THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America

2024 Post Adjutant's Manual

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Post Adjutant's Manual

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The American Legion *Post Adjutant's Manual* ("guide") provides the reader with very general information about planning and conducting various programs. This guide is only intended to help assist volunteers and staff. With respect to information contained in this guide, neither The American Legion nor any of its officers, directors or employees make any warranty, express or implied, nor assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product or process implemented at the post or department level. This guide only constitutes general advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices. Information within the guide stating "shall or must" is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. All other items of information in this guide are general suggestions except for the National Constitution and By-Laws. This guide does not constitute any type of legal advice. If readers have any concerns about anything in this guide, they are strongly advised to contact their respective department and an attorney licensed in their state.

Please see 36 U.S.C. Section 21704: The Corporation (The American Legion) may provide guidance and leadership to organizations (departments) and local chapters (posts) ... **but may not control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of such organizations (departments) and local chapters (posts).**

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FOREWORD

The *Post Adjutant's Manual* is a blueprint to assist in handling the business affairs of the post and to provide efficient and effective service to members. It is a work in progress and will never be complete as long as officers and members in local posts offer suggestions and recommendations.

The national staff do not have answers to every arising problem, but are dedicated to making the job of post adjutants easier and ensuring the long-term growth and stability of The American Legion. By reading the information contained in this manual, the post is better equipped to achieve the objectives of this great organization, which has served America's veterans since 1919.

Together, we are ***Veterans Strengthening America!***

Adjutant

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

– Charge from the installation ceremony

The adjutant's job

The post adjutant is not just a recorder of minutes at a meeting; the role requires a lot more. The adjutant is similar to a first sergeant of a military unit, around whom all post activities revolve. Many posts retain a good adjutant in office over a period of years as opposed to a one-year position.

The adjutant should provide continuity for the post. While the commander's duties are largely inspirational and executive, an adjutant's duties are administrative. The commander navigates the ship, but the adjutant is the engineer who runs the ship's machinery and keeps the vessel on an even keel. The adjutant is the personnel officer and personal point of contact for individual members of the post. The adjutant keeps membership records and minutes of meetings, assists the work of other officers and committees, and publishes official orders, announcements and instructions.

The adjutant's office is the conduit for communication with all levels of the organization and a hub for all post activities. The adjutant assists new officers and committees in getting started with their work and completing their endeavors.

Suggestions for the adjutant

The only indispensable qualifications are honesty and willingness. The new adjutant should go through all post records at the earliest opportunity. The constitution and by-laws, minutes of meetings, and reports of officers and committees will give insight into the post's policies and traditions. Communication from department headquarters and National Headquarters will provide additional information and instructions. Department headquarters and staff can be extremely useful tools to an adjutant.

Meeting minutes should be typed, printed and kept as a permanent record of activities. All reports of officers and committees should be included in the minutes of the meeting to which they are submitted to assure they are made part of the permanent record.

Bulletins and periodicals

Members will inquire about everything concerning their connection with The American Legion. The post should provide members with the information needed to fully engage with the organization. The adjutant conveys information and instructions through regular communication.

Copies of *The American Legion Magazine* as well as department and post periodicals, if any are published, should be kept and made available to members.

Bulletins are periodically mailed to post commanders and adjutants. The adjutant should forward applicable information to each committee chair. The department headquarters' official contact with the post is the commander and adjutant. The adjutant should forward communications received from department headquarters and National Headquarters to all members.

SECTION I – POST CHARTERS

- **Naming a post**
- **Change of post name**
- **Location change**
- **Temporary and permanent charters**
- **Supplemental charters**

Naming a post after an individual and/or name changes

For a post to be named after a person the individual must be deceased and the post must have the family's written permission to use the name. If naming the post after an individual when establishing a charter, attach the letter with the application. If changing the name when applying for a permanent charter or after the permanent charter has already been established, send a copy of the minutes or the resolution, or both, to department headquarters. The department will request a name change to the Department Executive Committee (DEC) for approval. Following approval, the department will request the name change from National Headquarters.

The name change guidelines and authorization form from the family to name a post can be found on the national website at **legion.org/publications/256646/legion-sal-charter-forms**.

The Sons of The American Legion squadron name will always reflect the American Legion post's name.

Location change

If a post requests a location change, a letter from the post adjutant, commander or an authorized representative must be sent to department headquarters, and the department will request the location change. The letter must include a copy of the minutes or resolution, or both, and identify the old and new locations. The department will forward the location change request to National Headquarters. The location change guidelines and form can be found on the national website.

Temporary and permanent charters

Any group of eligible veterans may apply for a post charter from the national organization through department headquarters after meeting all department requirements. The department executive committee shall determine the minimum membership and starting composition of a post.

A temporary charter application is to be filled out with a copy for the post, department headquarters and National Headquarters. The name of the new post on the temporary charter may be changed when the permanent charter application is submitted.

The organizer's address is used for the post's mailing address until the post has a permanent address. An Annual Post Data Report **(see page 10)** is sent with the temporary charter to the post, asking the dues amount, permanent address and dues mailing address, if different than the permanent address.

After a post has functioned with a temporary charter for a minimum of 90 days, it may apply for a permanent charter. The permanent charter guidelines and application can be found on the national website.

Supplemental charters

When a post becomes incorporated, it is necessary to apply for a supplemental charter. When a post incorporates and changes its name, the change is enough for it to be considered by the government as a new entity, thereby requiring an Employer Identification Number (EIN).

The incorporation of a post modifies the information sent in on the earlier inclusion letter reporting the post name to the national organization. The legal name of the post will appear on the incorporation papers or corporate charter with the state in which it is located. A change in the name, even just adding "Inc.," will be reported to the IRS.

The national organization must maintain the correct, legal and accurate post name exactly as it appears on the corporate charter from the state on this report to the IRS. Send any changes to National Headquarters so the IRS records will remain up-to-date and the post can avoid any IRS issues.

When submitting a supplemental charter form, attach a copy of the post's Articles of Incorporation, issued by the state. This supplemental charter form is available from the department headquarters.

If the name of the post charter changes while a supplemental charter is in place, the supplemental charter will be null and void. A new supplemental charter application and articles of incorporation will need to be submitted to the national organization by way of the department headquarters to reflect the new name of the post charter.

If a post becomes incorporated and makes the appropriate application to National Headquarters as evidence of this action, it will be issued a supplemental charter, properly attested by the duly authorized officers of the department and National Headquarters.

SECTION II – TAX EXEMPTION

- **Submitting Form 990**
- **Tax returns**
- **Tax-exempt Status**
- **Tax on unrelated business income (Form 990-T)**
- **Incorporation**
- **Inclusion letter**

Submitting Form 990

Federal tax regulations require every subordinate American Legion post obligated to file an annual information return (Form 990), or maintaining a bank account, to have an Employer Identification Number (EIN).

The American Legion is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended. Every post needs to obtain an EIN from the government. All newly chartered posts receive an SS-4 form in a new post kit prepared and sent by National Headquarters. The instructions should be closely followed in completing and submitting the SS-4 form.

When the post receives the EIN, send a copy of the number and the inclusion letter (also in the packet) to National Headquarters so the post may be listed as a tax-exempt charter of The American Legion.

