



# American Legion Training Newsletter

National Headquarters  
Internal Affairs Division

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## Basic Training: American Legion Style



By National Commander  
Charles E. Schmidt

Leadership by example is an ethos instilled in every veteran the first day of basic training. Those on the drill field are the cream of the crop. The best instructors don't merely intimidate recruits, but inspire trainees with their knowledge.

Legion Family. I truly believe this course will enhance the recruiting and retention of members.

Also in development is the American Legion Education Institute, a series of online training modules designed to educate our members and increase involvement and retention.

The American Legion has 98 years of fascinating history. It has four pillars upon which it was founded and many distinct programs, each

manage our programs, advocacy and daily activities.

We are not asking that every Legionnaire be a full-fledged scholar and graduate-level historian. But we are hoping they learn the basics. And "American Legion Basic Training" is a great way to start.

**Commander Schmidt was elected as the 98<sup>th</sup> national commander of The American Legion in August 2016. He is a U.S. Air Force veteran and retiree. He is a distinguished graduate of the Air Force Officer Training School.**

Knowledge is an essential ingredient to any recipe for success. If you were an uncertain customer, would you buy a car from a salesperson who had no idea what type of engine was beneath the hood? Likewise, would you be impressed by an "experienced" American Legion leader who did not know any of the words to the Preamble of our Constitution?

The military has long recognized that knowledgeable recruiters are worth their weight in gold. That's why I'm so excited about the evolution of The American Legion Extension Institute, our online training course which is being rebranded as "American Legion Basic Training." And coming this fall, the informative and interesting curricula will be **free** to all members of the American

with unique features and missions that support those pillars. Veterans do not automatically become familiar with the nuances and procedures of our programs on their first day of Legion membership. They don't often wish to study every provision of our National Constitution and Bylaws nor do they want to memorize the *Post Officers Guide*. Much of what they need to know can come with experience but it usually takes an effort and a willingness to learn.

Our numbers continually prove the more involved a Legionnaire is in our organization, the more likely he or she will be to renew membership. "American Legion Basic Training," will go a long way to baiting the hook and building brand loyalty for those with the desire to lead, participate in and



*USS American Legion approaching Pedro Miguel Lock  
USS American Legion attack transport - (APA - 17) -  
Built October 1919 and  
decommissioned March 1946*

This volume covers best practices, ideas and training that every Legionnaire needs to know, from the official uniform of The American Legion to copyright laws covering the emblem.

This periodic, Legionnaire-driven newsletter, produced by the Internal Affairs Division, highlights training that other departments and individuals are conducting throughout The American Legion.

Are you a trainer? Can you write? We need your submissions. Send your training ideas to **train@legion.org**.

Submissions should focus on stimulating training and what your department and posts are doing.

All contributions will be credited to the author.

# WEARING OF THE AMERICAN LEGION CAP

According to Resolution No. 46, passed in spring 1965 by the National Executive Committee: "A LEGIONNAIRE IS CONSIDERED TO BE IN UNIFORM IF WEARING AN OFFICIAL AMERICAN LEGION CAP."

The following text is from *The American Legion Officer's Guide & Manual of Ceremonies, 2017*, available for download at [www.legion.org/publications](http://www.legion.org/publications)

1. The Legion cap, uniform, or regalia should be worn by its members only when in attendance at official Legion meetings or ceremonies, as official guests at patriotic or other civil functions, or by individuals when officially representing The American Legion on public occasions. For

all ceremonies, the uniforms adopted by a department are recommended. However, an official American Legion cap, dark blue or black civilian coat, dark trousers, white shirt, black four-in-hand tie, black shoes and socks make an attractive uniform. A Legionnaire is



considered to be in uniform if wearing an official American Legion cap. Therefore, it is not proper to wear a Legion cap while eating a meal at an official American Legion

or civic luncheon or dinner.

2. The cap should be worn in a place of worship only by the guard of honor, color guard and commander of the same while in marching order or standing guard. When one is seated, the cap should be removed.

3. Posts marching in formation into a place of worship should uncover at the door, hold the cap with the right hand over the heart until arriving in the pews and commanded to take seats, and remain uncovered during the entire service. At the close of the service, upon command, the post shall rise, hold the cap with right hand over the hearts, march out of the place of worship, and recover after marching through the door. **Note:** The cap should be held over the heart as one approaches the casket, and is not at any time worn in a place of worship except by the guard of honor, color guard or commander of same while in marching order or standing guard.

4. Legionnaires not in formation will uncover upon entering the place of worship, remain uncovered during the entire

service and re-cover after leaving the place of worship.

5. At the graveside, the cap should be held in the right hand over the heart during the entire service. In cold and inclement weather, the cap should not be doffed.

6. In meetings, the cap should be worn except during the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer and while standing in silent reverence in memory of departed comrades, when it should be held with the right hand over the heart.

7. A Legionnaire wearing a cap should behave in proper accordance as to salutes, etc., the same as if wearing a military uniform. If not wearing a cap, observe ordinary rules of etiquette for civilian dress.

8. Female Legionnaires should wear their caps in the manner prescribed for women in the armed forces. This is suitable for most situations, but taste and common sense should prevail. By



American Legion tradition, a female Legionnaire may leave her cap on during the Pledge of Allegiance, the national anthem, prayer and meals.

9. Legionnaires wishing to attach decorations and/or other official insignia to their caps are advised of NEC Resolution No. 58, adopted April 30-May 1, 1964.

