

## Reference Guide

**AMMUNITION** - See the *Officer's Guide, Section 4*.

**ANNUAL REPORT - CONSOLIDATED POST REPORT [CPR] FORM** – Each Post is required to file an annual report with the Department Headquarters. A convenient report form is sent to each Post for providing the requested data on programs and activities.

**AUXILIARY** – Certification of American Legion membership determines eligibility for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary, The American Legion Junior Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion (See *Officer's Guide*).

**BINDERS FOR MEMBERSHIP REGISTERS** – Consult your National Emblem Sales catalog for prices.

**BURIAL FLAGS** – Who is eligible for a burial flag? The VA established eligibility. Your funeral director will assist you in obtaining a flag. More information is available at:

<http://www.cem.va.gov/bflags.htm>

**CERTIFICATES** – There is a variety available for purchase from National Emblem Sales. Also, see explanation later in this manual for certificates issued (at no charge) to members who are deserving of special recognition.

**CERTIFICATION OF OFFICERS** – It is extremely important to provide your Department a list of all Post officers, immediately following their election...this must be done annually.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS** – Be sure to notify Department Headquarters of any change of address of any member of the Post by completing the “Member Data Form” (Stock # 30-001). More information can be found later in manual.

**CHARTERS** – *Temporary, Permanent, and Supplemental* – also *Tax Exempt Status*

### ***NAMING A POST AFTER AN INDIVIDUAL AND/OR NAME CHANGES***

The Post must have the family's written permission to name a Post after their family member. 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, the Post must send a copy of the minutes, or the resolution, or both to their Department Headquarters and the Department will request the name change.

### ***LOCATION CHANGE PROCEDURE***

If a Post requests a location change a letter from the Post Adjutant/Commander needs to be sent to the Department Headquarters and the Department will request the location change. The letter needs to include the old location and the new location.

### ***TEMPORARY CHARTER***

Any group of eligible veterans may apply for a Post in The American Legion from the National Organization through the Department (State) Headquarters after meeting all Department requirements.

A temporary charter application is to be filled out in triplicate, and is to be typewritten. The instructions are included on the application, which is available from the Department. The name of the

new Post that appears on the temporary charter can/may **only** be changed at such time an application for a permanent charter is submitted.

The Executive Committee of the Department in whose area it lies shall determine the minimum membership of a Post. **No Post shall be named after any living person.**

#### ***PERMANENT CHARTER***

After a Post has functioned with a temporary charter for a minimum of ninety days, it can apply for a **Permanent Charter**. This form, available from the Department, is filled out in triplicate and sent to the Department Headquarters to be signed and forwarded to National Headquarters for the issuance of the charter. Instructions for this form are on the back of the application.

#### ***TAX EXEMPT STATUS***

Federal Tax Regulations require every subordinate American Legion Post that is obligated to file an Annual Information Return (Form 990), or if they maintain a bank account, must 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 their *New Post Kit*, prepared/sent by National. The instructions should be closely followed in completing/submitting the SS-4 form.

When you receive the Post 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, plus updates, is sent to the IRS each September 30. Your bank and various vendors will also need this number – **Protect it.**

#### ***SUPPLEMENTAL CHARTER***

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 usually enough for it to be considered by the government as a new entity, thereby requiring another Employer Identification Number (EIN). The old one is normally invalid; play it safe, get a new one.

The incorporation of a Post modifies the information sent in on the earlier inclusion letter reporting your EIN with 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” to the name will be reported to the IRS in September.

We need to maintain your **correct, legal and accurate** Post name on this report for IRS exactly as it appears on the Corporate Charter from the state. Any changes are to be sent to the National Office so the IRS records will remain up-to-date and the Post can avoid some IRS issues.

When requesting a supplemental charter, please fill it out in triplicate. A copy of your **Articles of Incorporation**, issued by the state, is a required attachment to the Supplemental Charter Application, which is available from the Department office.

**CIRCULATION PROCEDURES -THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE** – The member is entitled to a subscription to *The American Legion Magazine* for each year’s paid membership. There is not apt to be a lapse in the subscription IF the member’s card for the next year is transmitted promptly to the Department Headquarters so it reaches the National’s Data Services Section before the previous year’s subscription has expired! The following are ways to speed the delivery of the magazine:

1. As soon as a member signs up, send the completed left/center sections of the card to the Department Headquarters. The Department will then send it to National's Data Services Section.
2. Type or print all required information on the card.
3. Advise Data Services Section IMMEDIATELY of a change of address by completing the Member Data Form.
4. Answer correspondence requesting subscription information as soon as possible.

### ***HERE'S WHY...***

- a) It takes up to 45 days to add a name to the mailing list. As many as 600,000 membership cards are received and processed for an issue. In order to meet mailing deadlines, closing dates for receiving cards are set from 30 to 45 days prior to these dates.
- b) It takes up to 60 days to change an address. An average of 50,000 change of address notices is received for each issue. As with subscription cards, closing dates are established to meet deadlines.
- c) Complete information is required to enter a subscription. *The American Legion Magazine* is mailed 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.
- d) After receiving 12 issues a member will not get a magazine unless a new card is received.

