



American Legion Training Newsletter

National Headquarters Internal Affairs Division

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Honor - Serve - Prepare

Setting a Pathway to Success



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Chairman
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Our challenge in The American Legion today is to look ahead and set a “pathway” to reach the veterans of today and tomorrow. This pathway should reach the doorsteps of those we have yet to successfully engage and should connect us to all veterans, their families and their communities.

The obligation to serve has grown due to the impact of issues effecting today’s military service

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- *Honor those who served before*
 - *Serve those here today*
 - *Prepare for those who are yet to serve*
-

members. For us to successfully create this pathway, a change is needed.

We need anchor points to navigate this change. Let me suggest three:

1. Connect With and

Engage all veterans.

Develop tools to reach veterans based on their needs and desires, then engage them through comprehensive mentoring.

2. Train and Educate

our veterans by reinforcing our basic principles and values targeted to Blue Cap Legionnaires, with training available to all.

3. Empower our

Members to expand the impact of our service to veterans, families, communities and nation.

As a team, we can develop and demonstrate best practices to make The

American Legion better. By accomplishing this we will honor those who served before; serve those who are here today, and prepare for those who are yet to serve.

This newsletter is designed to address best practices, ideas and training that every Legionnaire needs to know, from mentoring to setting goals for the future.

This periodic, Legionnaire-driven newsletter, produced by the Internal Affairs Division, will highlight new training resources becoming available in 2018 and beyond. It will also feature training initiatives of posts, districts, departments and individuals throughout The American Legion.

We need your submissions! Send your training ideas and articles to **train@legion.org**.

Mentoring Our Future Leaders



Chad Woodburn,
Membership Director,
Department of Illinois,
U.S. Navy veteran

As I travel, I hear many Legionnaires say, *“I was asked to step into this role to help. They threw me the keys and I haven’t seen them since.”*

Have you encountered this yourself? Is this an effective way to build our organization? Noted, not all posts and districts operate like this but the experience is probably more common than we’d like to admit. We can reverse this trend by pushing to keep mentoring an essential part of our operations.

Throughout our history, The American Legion has developed great leaders to serve from the post to national levels. These leaders are the backbone of our existence. A key

component to their success has been the presence of effective mentors in their development. Posts and districts starving for new leaders sometimes act too quickly to replace a leader without training them. Developing and mentoring a leader can be the difference between a success and failure.

Mentoring is not a one-time event. It takes time, commitment and some effort. Here are some ideas on mentoring a potential leader.

First, equip them with the available tools to use as references in your absence. Provide them a copy of essential manuals and show them how to use them. Always set a person up for success! Try and stack the deck as much as possible in their favor.

Have the member complete **The American Legion Basic Training**, www.legion.org/alei. This updated version of the previous American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI). This course is full of new information not previously covered.

MENTOR

[ˈmɛn, tɒr, ˈmɛn, tər]

VERB

mentoring (present participle)

advise or train (someone, especially a younger colleague).

Many of our post and district leaders, with two years or fewer in the organization, have not been trained on basic American Legion history, programs and values. This valuable course gets all members up to speed on information regarding our organization!

Even experienced Legionnaires will learn something new and refresh prior training.

Mentoring Our Future Leaders

Next, If you have been doing the same job for 20 years and want to quit, one more year spent training your replacement, allows for successful transitions. During the transition year, continue to mentor them for success by introducing them to district officers and department personnel. Give them the opportunity to ask questions, while

making contacts and

Most technology needs an

General George S. Patton, “Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.”

connections to help them in their roles.

update or two to continue to improve and advance.

Finally, be available to them for a while until they feel comfortable in the position. Let them develop and implement new ideas.

Effective mentoring helps ensure we continue to grow great leaders for our next 100 years. Keep it part of your plan!

The Mentorship Of American Legion Leadership: A Case Study

An important message to American Legion leaders at every level, regardless of war era, is that mentorship of young leaders is critical to the future of the

Legion to find ways to keep serving and leading their communities, states and nation after discharge or, in the case of many of our younger members, while still actively serving in uniform.



organization. It's especially important now as younger veterans look to The American

Read THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE Editor Jeff Stoffer's account of a very successful mentoring relationship between **Josh Clement**, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran and full-time active Army National Guard reservist, and his mentor, American Legion National Executive Committeeman **Merv Gunderson**. Both are Legionnaires from the Department of Montana.

<https://www.legion.org/dispatch/235540/mentorship-american-legion-leadership>



National Resources

Stay updated on American Legion training

Training in The American Legion has taken on a new focus and the national website reflects that renewed focus. Among the available resources:

Topics covered are:

- ❖ Basic Training
- ❖ Americanism Conference
- ❖ Digital Media Workshop
- ❖ National American Legion College
- ❖ Service Officer Training
- ❖ National Membership Workshop
- ❖ Leadership Education And Development
- ❖ How to Write a Resolution
- ❖ Communications Tools
- ❖ How to Charter a Post
- ❖ Membership Recruitment
- ❖ Trophies & Awards Manual

Check out new content at www.legion.org/training



LEAD offers more than 30 different training classes, ideal for post, district, and department training conferences or Legion colleges. For specific information regarding any training module, or LEAD in general, contact your department headquarters or ia@legion.org.