For a video covering *The American Legion cap etiquette*, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26ZIWo7V3ow&feature=youtu.be>



# POST PROGRAMS & TRADEMARK PROTECTION

## Protecting the American Legion Emblems

The following text is from “Name and Emblem Use and Protection Guide” available for download at [www.legion.org/publications](http://www.legion.org/publications)

In order to abide by federal trademark protection law and protect the most precious symbols of The American Legion — our more than 40 trademarked images and emblems — there are long-standing rules that apply to posts, post committees, post activities and sponsored programs including American Legion Baseball teams, American Legion Amateur Radio clubs, Sons of The American Legion squadrons and American Legion Riders chapters.



**Background** Years ago, a subsidiary corporation of a department attempted to gain control of an emblem of The American Legion through a state court action. The state court judge granted a temporary restraining order. Immediately upon issuance of the order and well before it expired, The American Legion filed a case in federal court, with the cooperation of the department, and put an end to the matter. The subsidiary was dissolved. This was all done in accordance with Resolution No. 11, adopted by the NEC on May 4-5, 2005.

**Result** Trademark law requires that The American Legion be certain that its name and emblem are used exclusively for those purposes determined by The American Legion. The American Legion has no choice or room to maneuver in this area of the law. However, we do know that once a court rules on a trademark matter, it's too late. One of the tests to show exclusive use and to protect the emblem is “constant and continuous control.”



In this context, departments and posts may have subsidiary corporations or groups such as a trust or foundation if they so desire. The department, or post, needs to request the national adjutant's permission for the group to use the name and/or emblem of The American Legion. Moreover, because of the requirements of the trademark law, such subsidiary programs, trusts or foundations — including Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders — must meet the following requirements:

**1. All officers, directors, trustees, etc. must be named by the post** (usually nominated by the membership but ultimately named and installed by the post). Sons squadrons, Riders chapters and similar activities are often granted the courtesy of holding elections for

program officers. These elections serve only as nominations. The officers must be named or installed by the post commander or general membership.

**2. All vacancies in subsidiary programs must be filled (named) by the post.** The post will name the replacement for any program chairman or officer unable to complete the term of appointment.

**3. The subsidiary program officers must report to the post on program activities no less frequently than monthly.**

These reports must include financial reports. In months without activity, a “Nothing to Report” will serve.

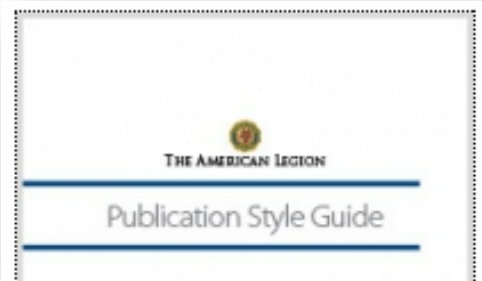


**4. The post treasurer or finance officer must be signatory on all accounts.** These officers are responsible for annual tax reporting and other requirements and must have access to all accounts at all times.

**5. All amendments to program articles of incorporation or by-laws must be approved by the post.** SAL constitutions and bylaws, and ALR constitutions and bylaws — or “standing rules” — are not valid until approved by the sponsoring post.

# NATIONAL TRAINING

## New American Legion Publication Style Guide available



This style guide has been developed to assist American Legion staff and volunteers to be as consistent as possible in all written communications. The ultimate goal is for articles, press releases, social media posts, brochures, booklets and other published material to have a uniform style. This

booklet does not replace rules and regulations adopted at local posts or individual departments; however, it is designed to offer guidance as to established norms, and is highly recommended for use at every level of the organization.

Sections include quick tips; the use of abbreviations, acronyms and capitalization; titles; and military terms and ranks. The style guide can be downloaded at: [www.legion.org/publications](http://www.legion.org/publications).

## Leadership, Education And Training

### **The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC)** *2 hour training module*



Is your post ready to support your community in times of crisis? Are your members able to provide real-time support to local first responders and fellow Legion Family members?

Learn about TALARC – The American Legion Amateur Radio Club - and the opportunities for membership growth under this new and dynamic program. Students will learn how to incorporate “ham” radio as a new post program supporting disaster preparedness and emergency response, Boy Scouts, STEM courses in local schools, National Emergency Fund (NEF), or simply as a new and fun activity for post membership.

LEAD offers more than 30 different training classes, usually two hours in length, presented by national staff who are subject matter experts. A new cap/lapel pin will be presented to each participant who completes, at the minimum, eight hours of LEAD training.

For specific information regarding each individual training module, or LEAD in general, contact your department headquarters.

### **54<sup>th</sup> National Membership Workshop – July 27 – 29, Indianapolis**



The American Legion National Membership Workshop convenes each year in Indianapolis over two days in late July or early August. Department and district American Legion officers, learn, network and share best practices for membership growth and retention. Attendees hear from national leadership and guest speakers, followed by three concurrent breakout sessions, including district commander training, department membership chairman training and long-term membership planning training.

Workshop topics vary depending on trends and priorities. Attendees are prepared to face day-to-day membership opportunities and challenges. The workshop provides essential membership workers with the tools, knowledge and desire to conduct effective American Legion membership activities.

Any American Legion Family member may attend at their own expense. Attendees wishing to attend should advise their respective department adjutants.

Learn more by contacting your department headquarters.