**CLUB ROOMS** – For detailed information on the management, planning, and record keeping involved in the club room, see the *Post Operations Manual*, available *free of charge* from Membership & Post Activities, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206.

**COLD WAR RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE** – In accordance with section 1084 of the Fiscal Year 1998 National Defense Authorization Act, the Secretary of Defense approved awarding Cold War Recognition Certificates to all members of the armed forces and qualified federal government civilian personnel who faithfully and honorably served the United States anytime during the Cold War era, which is defined as Sept. 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991.

The only official website on which to request certificates is noted below. The site is operated by the United States Army, the executive agency for the Cold War Recognition Program. Cold War Recognition Certificates are available to qualified individuals at no cost. Any other site offering these certificates or replicas for sale or purchase are not official sites and are not approved or endorsed by the US Army.

Turn-around time for mailing certificates has been at least 6 months. The CWRS Operations Team is working as fast as possible to clear the backlog. Please do not request feedback prior to 6 months from the request date; your patience and interest in the Cold War Recognition program is appreciated.

**Who is eligible?** All members of the armed forces and federal government civilian personnel who faithfully served the United States during the Cold War era, Sept. 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991. **Individuals requesting a certificate will certify that their character of service was honorable.** Acceptable supporting document for proof of service is any official government or military document with recipient's name, Social Security Number or Military Service Number or Foreign Service Number, and date of service.

Visit the Cold War Recognition Certificate website for more information and find out who is eligible and how to obtain one...their site is: <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/tagd/coldwar/default.htm>.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE MONTH** — *March is Community Service Month...* On March 15-17, 1919, a group of American Expeditionary Force soldiers gathered in Paris, France to create what would become the world's largest veterans' organization. The American Legion celebrates over eight decades of fruitful and dedicated service to its communities, states and nation.

The American Legion has every intention to continue this same level of service to its veterans throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

As a prominent pillar of the community, the Post appearance can be perceived as a reflection of the attitude, the initiative and the civic awareness of the Post membership. The Post mirrors the outward image of the whole organization of The American Legion to the citizens and their community.

Every Legionnaire at every level should focus upon the image of The American Legion. Attention should not be limited to programs sponsored and services provided, but also on the overall appearance of the Post Home and surrounding property. The local post "IS" The American Legion as a whole. Therefore, the Post Home should make every effort to be the *"showcase of the community,"* a place where everyone is proud to be a part of.

During the time the Post Home project is underway, there should be a group of key Legionnaires in the post actively planning an "Open House," possibly in conjunction with The American Legion Birthday to serve as a day or evening for Legionnaires and their families to reconnect and celebrate.

This event can be designed for veterans, their families, community leaders and other members of the community to visit the Post Home for information on programs and services provided by the local Post and The American Legion as a whole.

Honoring local leaders and citizens can also bring the whole community together, as well as providing for great public relations opportunities. Special attention should be paid to the comments from those in attendance. There may be a project or service, which the community lacks, that The American Legion can provide.

There is no doubt these activities will enhance the image and understanding of our great organization and promote growth. Veterans who are not already taking part should be encouraged to give it a try and get involved.

A well-planned and well-executed Community Service Month in conjunction with The American Legion Birthday will go to great lengths to ensure we are living up to our motto of **"Still Serving America."** This is especially true in the eyes of those in the communities and surrounding area where the Post is providing service.

If you want, let us know what activities you are planning and how they turn out. Contact us by e-mail at [ia@legion.org](mailto:ia@legion.org), fax at (317) 630-1413 or phone (317) 630-1327...The American Legion is always looking for Posts and activities to highlight in their publications, giving credit where due.

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS** – See your current copy of the *Officer's Guide*.

**CONTINUOUS MEMBERSHIP** – Although it's the responsibility of the individual American Legion Post to maintain continuous membership records for each Legionnaire, National Headquarters offers its facilities to help compile and maintain accurate records. Years of continuous membership are recorded on the data system at National Headquarters after the Post has reported them. As far as National

Headquarters' records will permit, years of continuous membership are printed on the individual's membership card each year. If a member's continuous years do not show 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.

Upon certification to Department Headquarters, the Post may obtain wallet-sized continuous membership cards for members who qualify. Cards are available in units of 5 years – from 5 to 80. A certification form is available from the Department Headquarters for listing those eligible for the continuous years membership cards.

In addition, continuous membership cap patches, lapel pins, certificates and other related items are available from National Emblem Sales (See their current catalog for items/prices).

National Headquarters also issues once a year (in January) certificates to members that have 50, 60, 70, 75, or 80 years of continuous membership. One certificate of each type will be issued to the member as the specified number of years is attained. These are mailed directly to the Post in February.

**CORRESPONDENCE** – Answer correspondence promptly. The primary contact with the Post is through the Commander and/or Adjutant. If a member makes an inquiry, don't sit on it...the member deserves a timely reply. When you receive information pertaining to an activity or program, see that it gets to the proper person as soon as possible. Delays can be embarrassing and/or cause deadlines to be missed.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE** – The National Customer Service Department 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. You may also reach Customer Service by telephone at 1-800-433-3318 or 317/860-3111, Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., EST, or by fax at 317/860-3001 or at their Internet address, which is [cs@legion.org](mailto:cs@legion.org). *Note: This should not be confused with the Emblem Sales Customer Service Department.*

**DISPATCH** – American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion are all a part of the same team, *The American Legion Family*, so keeping the lines of communication open is essential to serve the people we all work for: veterans and their families. Stay informed about Legion problems, policies and priorities through the pages of *The Dispatch*, which has been delivering news and commentary to members since the first issue of the publication rolled off the presses.