A listing of all new posts, including updates, is sent to the IRS on Sept. 30. The bank and various vendors will also need this number, so protect it.

It is immaterial that the post has no employees. Federal tax regulations require that every subordinate unit required to file an annual information return (Form 990) have an EIN. Failure to furnish The American Legion's national judge advocate with an EIN and a completed inclusion letter (**see page 9**) will result in the post not being included in the organization's application for tax exemption.

Tax returns

In order that the post may be included in the blanket application for tax exemption from the payment of federal income tax, filed by the national organization with the Internal Revenue Service, it is necessary that the post supply to the Office of the National Judge Advocate the following information:

1. The inclusion letter **(see page 9)**, executed by the post commander, authorizing the national organization of The American Legion to include the post in its blanket application for exemption from the payment of federal income tax.

2. Employer Identification Number (EIN) – To secure this number, the post commander should execute Form SS-4 and file it immediately with the IRS district director in the post's geographical area, who, in return, will furnish the post its EIN. Immediately upon receipt of this number, it should be furnished to The American Legion's national judge advocate. Form SS-4 is available from the IRS district director in your area.

Tax-exempt status

The American Legion's federal tax-exempt status has undergone some changes as the result of legislation signed into law. On Aug. 9, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed H.R. 11185, which became Public Law 92 -418. Section I of PL 92-418 did two things:

1. It created a separate exemption category for war veterans organizations and their auxiliaries.

2. It provided that income a war veterans organization receives from ensuring its members and their dependents is not subject to the unrelated business income tax, to the extent the income is used or set aside for insurance benefits or for religious, charitable, education and other purposes.

Prior to the enactment of PL 92-418, Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, provided for 18 categories of organizations exempt from payment of federal income tax. The American Legion and its component departments and posts were excepted under Section 501(c)(4), and classified as civic leagues or organizations not organized for profit but operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare.

PL 92-418 added a new, separate exemption category – veterans organizations and their auxiliaries – to the list of organizations exempt from tax under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. The new provision, Section 501(c)(19), was amended in 1982 by Public Law 97-248 into its present form, which defines a veterans organization as a post or organization of past or present members of the U.S. Armed Forces, an auxiliary unit or society of such post or organization, or a trust or foundation for any such post or organization:

A. organized in the United States or any of its possessions,

B. at least 75 percent of the members of which are past or present members of the U.S. Armed Forces and substantially all of the other members of which are individuals who are cadets or are spouses, widows, or widowers of past or present members of the U.S. Armed Forces or of cadets, and,

C. no part of the net earnings of which ensures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

Tax on unrelated business income (Form 990-T)

Prior to the enactment of the Tax Reform Act of 1969, there was no tax on the insurance activities of veterans organizations since the unrelated business income tax did not apply to the social welfare organizations and social clubs. However, the 1969 Act extended the application of the unrelated business income tax to virtually all exempt organizations, including social welfare organizations (as The American Legion was then categorized) and social clubs.

By virtue of the Tax Reform Act of 1969, The American Legion, its component departments and posts, as civic leagues, are subject to the imposition of an unrelated business income tax. The term "unrelated trade or business" means any trade or business the conduct of which is not substantially related (aside from the post's need for income or funds, or the use it makes of the profits derived) to the exercise or performance by the post of its charitable, educations, or other functions constituting the basis for its exemption. Since various deductions may be allowed against such taxable income, the post should consult a tax adviser knowledgeable in tax matters. This is generally a CPA or attorney.

PL 92-418 provides a special rule for veterans organizations concerning the income they receive from providing insurance benefits for their members or the dependents of their members. This special rule excludes from the unrelated business income tax any amounts attributable to payments for life, accident, or health insurance with respect to members of veterans organizations or their dependents to the extent these amounts are set aside for the purpose of either providing for the payment of insurance benefits or for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, education, etc., purposes (the purposes specified in Section 170(c)(4) of the code).

Another special rule was added by the Tax Reform Act of 1986. Under the act, if as part of a solicitation of charitable contributions, articles costing in the aggregate less than $5 per year are distributed without the consent of the recipient who did not request them and the articles are accompanied by a request for a contribution and a statement that the articles may be retained by the recipient whether or not a contribution to the soliciting organization is made, such distribution and the proceeds will generally not be considered unrelated business activities and/orincome. This is done by a new section to the tax code: 26 U.S.C. Section 513(h).

If the post is regularly carrying on a business activity, or soliciting, selling, and publishing advertising in any of its publications, it is subject to the tax on unrelated business income. In such instances, the post is required to file a Form 990-T – "Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Return" – in addition to Form 990.

If the post is carrying on any activity that might be subject to the imposition of the unrelated business income tax, it should institute accounting procedures that clearly identify exempt income and unrelated business income and the expenditures thereof. If the post is in doubt concerning the applicability of the unrelated business income tax to any of its activities, it should consult an accountant knowledgeable in the tax field. As noted above and for further information about unrelated business income, contact the IRS for its publications and consult a tax adviser (generally a CPA or attorney) familiar with the details of the post's finances.

Incorporation

It is recommended that posts incorporate in the states in which they are located. Such action helps to protect their individual members from liability and generally makes the holding of real estate a much easier matter.

Incorporation of a post is a simple matter. The cost of incorporation is small, particularly for nonprofit corporations. As a general rule, statutes in several states govern the requirements for incorporating a nonprofit entity. In most states, application is made to the secretary of state of the state concerned. Usually, the application is not complicated.

The department can assist the post in its desire to incorporate by offering assistance and guidance in the preparation of the necessary application. Normally a post incorporates after it receives its permanent charter.

Inclusion letter

_____
Date

The American Legion
P. O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Attn: National Judge Advocate

Dear Sir:

The undersigned, a duly authorized office of _____

_____ Post No. _____

Department of _____, does hereby authorize the National Organization of The American Legion to include it in its application to the Department of Internal Revenue for a group exemption letter so that this Post may be exempt from the payment of Federal Income Tax under the provisions of Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.

_____
POST EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

Sincerely,

_____
Post commander

_____
Post name

_____

SECTION III – REPORTS

- **Consolidated Post Reports (CPR)**
- **Annual Post Data Report**
- **Post Officer Certification**

Consolidated Post Report (CPR) form

The Consolidated Post Report (CPR) was established in 1975 to assist departments in the documentation of the various activities a specific post has done during the 12-month reporting period, June 1 through May 31. The CPR may be the most important document the post will complete all year. Updates can be made to the CPR throughout the year and saved on **MyLegion.org**. When the report is complete, click "Submit" and print a copy for the post records.

A CPR is sent to each post from department headquarters requesting data on the post's programs and activities. Submitted reports are included in a final report presented to Congress each year by the national commander as justification for The American Legion's nonprofit status and to elaborate on what the organization does in local communities. The deadline for department submission of the CPR to National Headquarters is July 1. Check with the department for its submission date. The CPR form may also be completed on **MyLegion.org** **(see page 24)** and is available for download at **legion.org/publications** under "Internal Affairs."

If the post had projects, activities or events that cannot be adequately covered on the report form, attach a written description with pictures and articles. The narrative report will be reviewed by personnel at National Headquarters. Each post has a story to tell, and when we speak collectively the message of our story is magnified.

