's assistance and advice in obtaining a uniform that's both distinctive and designed for long wear.

In considering equipment for musical and drill units, consider quality over price. Equipment must be capable of withstanding the elements and hard use. A special committee should be formed to investigate the equipment offerings of various firms and obtain bids.

A list of equipment firms can be obtained by writing: Uniformed Groups, Internal Affairs Division, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, Ind. 46206.

The above guidelines are applicable to any of the 11 categories of uniformed groups:

Senior Drum & Bugle Corps
Junior Drum & Bugle Corps
Senior Color Guard
Junior Color Guard
Firing Squad
Senior Band
Junior Band
Chorus
Quartet
Senior Drill Team
Junior Drill Team

Additional information on the formation and sponsorship of a uniformed Group may be obtained by writing to Uniformed Groups at National Headquarters.

Committee Chairmen Important to Post

HOW IMPORTANT is a chairman of a post committee? You could just as well ask, "What makes a good post?" Well, let's take the second question first and then see how the answer to the first question will relate to it.

"What makes a good post?" Put together active members and good programs and you've got it. That is, you've got it if what the post is doing fulfills a need.

That could be the recreational needs of the members. Or, it could be a community need — a new library, a social center, a park, etc. Maybe there's a school for retarded children which is short on funds and needs a sponsor — or the VA Hospital needs volunteers — or the needs of local youth for wholesome and beneficial training in citizenship and sportsmanship through such Legion programs as Boys State and American Legion Baseball.

Any one of these needs has been known to sustain a post for a long time, but a good post will have more than one such program.

And the programs which help meet these needs are directed by committees — committees headed by chairmen — chairmen who must function if the post is to prosper and meet the expectations of its members and the community. (And there you see how the answer to the second question above relates to the first question of this article.)

What are the characteristics of a good chairman?

1. He's an informed Legionnaire. The Post Commander has let him know what is expected and has provided him with the materials and supplies necessary. He knows the Post Commander's plans so he can meet objectives. He understands how the efforts directed by his committee fit into the post's timetable of events.

2. He's an appreciated Legionnaire. The importance of his role is continuously being expanded. And, just as important, he gets thanks for doing a good job.

3. He's a responsible Legionnaire. He knows that he has the Post Commander's confidence and that he has the authority to proceed in the development of ideas and activities.

4. He's a cooperative Legionnaire. He knows that the Post Commander and other responsible Legionnaires are always willing to sit down and discuss his plans, and he'll be constantly aware of where and how those plans can best be incorporated into the overall post activity schedule.

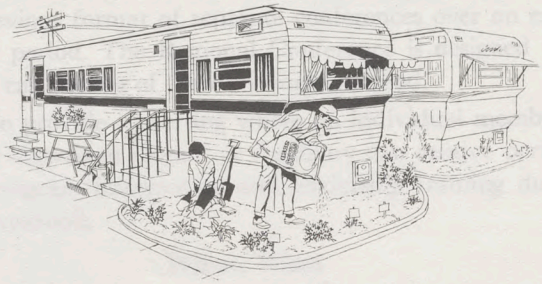
VA Increases Loan Guaranty On Mobile Homes

POST SERVICE OFFICERS are being alerted to new Veterans Administration regulations which have increased the amount of VA guaranty of mobile home loans.

In accordance with the Veteran's Housing Benefits Act of 1978 (PL 95-476), the VA is now able to guarantee up to 50 per cent of the principal amount of a mobile home loan not to exceed a maximum loan guaranty of $17,500.

VA loan guaranty entitlement for mobile home purposes may be restored when: (1) the property which was security for the loan has been disposed of by the veteran or has been destroyed by fire or other natural hazard; and (2) the VA Administrator has been released from liability for the loan; or if a loss has been suffered and the loss has been paid in full.

Entitlement may also be restored if an immediate veteran-transferee has agreed to assume the outstanding balance on the mobile home loan and consented to the use of his or her entitlement to the extent of the original amount of entitlement on the loan, and the veteran-transferee otherwise meets the requirements of existing law governing VA loans.



The new law no longer requires a veteran to have maximum loan guaranty entitlement to secure a mobile home loan. The new law also lifts the restriction that heretofore prevented a veteran from using any remaining entitlement for any other purpose until the mobile home loan had been paid in full.

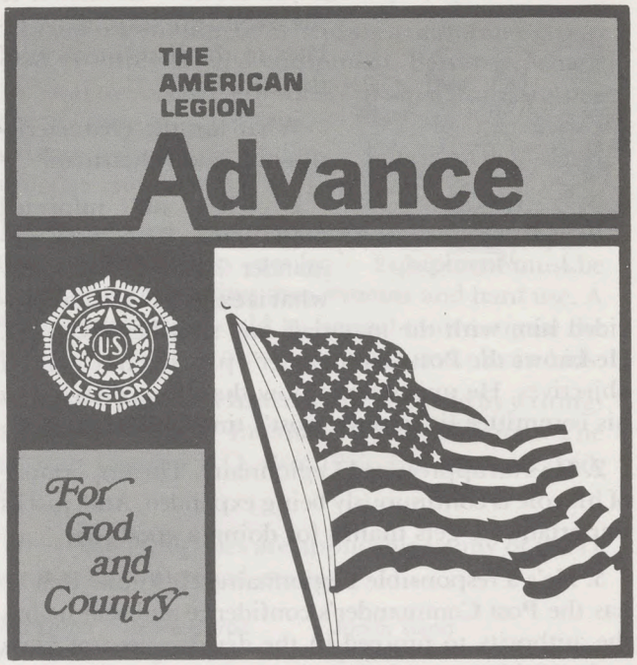
However, a veteran may not use any of his remaining entitlement to secure a loan for a second mobile home until the first unit is disposed of or destroyed by fire or other natural hazard.

A veteran purchaser of a mobile home may use his remaining entitlement toward the purchase of a conventional home. Likewise, a veteran purchaser of a conventional home may purchase a mobile home with a VA-guaranteed loan secured by the remaining entitlement. Any remaining entitlement for the mobile home purchaser may be applied toward a loan for a mobile home lot.

American Legion — Auxiliary
Regional Leadership Conferences
Dates & Sites

Region No.	Date	Site	Departments Assigned
1	Sept. 14-16	Manchester, N.H.	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont.
2	Oct. 5-7	Baltimore Md.	Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia.
3	Sept. 7-9	Atlanta, Ga.	Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee.
4	Oct. 5-7	Baton Rouge, La.	Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas.
5	Sept. 28-30	Indianapolis, Ind.	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin.
6	Sept. 14-16	Sioux Falls, S.D.	Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota.
7	Sept. 28-30	Las Vegas, Nev.	Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah.
8	Sept. 7-9	Portland, Ore.	Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming.

Watch for further details in future issues of ADVANCE and in mailings from department.



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