*The Dispatch* is published once a month, at an annual subscription rate of \$15. NALPA members can subscribe at a \$6 annual rate. Complimentary subscriptions are sent to all Posts through the Post Adjutant, who is strongly encouraged to share the publication with officers and other Post members. Display it on your bulletin board or use excerpts in your own Post newsletter.

Many publications would sue you for using their material, but not us. *The Dispatch* encourages Departments and Posts to reprint our articles; all we ask is to credit us as the source of the information.

To ensure you receive timely delivery of the latest Legion-related news to your home, write for subscription information to: The American Legion *Dispatch*, National Headquarters, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206; or call 317/630-1352.

**DIRECT RENEWAL DUES NOTICES** [See the “*post data*” form at the end of this manual] – National Headquarters mails annually to almost all Legionnaires one or more notices that their annual dues for the coming year may now be paid to the Post.

This is made possible by printing on every renewal notice the exact amount of each Post's dues and the exact address to which dues are to be mailed. Every year in the early spring your Department Head-

quarters will be asking the Post to provide this information. If your Post is already in the program, you will still need to verify the address and dues amount. Please make sure the information provided has no error. A mistake in either the address for mailing the dues or the dues amount will cause endless trouble. **MOST RENEWAL NOTICES WILL BE PROVIDED AND MAILED BY THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AT NO COST.** At any time the annual dues of your Post changes or if the remittance address changes, your Post should immediately contact the Department.

*Post Mailing Address*

**As far as possible, your Post should use a permanent mailing address – either a post office box or the address of the Post home. Do not use the name of the Adjutant or other individual unless no other address is available. Difficulties arise when officers change, the individual moves or dies.**

*Dues Amount*

Only one dues amount can be shown for each Post. For example, National cannot print “\$20.00 until November 1, \$25.00 after November 1.”

*Participation/Schedule*

Participation in the Renewal Program for notices mailed in the summer through the end of the year is on a voluntary basis (unless your Department has mandated 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 the Renewal Mailing*

Some Posts have members whose dues are paid by the Post (Honorary Life Members, 50-year members, Past Commanders, etc.). If your Post has members to whom a renewal should not be sent, please send a letter in the following format (**Sign and date**) to your Department Headquarters:

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

<b>9-DIGIT MEMBER</b>	<b>HONORARY LIFE</b>	<b>ADDRESS,</b>	
<b>ID NUMBER</b>	<b>MEMBER ( ✓ )</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>INCLUDING ZIP</b>

**(list more names/membership information as necessary)**

Note: In sending the name, address, and 9-digit I.D. number, check your Membership Register and submit the name and I.D. number exactly as they appear on the register. The address should also be given in the same way, unless the address on the register is incorrect.

*Code C (No Renewal)*

The Membership Register shown later in this manual 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**” & “**ERA.**” The letter “**C,**” printed in the column means the member will not receive a renewal from National Headquarters. Please do not send in a second request to remove a member from the renewal list if a “**C**” is printed on the register for the member. PUFL life members are automatically excluded from renewal mailings; it is not necessary to request the “**C**” for these members.

*Renewal Schedule*

Normally, during each membership year, National sends five renewal notices to members. The following is the renewal schedule:

July, October, January, March, and May

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

The 2007 membership year renewal schedule for transmitting memberships to arrive **at National** by the established date(s) are outlined below...this schedule will be followed in order to remove the name(s) of paid members prior to a specific mailing. Using the Renewal Schedule, National extracts (unpaid) member records, prints, and mails the renewal notices.

## **REGULAR LEGION MEMBERSHIP**

### **2007 RENEWAL NOTICE SCHEDULES**

<b><u>CUTOFF DATES</u></b>	<b><u>RENEWAL DATES</u></b>
MAY 1, 2006	JULY 1, 2006
*SEPTEMBER 13, 2006	OCTOBER 2, 2006
*DECEMBER 13, 2006	**JANUARY 5, 2007
*FEBRUARY 14, 2007	**MARCH 15, 2007
*APRIL 11, 2007	**MAY 1, 2007

\* Denotes that the cutoff date is also a membership target date.

\*\* This renewal notice is mandatory – all delinquent members will receive.

**DIRECT MEMBERSHIP SOLICITATION (DMS)** - The DMS Program is a form of direct marketing used to solicit membership in The American Legion. It is very successful.

Mailing lists are rented from *commercial list brokers*. We then compare these lists with our membership files to remove the names of members from the rented lists.

Next, we mail out a letter over the signature of the National Commander (or his representative), which outlines many of The American Legion's past accomplishments, our current concerns and reasons why we need the prospective member's support.

If the prospect wishes to join, he or she completes the application form enclosed, certifying their dates of service in the U.S. Armed Forces, their character of discharge, their branch of service and their birth date. Then the applicant returns the form with a check in the envelope provided.