Annual Post Data Report

Throughout the year, national staff will contact posts regarding membership renewals, awards, *Dispatch* subscriptions, veterans issues and other important information. In February, the Annual Post Data Report is mailed to department headquarters for distribution to posts. Each form is pre-printed with current contact information from National Headquarters' data system. This pre-printed form for the post is sent for annual spring reporting. When there is a change, notify department headquarters, which will forward the change to National Headquarters. All changes must first go through department headquarters for processing. Any changes received by National Headquarters directly from a post will be returned with no action taken.

Post officer certification

It is critical for the post adjutant to report all post officers to department headquarters immediately after election. The department may furnish a special reporting form or the post may receive reporting forms provided to the department by National Headquarters. All national mailings are addressed to post officers. It is imperative that all contact information for post officers be up-to-date and correct.

SECTION IV – MEMBERSHIP

- **Eligibility**
- **DMS**
- **Renewals**
- **Cards**
- **Rosters**

Eligibility

As provided in the Constitution, Article IV, Section 1: Any person shall be eligible for membership in The American Legion who was a member of the Armed Forces of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and December 7, 1941, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the government of the United States; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of his entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during any of said periods; provided, however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably during or after any of said periods; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service.

Section 2. There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually or for life.

Section 3. No person may be a member at any one time of more than one post.

Section 4. No person, who has been expelled by a Post, shall be admitted to membership in another Post without the consent of the expelling Post, except that where such consent has been asked for and denied by such Post, he may then appeal to the Executive Committee of the Department of the expelling Post for permission to be admitted to membership in another Post, and shall be ineligible for membership until such permission is granted.

National Guard, reserve eligibility

Members of the National Guard and reserves are required to meet the same eligibility requirements as federal active-duty veterans.

To be eligible, the National Guard member or reservist must have served at least one day on federal active duty (including basic training) during any of the delimiting periods as set forth in Article IV, Section 1 of the American Legion Constitution. The person must either have an honorable discharge or currently be serving either in the Guard, reserve or on federal active duty.

Note: A DD 214 is issued for the time on federal active duty only if the reserve component member has been on Title 10 status for 180 days. A DA-1059 is issued for completion of a school with a character type of discharge. All reserve components send their members to basic training using Title 10, Subsection 672/12301 orders.

National Guard (example)

If a traditional National Guard soldier or airman (i.e., one never stationed with an active-duty unit) performed basic training during The American Legion's eligibility period, he or she would qualify for membership because that time on active duty was federal Title 10 duty.

Two-week annual training (AT) does not usually qualify one for membership, but if AT was under federal control, going out of country for two weeks to drill, those orders were federal orders. The soldier/airman would not have a DD 214 (see note above), but would have a copy of the orders qualifying the reservist as for membership.

Reserve (example)

If a traditional reservist (i.e., one never stationed with an active-duty unit) performed basic training during one of The American Legion's eligibility period, that servicemember would qualify for membership because that time on active duty was federal Title 10 duty.

This reservist would not have a DD 214, but would have a copy of the orders qualifying that person for membership. All reservists are under federal control, so all their orders are Title 10, Subsection 270. These do not qualify a reservist for American Legion membership, but if the reservist receives Title 10, Subsection 672 or 12301 orders that would be active-duty service qualifying him or her for membership.

As with all membership eligibility, if further clarification is needed, contact the department headquarters. Reserve component servicemembers are a large and growing pool of eligible members.

Direct Membership Solicitation (DMS)

The Direct Membership Solicitation (DMS) program is a form of direct marketing used to solicit membership in The American Legion. Mailing lists are rented from commercial list brokers and compared to our membership files to remove the names of members from the rented lists.

Contacted prospects wishing to join complete an application form, certifying dates of service in the U.S. Armed Forces, character of discharge, branch of service and birth date, then submit the form with payment. National Headquarters sends a membership card signed electronically with the signature of the national adjutant, a welcome letter, and other information. These new members are placed into the department headquarters post of their state in accordance with the current policies of the National Executive Committee.

Lists of the DMS or headquarters post members in the area are available from department headquarters or through **MyLegion.org**. Utilizing these lists is an excellent way to increase post membership, boosting American Legion engagement in the community and giving veterans a louder voice in Congress.

For the DMS program to truly be effective, it is imperative these new members are personally contacted and invited to transfer into a local post. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of every post receiving a transfer to verify the member's eligibility, using a DD 214 or other official proof of honorable military service.

Direct renewal dues notices

Every year, National Headquarters mails to almost all Legionnaires one or more notices that their annual dues for the coming year are payable. This is made possible by printing on every renewal notice the amount of each post's dues and the address to which dues are to be mailed. In early spring, the department headquarters will ask posts to provide this information on the Annual Post Data Report **(see page 10)**. When the post's annual dues or remittance address change, immediately inform the department.

Post mailing address

The post should use a permanent mailing address – either a post office box or the physical location of the post. Do not use the address of the adjutant or other individual unless no other address is available. Difficulties arise when post officers change, move or become incapacitated.

Dues amount

Only one dues amount can be shown for each post. For example, National Headquarters cannot print "$30 until November 1, $35 after November 1." Any change to the dues must be updated using the Annual Post Data Report **(see page 10)**.

Participation and schedule

Participation in the renewal program for notices mailed in the summer through the end of the year is voluntary (unless the department mandates participation). Posts must notify their department prior to May 1 if they want to be deleted or added to the summer renewal mailings.

Renewals mailed after January through the spring will be sent to *all* delinquent members in *all* posts. Also, information on the mailing(s) will be described in various publications going to posts.

Omitting members from renewal mailings

Some posts have members whose dues are paid by the post are noted as honorary life members, 50-year members, past commanders, etc. If the post has members to whom renewals should not be sent, notify the department in writing using the following format:

Please notify National Headquarters that renewal notices should not be printed for the following member(s) of this post:

Member ID #	Honorary Life Member Name	Member Address
123654789	*John Sample*	*4321 Main St., Anytown, IN 46204 (example)*

Note: When sending the name, address and 9-digit ID number, check the membership register and submit the name and ID number exactly as they appear on the register. The address should be submitted in the same way, unless the address on the register is incorrect.

Code "C" (no renewal)

The membership register (**see page 19**) will detail members who have previously been coded so they will not receive a renewal notice. Check the "EX Flag" column on the right side of the register between "CER Flag" and "Era." The letter "C" means the member will not receive a renewal from National Headquarters. Do not send a second request to remove a member from the renewal list if a "C" is printed on the register for the member. All Paid Up For Life (PUFL), honorary life and department life members are automatically excluded from renewal mailings.

Renewal schedule

During each membership year, National Headquarters sends renewal notices in July, October, January, March and May. Sometimes, at a department's request, a special notice may be mailed in February to boost a department's renewals.

The accompanying list is the 2022 membership year renewal schedule for transmitting dues to arrive at National Headquarters by the established dates. This schedule will be followed to remove the names of paid members prior to a specific mailing. Using the renewal schedule, National Headquarters extracts unpaid member records, then prints and mails the renewal notices.