There is also an option for the prospect to charge their dues to their VISA or MasterCard account. When the response is received at National Headquarters, the prospect is keyed into our computer system.

These new members are transmitted directly into the Department Headquarters Post in the state in which they live. National Headquarters sends them a membership card signed electronically with the signature of the National Adjutant, a welcome letter, and information on The American Legion Family Benefit Plan.

**For the program to be truly effective, it is imperative these new members are personally contacted and invited to transfer into a local Post in their area.**

**It is the ultimate responsibility of the Post receiving a DMS transfer to verify the new member's eligibility, using the Form DD214 or other official proof of honorable service with the U.S. Armed Forces.**

For further information regarding the DMS Program, contact your Department Adjutant.

**DUES** – The Post sends Department and National dues to the Department Headquarters.

**DUES NOTICES** – For Posts which may not be under the National plan of direct renewals, first and second notices and a dues letter may be obtained in the necessary quantity from the Department Headquarters at no charge.

**ELIGIBILITY** – See earlier in this manual and the *Officer's Guide*.

**EMBLEM SUPPLIES** – Each Post Commander and Adjutant receive a copy of the National Emblem Sales catalog shortly after the first of the New Year. Additional copies may be obtained from them at P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Or shop online at <http://emblem.legion.org> or call toll free at 1-888-453-4466.

**EXTENSION INSTITUTE** – Each Post should encourage their members to learn as much about the history of The American Legion as possible. This will ensure they know where we've been, as well as lay the groundwork for developing new leaders for the future. At the back of this manual, an order form is printed, which can be copied (over and over), for use in enrolling your members in the course.

**FUNERALS HONORS ("HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED")** – The Department of Defense (DOD) is responsible for providing military funeral honors. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration cemetery staff assist with military funeral honors at VA national cemeteries.

On January 1, 2000, the Department of Defense began the implementation plan for providing military funeral honors for eligible veterans as enacted in Section 578 of Public Law 106-65 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000.

"Honoring Those Who Served" is the title of the DOD program for providing dignified military funeral honors to veterans who have defended our Nation. While military funeral honors are a long-standing tradition within the Armed Forces, the DOD program is in response to the law governing funeral honors for eligible veterans.

Upon the family's request, the law requires that every eligible veteran receive a military funeral honors ceremony to include folding and presenting the United States burial 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 a member of the veteran's parent service of the Armed Forces.

The DOD program calls for funeral home directors to request military funeral honors on behalf of the veterans' family. Veterans organizations may assist in the provision of military funeral honors. When military funeral honors at a national cemetery are desired, they are arranged prior to the committal service by the funeral home.

Questions and comments concerning the DOD military funeral honors program may be sent to the address listed on the next page, or visit their web site at:

<http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil>

Military Funeral Honors  
9504 IH-35 North, Suite 320  
San Antonio, TX 78233-6635

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP** – Honorary, Associate, Social or guest memberships in The American Legion are not legal. As provided in the Constitution and By-Laws, there is only one class of membership, and that is an active membership. This is not to be confused with “Honorary Life Membership;” explained below.

**HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP** – Almost since the founding of The American Legion in 1919, Posts have recognized their outstanding members for exceptional service or accomplishment by awarding what is known as an Honorary Life Membership. Various metal Life Membership cards and other items can be purchased from National Emblem Sales. Your Department may have rules pertaining to the granting of this type of membership. The only National requirement is that the Post assumes the responsibility of seeing the yearly dues are paid annually for the remainder of the member’s life. *Important note: new and even longtime experienced officers sometimes overlook their Honorary Life members at dues paying time, which may result in a membership lapse. It’s embarrassing to everyone to have to explain to an Honorary Life member why they are no longer a member of the Legion.*

**INCORPORATION OF THE POST** – When a Post becomes incorporated, and makes the appropriate application to National Headquarters, they will be issued a **Supplemental Charter**, as evidence of this action, properly attested by the duly authorized officers of the Department and National Headquarters.

**INTERNET WEB SITES (ASSOCIATED VETERANS’ MATTERS) –**

**THE AMERICAN LEGION HOME PAGE –** [HTTP://WWW.LEGION.ORG](http://www.legion.org)

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

DVA Home Page - [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)  
Veterans Benefits On-line Application (VONAPP) – [www.vabenefits.vba.va.gov](http://www.vabenefits.vba.va.gov)  
National Cemetery Administration Home Page – [www.va.gov/cemetery](http://www.va.gov/cemetery)  
Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Home Page – [www.va.gov/health/enviro/persgulf.htm](http://www.va.gov/health/enviro/persgulf.htm)

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Health Care Program (TriCare) – [www.tricare.osd.mil/fehbp/](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/fehbp/)  
Military Funeral Honors - [www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil](http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil)

**BURIAL**

Arlington National Cemetery – [www.arlingtoncemetery.org](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org)  
American Battle Monuments Commission – [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)

**LEGAL**

United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims  
Home Page – [www.vetapp.uscourts.gov](http://www.vetapp.uscourts.gov)

**LEGISLATIVE/EMPLOYMENT/GENERAL INTEREST**

Committee on Veterans Affairs (Senate and House of Representatives)  
US Senate – [www.senate.gov/~veterans/](http://www.senate.gov/~veterans/)  
US House – [www.veterans.house.gov](http://www.veterans.house.gov)  
Replacing Military Records/National Archives – [http://www.archives.gov/research\\_room/vetrecs/](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/vetrecs/)  
Department of Labor Home Page – [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)  
Small Business Administration – [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)  
Federal Jobs for Veterans – [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)

**IT DIVISION/POST SERVICES** – The IT Division at National Headquarters can provide member data on diskette, printed listings, or mailing labels. Any request **must** be routed through your Department Headquarters for approval. The request is then forwarded to National Headquarters for approval by the National Adjutant. **For information on member data availability and pricing, contact the IT Department/Post Services group at 317/860-3104.**

**KOREAN WAR SERVICE MEDAL** – U.S. veterans of the Korean War are eligible to receive the Republic of Korea Korean War Service Medal. The ROK government has established criteria for the awarding of the Republic of Korea Korean War Service Medal (ROK KWSM). To qualify for the medal, the veteran must have:

- Served between the outbreak of hostilities, June 25, 1950, and the date the armistice was signed, July 27, 1953
- Been on permanent assignment or on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days
- Performed his / her duty within the territorial limits of Korea, in the waters immediately adjacent thereto or in aerial flight over Korea participating in actual combat operations or in support of combat operations.

The U.S. Air Force is the lead agency to distribute the medals to US servicemen and women from each branch of Service. The Air Force will provide the **medal at no cost**, and on a first come first served basis, based upon availability of medals, to veterans who meet the criteria and provide a copy of their discharge paper.

To obtain the medal, those who meet the criteria above must provide the US Air Force Personnel Center (contact information listed below) a copy of their discharge paper, commonly known as a "DD-214," or a corrected version of that document, a "DD-215." National Guard members must provide their statement of service equivalent, "NGB Form 22." Please only send copies of these documents; do not send original documents.

US Air Force Personnel Center contact information:

Office hours: Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (CST). Telephone numbers: (800) 616-3775, (210) 565-2432/2520/2516, or fax (210) 565-3118. Mailing address: HQ AFPC/DPPPRK, 550 C Street West, Suite 12, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas 78150-4612.

Web Page address: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/awards/>

To obtain information concerning your personnel records (e.g., DD Form 214 and medical records) contact the National Personnel Records Center. When requesting information, provide the veteran's full name, SSN, mailing address, applicable service number, branch of service, dates of service, type of information needed and the veteran's signature on request. Please forward all personnel records requests to: National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63132-5295, Phone: (314) 538-4200, FAX: (314) 538-4175

**LEGION LIFE INSURANCE** - See the *Officer's Guide*.

**MEMBER DATA FORM** – Stock number 30-001...**these are available from your Department.**

**MEMBERSHIP CARDS** - *Check later pages of this manual.*

**MERCHANT MARINE ELIGIBILITY & FLAG** - See the *Officer's Guide*.

**MILITARY AWARDS AND DECORATIONS** – The American Legion continually receives requests from Legionnaires and veterans about how to contact the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. These requests range from seeking information on:

- ◆ Lost records;
- ◆ Military Awards and Decorations;
- ◆ Cold War Recognition Certificate; and
- ◆ Request for the Standard Form 180

The following pages are from official government Internet web sites on these matters and are furnished to the Post Adjutant for convenience/usage in serving members and all veterans. Additional copies of the SF180 may be made as necessary for submission to the appropriate government agency.

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 Air Force (including Army Air Corps) and Army personnel, the National Personnel Records Center will verify the awards to which a veteran is entitled and forward the request with the verification to the appropriate service department for issuance of the medals.

Generally, there is no charge for medal or award replacements. The length of time to receive a response or your medals and awards varies depending upon the branch of service sending them.

For more information on the National Archives and Records Administration, visit their web site at <http://www.nara.gov>.

The **Standard for (SF 180), Request Pertaining to Military Records**, is recommended for requesting medals and awards. The form appears at the back of this manual. Provide as much information as possible and send the form to the appropriate address from the following table:

**ARMY** - For medals, write to – National Personnel Records Center, Medals Section (NRPMA-M), 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. For a problem or an appeal, write to – Commander PERSCOM, Attn: TAPC-PDO-PA, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332-0471.

**AIR FORCE (including ARMY AIR CORPS & ARMY AIR FORCES)** - For medals, write to - National Personnel Records, Air Force Reference Branch (NRPMF) 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. For a problem or an appeal, write to - Headquarters Air Force Personnel Center, AFPC/DPPPR, 550 C Street West, Suite 12, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4612.

**NAVY** - For medals, write to – Bureau of Naval Personnel, Liaison Office Room 5409, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. For a problem or an appeal, write to – Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV 09B33), Awards & Special Projects, Washington, DC 20350-2000.

**MARINE CORPS** - For medals, write to – Bureau of Naval Personnel, Liaison Office Room 5409, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. For a problem or an appeal, write to – Commandant of the Marine Corps, Military Awards Branch (MMMA), 3280 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-5100.