2024 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL SCHEDULE

CUTOFF DATES	RENEWAL MAIL DATES
MAY 15, 2023	JULY 1-8, 2023
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023	OCTOBER 7-14, 2023
OCTOBER 18, 2023	NOVEMBER 10-18, 2023
DECEMBER 13, 2023	JANUARY 6-12, 2024
FEBRUARY 14, 2024	MARCH 2-8, 2024
APRIL 10, 2024	MAY 4-10, 2024

Transmittals not received by the cutoff date may not prevent a subsequent renewal notice from being delivered at or around the renewal date.

NOTE: Renewals transmitted and received by the cutoff (which is also a national target date) will be updated prior to printing renewal notices, assuming they can be successfully scanned. Membership that must be hand-keyed (new members and renewals that can't be scanned) will take longer to process. Transmit as early and as often as possible in advance of the target dates to help avoid delays in processing.

Continuous membership certificates

Although the post is responsible for maintaining continuous membership records for each member, National Headquarters offers its facilities to help compile and maintain accurate records. Years of continuous membership are printed on the individual's membership card each year. If a member's continuous years are not listed on the card, or if the number of years is wrong, a correction should be made by the adjutant by completing the Member Data Form **(see below)**.

50-, 60- or 70-year certificates

In February, certificates are issued by National Headquarters for every member credited on the national records with a minimum of 50 years of continuous membership, and those who have not previously received an award. A member receives only one of these awards for each specified year. The certificates are sent to each post with qualifying members. Each post should receive the certificates in mid-to-late February in time to be presented in connection with The American Legion's birthday, March 15-17.

The membership register will list all post members for whom certificates have been issued. If the post has members who will reach 50 years of continuous membership this year, be sure their dues reach National Headquarters by January 1 so their records will be updated and they receive certificates. If the post has members with 50 or more years of membership who have never received a certificate, correct their records using a Member Data Form.

Member Data Form (MDF)

The Member Data Form (MDF) is a multipurpose form for tracking and providing accurate information on post members. There are separate forms for American Legion (Stock No. 30-001) and Sons of The American Legion members (Stock No. 00-007). Both forms are available from department headquarters. With the exception of transferring members from one post to another, most MDF changes can be made through **MyLegion.org**.

Note: Members can be transferred online through **MyLegion.org** if the member is paying at the time of the transfer.

Instructions for the use of the MDF can be found on the reverse side of the form.

The MDF can be used to report:

Deceased member	Continuous years	Name correction
Address change	First war era served	Branch of service
Telephone number	Date of birth	Honorary life member
Email address	Gender*	Post transfer**

*Not available on Sons of The American Legion MDF (Stock No. 00-007)

**Function only available using MDF

Always include the 9-digit member ID number, post number and department name. The signature of the authorized post officer is required at the bottom of the form. Route the parts of the MDF as follows:

Parts 1-3: Mail to department headquarters
Part 4: Retain in post files

The information reported on the MDF should also be changed in post membership records.

Transfer of membership

Membership transfer from one post to another is handled by completing the Member Data Form. The right to transfer does not include the right to be accepted by any post. Members still must vote upon acceptance of the applicant. Being the member of more than one post at one time is a violation of the American Legion Constitution. Formal transfer is the only method of transferring from one post to another so continuity of American Legion membership is not broken, and it is available to members in good standing.

IMPORTANT! Always ask prospective members if they currently are or have been members. If the veteran has a current or previous 9-digit member ID number, it should be reported on the transfer request and dues card forwarded to the department.

Many members who change posts simply start paying dues in the new post without the formality of an official transfer. This can result in a duplicate membership record entered in the database. Such transfers risk the member losing his or her continuous membership record. The member will also likely receive renewal notices from National Headquarters asking for dues to be paid to both the former and current posts.

When a member transfers from one post to another after payment of the current year's dues, the transferring post shall retain said dues, but the transferred member shall be entitled to all of the benefits and assume all of the responsibilities of membership in the post to which transfer is made, after such transfer is complete. No additional payment is required, even if the annual dues amount is higher in the post receiving the transferred member.

NOTE: Members can be transferred online through **MyLegion.org** if the member is paying at the time of the transfer.

Membership card

- **ID number**
- **Post name**
- **Scan line**
- **Guide to the pre-printed card**

Membership cards are pre-printed at National Headquarters with the names and addresses of the previous year's members and with the number and location of the post. The card has three parts.

At the far right of the pre-printed 3-part card is the official membership card, to be given to the member after dues have been paid. The left and middle portions of the pre-printed 3-part card are identified as the national card and the department card, respectively. These should at no time be separated from each other. General instructions for the processing of the 3-part card, also called the record card, are printed on the reverse side of the 3-part card.

The record card has several boxes used for collecting and correcting members' information. Procedures on making these changes are described as follows:

Membership ID number

Every member who gets a pre-printed card is assigned a 9-digit ID number, which will stay with the person as long as dues are paid continuously without a disruption in membership – even if a person transfers from one post to another and proper transfer procedures are followed. For this reason, it is important to use the Member Data Form when transferring members **(see page 14)**.

The official membership ID number is printed in four places on the pre-printed 3-part record card. It is printed twice on the left section, and once each on the other two sections (**see page 17**). The identifier is used to keep each member unique from other members and should be used whenever you contact to department headquarters or National Headquarters concerning a member. Use the 9-digit identification number to ensure the correct member's issues are addressed quickly and accurately.

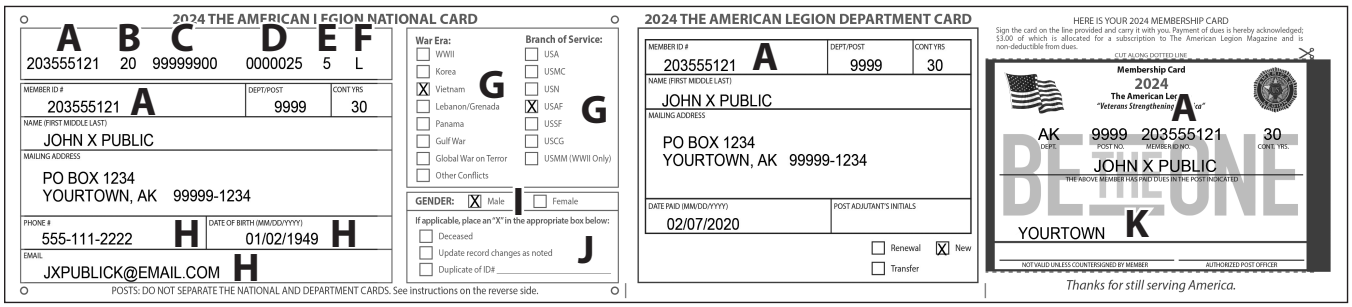
Post name

For technical reasons, it is not feasible for National Headquarters to print the name of the post on the member card (right portion of the 3-part preprinted record card). A line is provided so the name may be stamped, typed or printed on the card by the post adjutant or authorized post officer. The line below the member's name will have printing on it when received from National Headquarters; this is the space where the post name may be added.

Scan line

When the left section of the record card (National Headquarters' portion) is processed, the primary line scanned is noted on the sample card; these are the series of numbers and characters A–F. Do not mark in this area. Marks cause processing errors.