**COAST GUARD** - For medals, write to – Bureau of Naval Personnel, Liaison Office Room 5409, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. For a problem or an appeal, write to – Commandant U.S. coast Guard, Medals and Awards Branch (PMP-4), Washington, DC 20593-0001.

**MILITARY PERSONNEL RECORDS** - If you need copies of your Military Personnel Records, you can do so by submitting the Standard Form 180. **Or**, use the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) online military personnel records request system. Their web site is:

[http://www.archives.gov/research\\_room/vetrecs/](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/vetrecs/)

Use their system to create a customized order form to request information from your, or your relative's, military personnel records. You may use the system if you are:

- A military veteran, or
- Next of kin of a **deceased**, former member of the military. The next of kin can be any of: surviving spouse that has not remarried, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, or brother.

If you are not the veteran or next of kin, you must complete the Standard Form 180 (SF 180). You can obtain this form from Fax-on-Demand, or download it, then mail or fax it to the appropriate address on the form. The SF 180 may be photocopied as needed. Please submit a separate request (either SF 180 or letter) for each individual whose records are being requested. You may submit more than one request per envelope or fax.

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND (NEF)** – See *detailed explanation later in this manual*.

**NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE ELIGIBILITY** – See earlier page & the *Officer's Guide*.

**NO BILL FOR PAID-UP-FOR-LIFE MEMBERS** – Post(s) do NOT need to request a “C” code [NO BILL] for a Paid-Up-For-Life member; a code is automatically added to the member’s record so dues renewals will not be sent.

**PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE** – A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans.

**History** - This program was initiated in March 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and has been continued by all subsequent Presidents. Statutory authority for the program is Section 112, Title 38, of the United States Code.

**Administration** - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the PMC program by preparing the certificates, which bear the President’s signature expressing the country’s grateful recognition of the veteran’s service in the United States Armed Forces.

**Eligibility** - Eligible recipients include the deceased veteran’s next of kin and loved ones. More than one certificate may be provided.

**Application** - 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 to use when requesting a PMC. Please be sure to include a return mailing address with your request and a copy of the veteran’s discharge documents.

**PAID-UP-FOR-LIFE MEMBERSHIP (PUFL)** – The program started with the 1976 membership year as a convenience for Legionnaires, offering them a method to purchase a membership for life, through a one-time payment.

Every veteran has a personal reason for becoming a Legionnaire. Those willing to become lifetime members are offering somewhat more than the usual amount of enthusiasm, dedication, and love for country. Each is sacrificing hard-earned dollars for a lifetime pledge to the goals, objectives, and ideals upon which The American Legion was founded. They are betting the Legion's future will be just as bright as its past accomplishments, and that continued service to veterans is synonymous with the organization's commitment for "Still Serving America."

The program has converted over 250,000 Legionnaires, who have taken advantage of the opportunity, and enrolled in the program by switching from annual dues-paying members to lifetime members.

***Cost Of A Lifetime Membership*** - The cost of a Paid-Up-For-Life membership is based on the member's age at the time of application and the current annual dues of the Post. The fee is computed by multiplying the annual dues by the FACTOR shown under the appropriate age group. The full fee schedule is printed on the back of each application, which are available from the Department Headquarters.

***Reduced Purchase Fee*** - Many Posts purchase a Paid-Up-For-Life membership for their long-time members, and in calculating the cost to remit, the authorizing post officers may chose to leave out all or a portion of their share of the dues...this will reduce the amount to submit with the application. A Post can authorize this for an applicant...there is a line on the application for this purpose.

***Items For Purchase (prices are subject to change)*** - A number of items can be purchased to show personal pride as a Paid-Up-For-Life member. Check the current catalog of National Emblem Sales for price and availability. One of these items is a metal lifetime card, along the lines of the gold or silver Honorary Life card. It is stock number 722.104 @ \$14.95...it is an engraved copper wallet card, and can be purchased by any certified PUFL member.

National Emblem Sales has also developed other items: a lapel pin, an attachment tab, an auto license plate, a PUFL cap pin, a PUFL cloth cap insignia, and a PUFL baseball cap. These unique items have been designed to enhance the fundamental value of a lifetime membership and to demonstrate your pride in being a Paid-Up-For-Life member of The American Legion.

***Member Must Be In Good Standing*** - **A Legionnaire must be in good standing to become a Paid-Up-For-Life member...**to be in good standing, the member must have a valid membership card for the current Legion year.

***Most Buy At Dues-Paying Time*** - The average Legionnaire is most likely to decide to become a lifetime member at the time when dues are paid for the coming year. Post Commanders, Adjutants, and membership workers are asked to make sure their members know that with one payment they can take care of dues for all future years.

**Not A Discount Membership** - The National Constitution & By-Laws of The American Legion is clear that "there shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually or for life."

Everyone must pay their “*fair share*” to support the organization. The National Paid-Up-For-Life plan was established for convenience only, giving members an alternative to paying dues on an annual basis, which is still the choice for the majority of the nearly 2.6 million members.

*Post Receives Dues Portion Annually* - The Post will receive an annual amount for each Paid-Up-For-Life member equal to the Post portion at the time the member became a lifetime member. Depending on the dues of the Post, this amount can be different from one member to another.