Guide to the pre-printed card information



A/B/C/D/E/F – The characters that appear here make up the scan line. Do not change any of the information on this line. Do not mark in this area for any reason.

A The permanent 9-digit member ID number, which remains the same as long as the member continues to pay dues annually or for life

B The membership year

C The department and post (and country when applicable)

D These numbers serve as a counter – for example, if the post has 195 pre-printed cards for members from last year and you get an extra 25 blank cards (use for new members), the first card will have a 6-digit sequence number of 000001 and the last card will have 000220.

E This variable number is important only to National Headquarters.

F All American Legion cards have an "L," and Sons of The American Legion cards have an "S."

G Only the **first** war era and one branch of service in which a member served is indicated. Update if blank on pre-printed card.

H Current phone number, date of birth and member's email address. Update if blank on pre-printed card.

I Member gender identifier. Update if blank on pre-existing card.

J Update as appropriate.

K City in which the post is located

Membership register

- **Post membership roster**
- **Blank cards**
- **Renewal**
- **New and replacement card processing**
- **Correcting information**

When the post receives the cards, it will also receive a membership register. The membership register has one or more printed sheets. The register will list, in alphabetical order, all the previous year's members whose cards were received at National Headquarters before April 1. The register may also include the names of members who paid dues in previous years but did not pay for the most recent year at the time of printing the register. Their expired records are still in National Headquarters' data system. The post can easily identify these records by reviewing the column headed "Last Paid Year" on the left side of the register.

Special attention is called to the last five columns. Data in these columns is explained in the membership roster graphic on the next page:

Guide to the post membership roster

		Current Roster: MD Post 0171												
Act/Dec	Paid	MemberID	LastName	FirstName	Address	City	ST	Zip	Phone	Email	War Era	#Yrs	BOS	Type
A	2022	202020202	Marine	Johnny	1234 Any St	Anywhere	MD	20872-1007	202-555-1212	Starwars@gmail.com	VIETNAM	1	USMC	1YR
A	2022	212121212	Airman	Doug	4567 Mine Ave	Somewhere	MD	20872-2134	301-555-1212	Sorryman@verizon.net	VIETNAM	27	USAF	1YR
A	2021	303030303	Sailor	Sam	2466 Ridge Rd	Lincoln	MD	20854-2433	301-555-1111	Sailorsam@yahoo.com	LEBANON_GRENADA	25	USN	PUFL_RENEWAL
A	2022	250052250	Soldier	James	255 Falls Chapel Ct	Ringtown	MD	20872-1311	410-123-4455	Yoursoldier@aol.com	WWII	77	USA	PUFL_RENEWAL
	2022	300200400	Space	Kevin	2323 Lewis Ave.	Damascus	MD	20872-1274	619-444-1234	Spaceman@gmail.com	VIETNAM	13	USAF	1YR

Act/Dec This is the code that shows if the member is "A" (active) or "D" (deceased).

Paid This shows the last year of paid membership.

War era This identifies the member's war era on file. A member may have served in more than one era.

#Yrs This identifies the member's number of continuous years.

BOS This identifies the member's branch of service.

Type This indicates the type of membership. Examples are 1Yr (annual paying member), PUFL_Renewal (PUFL member renewed for the current year), PUFL (member who became a PUFL during the current year), PUFL_PP (member on the PUFL payment plan).

Blank cards Every post receives a pre-determined percentage of blank cards in addition to pre-printed ones. If you run out, request additional ones from department headquarters. The blank cards are to be used for new members and providing duplicate or replacement cards.

Handling a renewal membership

After a member pays dues, locate the 3-part membership card and:

- Fill in the date paid on the center section.
- Update blank and/or incorrect member information field.
- Initial the center section next to "date paid" line.
- Sign the member's official card on the line reserved for the authorized officer.
- Place an X in the renewal box in the upper right of the center section of the department card.
- Separate the member's card from the left and center sections (keep together). These go to the department. Give or mail the card to the member promptly.
- Find the member's name on the membership register, which is in alphabetical order, and mark the date paid in the column set aside for this purpose – the far left column.

Member processing through **MyLegion.org** does not require submission of the Member Data Form **(see page 15)**. Once the post submits the member in a batch (online processing), the post needs only to send the member the new card. No other documentation needs to be submitted to the department or National Headquarters.

Handling new members

Instructions on the processing of new members also apply to:

- Transfers for whom there is no pre-printed membership card (Do not send the card's left and center sections to the department if the transfer has paid for the current membership year as a member of the previous post.)
- Any renewal without a pre-printed card

When a new member pays dues for the current year, take the first blank card from those supplied from the department. The serial number printed on the card will be the 6-digit sequence number. Once the card is processed at National Headquarters, the member will be assigned a permanent 9-digit number that will appear on all future cards, mailings and documents.

- Print on the center (department) section the following information: Member ID number (use 6-digit sequential number)
- Post number
- Years of continuous membership (one year for a new member)
- First name, middle initial, last name of new member
- Mailing address: street, city, state, ZIP code
- Complete payment date
- Post adjutant initials
- Check the "new" box

Print on the left (national) section the following information:

- Member ID number (leave blank)
- Post number
- Years of continuous membership (one year for a new member)
- First name, middle initial, last name of new member
- Mailing address: street, city, state, ZIP code
- Phone number
- Date of birth
- Email address
- Conflict
- Branch of service
- Gender (check appropriate option)

Transfers should use their permanent 9-digit ID number. Put an X in the proper box in the center section to show renewal, new or transfer.

Date and initial the line in the center section to validate the card. If membership records are handled by someone other than the adjutant, the initials of that designated official are acceptable.

Print the member's name on the first line of the official membership card (right side), just above the words "The above member has paid dues for (year) in the post indicated." If the number of the post has not been pre-printed, enter the post number. On the second line of the official membership card, print or stamp the post name.

A new member paying dues for the first time should be credited with one year of membership. Also, be sure to enter the number of years in the appropriate boxes on the left and center sections. Be sure to fill out all sections of the 3-part card. Do not change, strike over or mark out any of the numbers printed on the cards. Follow this rule when making cards for new and renewal members.

When transferring a current-year paid member, transmit the Member Data Form to the department and issue the transferring member a current-year card (right section). Discard the department and national portions of the 3-part card. It's recommended you make a notation on the membership records so you and anyone else who handles membership cards has a written record of the post's actions **(see Member Data Form, page 14)**.

If you do not receive a pre-printed card for one or more members, fill out a blank card for the member. Submit the member's information and ID number as they appear in the national database. To view this information, access the member's information online through **MyLegion.org** or contact the department headquarters.

Replacement membership card

If it is necessary to provide a replacement card, the post can use one of the blank stocks provided.

Department record replica

If the left and center section of the 3-part card is lost or destroyed, the post will provide a replica of the card by using a blank card. This should be reported to department headquarters, in the event it requires the post to account for how, when and why every card is used. In preparing a replica card, take the first blank available from the supply provided, and type it to show, as much as possible, the same information as it appears on the original card. On the membership register, make a notation as a written record.

If the post runs out of membership cards

Every post is provided extra cards, but if more are needed, request additional cards from the department. However, they will not have the post's number pre-printed on them. The post will have to print the post number on all three sections of the card when it is issued. The post should also receive new membership register sheets listing the sequential number of the cards. In all instances, write each member's name and address on the membership register to have an accurate record of membership.

If duplicate cards are received

The post might receive more than one pre-printed card for the same member. If this happens, process one of the cards as usual. On the other card, put an X in the box next to "Duplicate" in the lower right of the department record and note the number of the duplicated member ID. Return all three parts of the card to the department. Strike the duplicate name off the membership register and note in the allotted space that the card was returned.

If a member has died

If the post receives a pre-printed card for a member who has died, put an X in the box opposite the word "Deceased" in the lower right corner of the left section. Return the entire card to the department. Note on the membership register that the member is deceased and the card was returned.

If a member dies after dues have already been transmitted, notice of the fact should be reported on a Member Data Form **(see page 14)** or directly online through **MyLegion.org**. Don't assume the department and National Headquarters are aware the member is deceased. National Headquarters mails dues renewals periodically to unpaid members. Report deaths as soon as possible so deceased members can be removed from the mailing list to avoid causing discomfort for the family.

If a member's information is incorrect

If a member's information is incorrect, put an X in the "update record changes as noted" box on the left section of the 3-part card. Put a line through the misspelled information and print the corrected information below the pre-printed information on the left and middle sections of the 3-part card.

Transmitting per capita membership dues payments

The department headquarters has specific guidelines on how dues are to be transmitted. Although there is a perforation between the left and center sections of the card, do not separate these two sections. Both sections are sent intact to the department.

On a regular basis (at least weekly), send to the department all completed cards for which dues have been received, including renewals, new and transferred members. Send the payment along with the cards to the department. If cards for deceased, unknown or duplicate members are being sent (all three parts) to the department with member per capita payments, keep these cards separate from those including payment.

Write or stamp the date the dues were transmitted in the column headed "Date Transmitted" on the membership register. If returning cards for deceased, unknown or duplicate members, note the date returned on the membership records.

Posts in all departments are able to transmit per capita membership dues payments directly to National Headquarters online through **MyLegion.org** using electronic checks. Using this option will reduce the process from three to four weeks to a few days, essentially eliminating the possibility of members receiving dues renewal notices once the post submits the renewal.

Submitting a transmittal through the online processing system takes nine calendar days to process. Once it is accepted, it has advantages to the member, the post, the department and National Headquarters.

1. The member is added to the National Target Date membership reports.

2. The member is immediately available for departments to add to their membership reports.

3. The members are immediately excluded from from any renewal notices (direct mail and email).

4. It prevents members from renewing online (duplicate payments).

5. The average turnaround time for paper transmittals sent to the department (up to National Headquarters) is four or more weeks.

6. The post saves money by not having to pay shipping costs for a paper transmittal to the department.

7. The department does not have to process the post transmittal (open package, out sort and count documents, deposit checks, etc.).

Maintain the membership register for future reference

It is a good practice to keep the membership register in order and to protect it.

The average post keeps membership registers for several years. They are the post's historical record of past membership and history.

Supplemental cards/rosters

Membership cards for the next year are printed in early April by National Headquarters, and sent to departments for distribution. For the balance of the year, until the April cycle rolls back around, activity changes for members continue to happen.

Some members join in the spring (between April and June). National Headquarters provides supplemental post cards and rosters for this period. These are printed in July and sent to departments for distribution. By the end of August, if the post has not received these cards, it is suggested the post contact the department. Any cards included would be for those who joined since pre-printed cards/rosters were produced in April.

Honorary membership

Honorary, associate, social or guest memberships in The American Legion are NOT permitted. The American Legion Constitution, Article IV, Section 2, states, "There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership." All members must be eligible through the nature and timing of their U.S. military service, or in the case of Sons of The American Legion members, through the nature and timing of the U.S. military service of their predecessors.

Honorary life membership

Many posts recognize their outstanding members for exceptional service or accomplishment by awarding what is known as an honorary life membership. In this option for active membership, the post pays the honored members' dues for the remainder of their lives. Various life membership cards and other items can be purchased from Emblem Sales. Be aware that when a member transfers to a new post, the new post is not required to honor the honorary life membership. As a result, the member may have to begin paying their own membership.

Note: New and even experienced officers sometimes overlook transmitting honorary life members per capita payments. To avoid this happening, consider including the honorary life membership per capita payments with the first transmittal of the membership year (July).

Paid Up For Life (PUFL) membership

Members pay a one-time fee or can utilize a payment plan option to gain lifetime membership in The American Legion. Rates and forms are available at **legion.org/join/pufl** for either electronic submission or printing for mailing. There is a quick link to the application at **MyLegion.org** for posts and departments. The post can contact National Headquarters customer service at **(800) 433-3318** with any questions.

SECTION V – MYLEGION.ORG

National Headquarters has a free secure website to assist post officers in their day-to-day membership processing duties. As of April 1, 2021, all MyLegion accounts are **member** accounts registered with the email address on your membership record. Adjutants and commanders have an area called My Groups, which is the administrative side of MyLegion. It provides access to post and squadron membership management, rosters, reports and online membership processing. County and district adjutants and commanders, through their MyLegion accounts, have access to membership information for members assigned to their groups, including rosters and reports. District and county have read-only access.

Membership tools

- View and update membership information for post and squadron members.
- View members renewing directly to National Headquarters.
- Renew members, add new members and transfer paying members.
- Generate and print rosters for current, expired and deceased members.
- Identify members whose addresses are flagged as undeliverable.
- Submit a Consolidated Post Report (CPR) electronically.
- Find headquarters post members near you to help grow the post.
- Monitor all roster updates, including members transferring in and out.
- View leadership on file for the post and squadron.
- Print a current membership card for members.
- View members' dues history from 2001 to present.
- Create renewal letters with labels.
- Global search – Using an ID number, search members not in your post.
- Create 3 x 10 mailing labels.
- Project Stay Active listing – See who has recently moved into your area.

Manuals and brochures

- Download the *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies*, *Post Adjutant's Manual* and other publications essential to day-to-day operations at **legion.org/publications**.
- Promote The American Legion in the community with brochures about Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA), Family Support Network (FSN), National Family Week and other programs.
- Take advantage of suggested speeches prepared by National Headquarters for Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Flag Day, Pearl Harbor Day, 9/11 and The American Legion's birthday.

Site security

MyLegion is a member account registered with an email address. Administrative officers (adjutants and commanders) can assign permission to those needing access to online rosters, reports or membership processing without sharing login credentials. For more information regarding assigning permissions, go to Resources > How to use MyLegion > My Groups.

Online help

Online help is available in the Resources area of MyLegion. Step-by-step instructions, training videos and frequently asked questions are provided to assist with day-to-day membership responsibilities.

Online membership processing

To process membership and transmittals, post and squadron adjutants and commanders must be signed in to **MyLegion.org** and access My Groups.

The following is a brief overview of how to process membership and transmittals:

Renew members

- Click "Process Membership" in the lefthand menu.
- Click "Add/Modify Transmittal" to open the post transmittal window.
- Search the member's name and check the box to the left of the name to renew. If no results are found, the member is already paid or is in a pending batch. Results in this search provide only the names of members eligible for renewal. The member is added to the transmittal batch and summary recalculates. Click "Save."
- Repeat this process for each member to renew. Select "Save" with each member added.
- Review the post transmittal summary, which will also update the amount due. If the dues are not correct in the summary, contact department headquarters.