***Payment Method For A Lifetime Membership*** - An applicant may pay by check, MasterCard, VISA, American Express or Discover Card. Do not send “cash” through the mail.

***Membership Card*** - Each Paid-Up-For-Life member receives a permanent plastic card (see following explanation on Branch of Service cards), as well as an annual paper membership card, directly from National, to verify continuing membership in The American Legion. The annual card will be mailed to the member in June or July of each year. Upon request, a replacement plastic or paper card can be provided at no additional charge to the Paid-Up-For-Life member.

***“Branch of Service” Plastic Cards*** - Each Paid-Up-For-Life applicant receives a unique plastic membership card reflecting which military Branch Of Service (BOS) the veteran served. There is no cost to the member.

A total of six Branch of Service cards have been developed; one each for veterans of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and a generic type for those requesting one (or not identifying their branch of service).

Applicants are now able to select their Branch of Service card simply by checking the proper box on the current PUFL application. If an old application is used, just write the Branch of Service somewhere on the form. Only one type of card per applicant. A description of each card follows.

<b>Branch of Service</b>	<b>Graphic on Card</b>
Army	M1A1 Abrams Tank
Navy	Ticonderoga Class Cruiser
Air Force	F-15 Eagle Fighter
Marines	V-22 Osprey Helicopter
Coast Guard	HH65 Dolphin Helicopter
General-type	*Uses a portion of some of the above graphics to include the USA, USN, and USAF

\* This type card will be sent if the applicant doesn't specify the branch of service.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Paid-Up-For-Life Time Payment Plan Application Instructions</i></b></p>
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1. Current members of The American Legion may use the Time Payment Plan to purchase a Paid-Up-For-Life [PUFL] membership through National Headquarters. ***No interest or service charge*** is added to the fee.
2. The applicant must be a **member in good standing**; this means the member must have a valid membership card for the current Legion year.
3. The “Time Payment” option must be checked in the space indicated on the PUFL application.

4. When the application is submitted to the Post for certification, an initial remittance of at least 10% of the total PUFL fee must accompany the application. Payment can be made by check, money order or credit card (Master Card, Visa, Discover or American Express). **PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH!**
5. After receipt and approval of the application, National Headquarters will provide Time Payment applicants with coupons and envelopes to be used for submitting monthly payments until the entire PUFL fee is paid-in-full. The monthly payment due will be at least 10% of the total fee. (*Note: Monthly statements will not be sent from National.*)
6. If no payment is received for three (3) consecutive months, the Time Payment account will be closed.
7. The total PUFL membership fee must be paid within twelve (12) months from the date of application.
8. The member is responsible for paying annual dues to the Post until the total PUFL fee is paid-in-full.
9. The permanent PUFL membership card will be issued only after the total PUFL fee is paid-in-full.

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### **Further Information/Assistance**

For further information regarding The American Legion's National Paid-Up-For-Life membership plan, you can contact your Post Adjutant or Finance Officer, or call National Headquarters (317) 630-1205. Or visit us on The American Legion web site at <http://www.legion.org>.

**POLITICAL CANDIDACY** – By action of the 58<sup>th</sup> National Convention, August 24-26, Seattle, WA, The American Legion's National Constitution was amended to permit a candidate for nomination or election to, or an incumbent of, any remunerative elective public office, to hold any elective or appointive remunerative office in The American Legion. (See National Constitution and By-Laws, *Officer's Guide*, current edition).

**POST OFFICER CERTIFICATION** – It is critical for the Post Adjutant to report all Post officers to the Department Headquarters immediately after their election. The Department may furnish a special reporting form for this purpose or you may receive reporting forms provided by National to your Department.

**PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT PROGRAM (RXAMERICA)** – American Legion, Sons of The American Legion members and dependents save as much as **20% or more** on prescription drugs in participating pharmacies, and even greater savings through the use of mail service.

The discount varies by location, and at no time would a Legionnaire or SAL member be charged more than the pharmacy's everyday retail price.

To find a participating drugstore nearest the member, or to place a mail order request, call the **RxAmerica** American Legion Toll Free Number **1-800-905-9818**.

For local service, the member simply presents a **current** American Legion or SAL membership card at a participating drugstore.

For mail service, the local Legion Post can provide a mail order request, or it can be obtained by calling the toll free number; complete and send it to **RxAmerica**.

The mail service is guaranteed to be more cost effective than using AARP mail-order service.

**Note:** The program described here is not available in Maryland; they operate their own prescription program for members in that state...contact The American Legion of Maryland for further details.

**PUBLICATIONS** – A list of basic handbooks/materials issued by National appears in the *Officer's Guide*. See the *Officer's Guide* @ <http://www.legion.org>

**RIFLES (CEREMONIAL)** – See the *Officer's Guide*, Section 4.

**SERVICE OFFICER, POST** - Veterans needing assistance with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other military-related matters, often turn to The American Legion for help. For most veterans, the post in their community is “The American Legion,” not the national or department headquarters. This means that veterans needing help are going to look for it at the local post. This is especially true today with thousands of troops deploying to and returning from the War on Terrorism. If a veteran goes to a post for help and is turned away or treated with indifference, The American Legion, not the post, is seen as not caring about veterans, regardless of what the Legion has done or is currently doing for veterans at the state and national levels. This is why it is so important every post have a Post Service Officer (PSO) truly interested in serving fellow veterans.