Add a new member

- Click "Process Membership" in the lefthand menu.
- Click "Add/Modify Transmittal" to open the post transmittal window.
- Click "Add/Transfer Member" to view add/transfer scenario. A member information window will appear where you can add as much information as possible and save. Saving will add the member to the batch.

Transfer a member

- Click "Process Membership" in the lefthand menu.
- Click "Add/Modify Transmittal" to open the post transmittal window.
- Click "Add/Transfer Member."
- Enter Member ID number and last name (required). Then click "Continue."
- Verify member information, make any updates and save.

Finalize the transmittal

- The "Save" button allows the transmittal to be saved and finalized on a later date. Transmittals are to be finalized within 14 days from the date opened.
- Selecting "Finalize" displays the members in the batch for a final review. Click "Finalize" a second time to reach the payment information window. To view members in the transmittal batch at any time, click "List Selected."
- Add payment information or select "Saved Bank Account" and "Pay Now." Check the "Authorization" checkboxes, then click "Pay Now." A transmittal receipt will appear for you to print or save.
- Bank information can be updated when finalizing a batch. On the transmittal payment window, select "Update Account Information."

Transmittal review

Review transmittal history from Group profile. Go to "Transmittal History" on the lefthand menu. A table will display a summary of transmittals. Select the transmittal number to view members in the batch.

Important information about online membership processing

- Online processing is paid with e-check. Foreign departments have the option of using a U.S. credit card for payment. Posts in the United States are required to use E-check.
- After finalizing the first transmittal, a hold will prevent a second submission until the first transmittal is completed. This hold is to ensure payment information is stored correctly and to prevent multiple declines in the event the first transmittal is declined. Finalizing a transmittal prior to the first's completion will result in an error message.
- Current processing time can take up to seven business days. MyLegion will update transmittals once approved by the financial institution.
- There is a $10,000 batch limit per transmittal. Amounts higher than that should be broken down to separate transmittals that meet the limit.
- Transmittals are to be finalized within 14 days. Members pay their dues with the expectation that they will be removed from future renewal notices, and that they will receive their membership cards in a timely manner along with their monthly *American Legion Magazine*. When posts do not transmit in the allotted time frame, they run the risk of upsetting their members and making them not want to belong. **Open transmittals not submitted in 14 days are deleted if no action is taken.** All members in the transmittal will have to be re-entered.
- Finalized batches cannot be changed. Review your transmittal carefully prior to selecting "Pay Now." To remove members from the transmittal, prior to finalizing, uncheck the box next to the name and "Save." To delete the whole transmittal, select "Delete Transmittal."
- Renewing a member for the wrong membership year or any other incorrect transmissions are to be reported to the department. Once a transmittal is in process, it must be completed before any adjustments can be made.
- Declined transmittal will require new bank information to be entered prior to submitting the next batch. This results in a new hold from submitting other batches until it completes.
- Transmittals declined are removed from "Transmittal History." Contact your MyLegion Support Staff with questions regarding missing transmittals.
- Online help is available in MyLegion.org > Resources.

SECTION VI – NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND (NEF)

- **Eligibility**
- **How to apply**
- **Contributions**

The National Emergency Fund program is one great example of veterans helping veterans through The American Legion. This "no-strings-attached" disaster relief program has helped thousands of American Legion and SAL members and their families, and American Legion posts, to recover from declared natural disasters.

Eligibility

There are no premiums to pay into the NEF program. Rather, grants are made to Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion members and American Legion posts in need. The only requirements are:

- Applicant must be a current member (or post) of The American Legion or Sons of The American Legion in good standing prior to the date of the disaster
- Area of residence must be a declared natural disaster by government authority (national, state or local)
- Applicant must be temporarily or permanently displaced from their primary residence due to damage occurring during a natural disaster
- Application request covers immediate needs (temporary housing, food, water, clothing, diapers, etc.)
- Only one grant per household, per disaster

Application requirements

For the quickest response, applications should:

- Be submitted to department headquarters within 90 days of disaster
- Include supporting data (photos, receipts, estimates, post/district/department officer statements, etc.) attesting to damage of the residence as well as costs incurred while displaced
- Substantiate damage to the post occurring directly from the declared natural disaster, and how the American Legion post will cease to provide "four pillar" support and activities to the local community due to sustained losses

How to apply

NEF grant applications may be obtained by contacting the department headquarters or National Headquarters at **(317) 630-1327**, or online at **legion.org/emergency**.

Not including all the required information can delay the grant processing time. Supporting documentation and photographs provided in support of the grant application will not be returned.

Once the grant application is filled out completely, **it is submitted to department headquarters**, where grant applications are reviewed and damages are assessed. The department commander and adjutant recommend the grant amount. The amount of the grant is not to exceed $3,000 for individuals and $10,000 for posts. The department commander OR adjutant sign the grant application and forward it to National Headquarters for review and final decision. If approved, a check for the applicant is issued and forwarded to department headquarters for presentation.

Contributions

Since October 1989, the NEF program has provided more than $10 million in direct financial assistance to Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion members and posts. All contributions made to this fund are distributed directly to the American Legion family member in need. There are no administrative or fulfillment costs. Every dollar raised goes directly to assist members and posts in need.

Contributions to the NEF have helped thousands rebuild their homes and lives and kept American Legion posts from closing. For more information about how to donate or how the post can contribute, visit **legion.org/emergency**.

Be prepared

Post officers are the first line of assistance to members when a disaster hits. Position the post to provide immediate support when disaster occurs.

Develop a disaster plan for the post and assign responsibilities. Have NEF forms pre-printed for members, as access to electricity and the Internet may be an issue. Have member lists printed and available to determine which members of the post have been affected by the disaster. If permitted, go to affected areas to assist members. Bring a camera along, as affected members may not have access to one.

Helping members at a time when they feel most beaten is the quickest way to get a loyal member for life.

SECTION VII – BASIC TRAINING

In 2017, The American Legion introduced an updated online, self-paced course outlining American Legion history, values and programs. Previously known as The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI), the course is now called BASIC TRAINING and is the first of many self-paced online courses to be offered under the training banner at **legion.org/basictraining**. The course is intended to educate and empower American Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members.

The 90-minute course has six modules: History and Organization, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism and Children & Youth, plus a course wrap-up and comprehensive final exam. BASIC TRAINING centers on The American Legion's four pillars, which offer a variety of programs that benefit veterans, servicemembers, their families, America's youth and citizens.

To take the course, go to **legion.org/basictraining**. The cost is free for American Legion and Sons of The American Legion members.

SECTION VIII – POST SERVICE OFFICER

Veterans are going to look first to the local post in their community for assistance with their benefits rather than search out the Legion's national or department headquarters. Having a fully informed post service officer to direct them to the best resources to address their concerns is an essential component of most active posts.

The post service officer (PSO) may serve as the initial contact between The American Legion and the veteran, providing basic information and assistance, including referrals to the department service officer (DSO). The PSO, in most instances, is not a professional service officer, nor is he or she an accredited representative of The American Legion (the exception would be when a professional service officer – county, state or American Legion – also serves as the PSO for his or her post). The PSO doesn't need to be an expert in veterans law or benefits. What is important is for the PSO to have a strong desire to serve veterans.

It is important for the PSO to establish a working relationship with DSO and local accredited veteran service representatives. Knowing how to acquire needed documentation prior to meeting with an accredited veteran service representative can help a veteran or veteran's family expedite a benefits claim.

National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation points of contact

VA&R policy and general information	(202) 263-5759, var@legion.org
VA health care or hospital issues	(202) 263-2998, var@legion.org
Environmental hazards (Gulf War, etc.)	(202) 263-2991, var@legion.org
Military discharge upgrades	(202) 263-2994, var@legion.org
Claims assistance/service officer	(202) 861-2700, var@legion.org
Appealed claims (Bureau of Veteran Affairs)	(202) 530-9141, var@legion.org
Veterans preference and employment issues	(202) 263-5771, vee@legion.org
VA&R brochures	(202) 263-5759, var@legion.org

SECTION IX – FUNERAL HONORS

The rendering of military funeral honors is a way to show the nation's deep gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country. This ceremonial paying of respect is the final expression of thanks from a grateful nation to the veteran's family. A VA website, **https://www.cem.va.gov/military_funeral_honors.asp**, provides the general public with information on military funeral honors, as well as helpful links to related military and veterans websites. The site also serves as a resource tool for funeral directors as they assist veterans' families in arranging for military funeral honors.

The law requires, upon a family's request, that an eligible veteran shall receive a military funeral honors ceremony, which includes folding and presentation of the U.S. flag and the playing of taps. The law defines a military funeral honors detail as consisting of two or more uniformed military persons with at least one member of the honor guard being from the veteran's branch of service.

The DoD program calls for funeral home directors to request military funeral honors on behalf of a veteran's family. Veterans service organizations such as The American Legion may assist in providing military funeral honors. When military funeral honors at a national cemetery are desired, they are arranged by the funeral home prior to the committal service. A notice of at least 48 hours is required to organize the funeral detail.

The funeral director will assist veterans' families and answer questions regarding grave markers. Family members can also write to **Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Community and Family Policy) 4000 Defense Pentagon, Room 5A726, Washington, DC 20380**.

SECTION X – *THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE & DISPATCH*

The American Legion Magazine

Every member is entitled to a subscription to *The American Legion Magazine* for each year's paid membership. There will not be a lapse in the subscription if the member's card for the next year is transmitted promptly to department headquarters and reaches National Headquarters' data services section before the previous year's subscription has expired. The following are ways to speed the delivery of the magazine:

- As soon as a member signs up, send the completed left and center sections of the 3-part card to department headquarters. The department will then send it to National Headquarters.
- Type or print all required information on the card.
- Advise data entry immediately of an address change by completing the Member Data Form **(see page 14)**.
- Answer correspondence requesting subscription information as soon as possible.

Remember …

- It takes up to 45 days to add a name to the mailing list. To meet mailing deadlines, closing dates for receiving cards are set from 30 to 45 days prior to these dates.
- It takes up to 60 days to change an address. As with subscription cards, closing dates are established to meet deadlines.
- Complete information is required to enter a subscription. *The American Legion Magazine* is mailed second class and, as a result, the list must be processed and maintained in strict accordance with U.S. postal laws and regulations and those of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. After receiving 12 issues, a member will not get a magazine unless a new card is received.

The American Legion Dispatch

The American Legion Dispatch is a free monthly e-newsletter providing post, district and department officers with news relevant to membership recruitment and retention, post activities and community support, American Legion programs, troop support, veterans benefits and more. The e-newsletter features headlines with clickable links to full stories on the *Dispatch* page at **legion.org/dispatch**. Subscribe at **legion.org/newsletters**.

SECTION XI – MILITARY AWARDS, DECORATIONS & RECORDS

The American Legion receives many requests from Legionnaires and other veterans related to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, ranging from information on lost military personnel and medical records to replacement military awards and decorations. Download the Standard Form 180 (SF 180) at **https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html** or contact the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at **(866) 272-6272**.

Requests for the issuance or replacement of military service medals, decorations and awards should be directed to the specific branch of the military in which the veteran served. However, for Army Air Corps, Air Force and Army personnel, NPRC will verify the awards to which a veteran is entitled and forward the request with verification to the appropriate service for issuance of the medals.

Use NARA to create a customized order form to request information or military personnel records. You may use the system if you are a veteran or next of kin of a deceased former member of the military. The next of kin can be a surviving spouse who has not remarried, father, mother, son, daughter, sister or brother.

If you are not the veteran or next of kin, you must complete the SF 180. Submit a separate request (either SF 180 or letter) for each individual whose records are being requested.

Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC)

The Presidential Memorial Certificate is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the president, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the PMC program by preparing the certificates, which bear the president's signature and express the country's grateful recognition of the veteran's service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Eligible recipients include the deceased veteran's next of kin and loved ones. More than one certificate may be provided.

Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office or by U.S. mail only. Requests cannot be sent via email. There is no form when requesting a PMC. Include a copy of the veteran's discharge and death certificate. Submit copies only, as VA cannot return original documents.

To request a PMC, fax the request and all supporting documents to **(800) 455-7143** or mail it to Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C), Department of Veterans Affairs, 5109 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-3903. For questions about the certificate you have received, a request you have already sent in or about the program in general, call **(202) 565-4964**.

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

AMMUNITION See the *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies.*

BURIAL FLAGS VA establishes eligibility. The local funeral director will assist you in obtaining a flag. Find more information online at **https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/burial-flags/**.

CONTINUOUS YEARS CERTIFICATES National Headquarters issues certificates recognizing 50, 60 and 70 years of membership **(see page 14)**.

CERTIFICATION OF OFFICERS It is extremely important to provide the department with a list of all post officers immediately following their election. This must be done annually or whenever there is a change in officers.

CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION Be sure to note any change of contact information (mailing, email, phone) for any member of the post by completing the Member Data Form or directly online through the post **myLegion.org** portal. Member information can also be updated at **legion.org/membershipmanagement**.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS The American Legion National Constitution and By-laws are available for download at **legion.org/publications**.

CUSTOMER SERVICE National Headquarters' customer service division handles member inquiries from individual members, posts, districts and departments. Inquiries may be submitted in writing to American Legion Customer Service, 5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216. Customer Service can also be reached by phone at **(800) 433-3318** or **(317) 860-3111** between 8 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. EST Monday through Friday, by fax at **(317) 860-3130** or by email **cs@legion.org**. **Note***:* These contacts are not for issues related to Emblem Sales or **MyLegion.org**.

EMBLEM SALES / SUPPLIES Each post commander and adjutant receive a copy of the latest Emblem Sales catalog. Additional copies may be obtained from Emblem Sales online at **emblem.legion.org** or call toll free at **(888) 453-4466**.

MYLEGION.ORG Contact the MyLegion.org Support Team by phone at **(833) 253-9995**, fax at **(317) 860-3131** or email at **mylegion@legion.org**.

RESOLUTIONS See the *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies*.

RIFLES (CEREMONIAL) See the *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies.*

SURPLUS MILITARY EQUIPMENT See the *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies*.

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