The PSO serves as the initial contact between The American Legion and the veteran. 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 Legion, also serves as the PSO for his or her post). It isn't necessary for the PSO to be an expert in veterans' law or benefits. What is important is for the PSO to have a strong desire to serve veterans. The purpose of the PSO is to be an initial point of contact for veteran issues by providing veterans in the community where the post is located with basic information and assistance, including referrals to the Department Service Officer (DSO). It is important for the PSO to establish a working relationship with the professional American Legion DSO and ensure any paperwork submitted by the veteran is forwarded to the DSO in a timely manner.

PSO training is the responsibility of the department. PSOs should take advantage of all training opportunities. The National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission (VA&R) publishes a “Post Service Officer Guide” every year. This guide contains general VA-related information, including DSO contact information for every state, and is an excellent resource for the PSO. Guides are sent to the department adjutant for distribution to every post in his/her state. If you have not been receiving a PSO Guide, please contact your department adjutant. VA&R, located in the Washington, D.C. Office, also provides numerous VA-related brochures, for post use, free of charge. Relevant veteran-related information also can be found in the “Veterans” section of the Legion homepage, [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

## National VA&R Points of Contact

VA&R Policy & General Info.	<a href="mailto:VAR@legion.org">VAR@legion.org</a> or (202) 861-2700, Ext. 1402
VA Health Care or Hospital Issues	<a href="mailto:VAR@legion.org">VAR@legion.org</a> or (202) 861-2700, Ext. 1405
Environmental Hazards (GW, AO, etc.)	<a href="mailto:Gulfwar@legion.org">Gulfwar@legion.org</a> or (202) 861-2700
Military Discharge Upgrades	<a href="mailto:VAR@legion.org">VAR@legion.org</a> or (202) 861-2700, Ext. 1511
Claims Assistance/Service Officer	<a href="mailto:VAR@legion.org">VAR@legion.org</a> or 1-800-433-3318
Appealed Claims (BVA)	<a href="mailto:VAR@legion.org">VAR@legion.org</a> or (202) 565-6324
Vet. Preference & Employment Issues	<a href="mailto:Econ@legion.org">Econ@legion.org</a> or (202) 861-2700, Ext. 1600

**SNOWBIRD** - Some members have more than one residence...one for summer and one for winter. See the form later in this manual that can be submitted so mail reaches the member in a timely manner.

**SURPLUS MILITARY EQUIPMENT** – See the *Officer's Guide*.

**TAXES** – Each American Legion Post has the responsibility to determine the extent of its tax liability and the forms and reports it should file. All Posts should file each year a **Form 990 – Annual Information Return**. Each Department and Post of The American Legion is required to furnish its **Group Exemption Number (GEN)** at the time of filing its Form 990. The GEN assigned to The American Legion and its subordinates is **0925**. Accordingly, when each Department and Post of The American Legion files its Form 990, it should insert in Heading, Item G of the form the number 0925. Further, Federal Tax Regulations require every subordinate unit filing Form 990 must have an **EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER**, which can be obtained by filing **IRS Form SS-4**.

**TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP** – A membership transfer from one Post to another should be accomplished by completing the Member Data Form (30-001; available from your Department Headquarters).

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 (and unnecessary) record entered on the data system.

When a transfer is made this way, there is a danger the member will lose his/her continuous membership record unless the Post Adjutant gives the member full credit at the time the card is made.

Without the official transfer, the member also may receive a renewal notice from National Headquarters asking for dues for the next year to be sent to the Post where the membership was formerly held; second, third and fourth renewals can also be sent if the proper procedures are not followed.

**VERY IMPORTANT: always ask a prospective member if he/she currently belongs or has recently been a member.**

**VETERANS' DATA RECORD** – This record can be reproduced for one or all members. It can aid them in organizing important personal, making it easier for the family, in case of an emergency. Check later in manual for the form to use.

### ***Member Data Form (Stock # 30-001)***

The Member Data Form, available from your Department Headquarters, is a multi-purpose form for use in keeping better track and more accurate information on the members of your Post. There is a separate form for members of The American Legion and one for members of the Sons of The American Legion (stock # 00-007).

When using, please follow the instructions on the reverse of the form. The American Legion Member Data Form can be used to report:

- |                      |                                   |                         |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a) Deceased Member   | b) Continuous Years               | c) Name Correction      |
| d) Change of Address | e) 1 <sup>st</sup> War Era Served | f) Branch of Service    |
| g) Telephone Number  | h) Date of Birth                  | i) Honorary Life Member |
| j) Post Transfer     |                                   |                         |

Always include the Member ID Number, Post Number and Name of Department. Signature of the authorized Post officer needs to be included.

Route the parts of the Member Data Form as follows:

Parts 1-3: Mail to Department Headquarters.

Part 4: Retain in Post Files.

The information reported on the Member Data Form should also be entered in the appropriate area on the Post Membership Register for easy reference.