



## **How to prepare a NEW MEMBER GET ACQUAINTED AND WELCOME PACKAGE**

**WHY?** Most of our new members are initiated and we seldom see them again. Maybe they have only joined to play darts and have a cheaper beer. After a year, perhaps two, they no longer renew their membership.

We wonder why members do not get involved and participate in Legion activities, or why they don't attend General Meetings, or become interested in the leadership positions. Much of this is because we don't get them off to a good start. They are not born with the knowledge about Legion and how it operates. They don't know about the good work the Legion does for the veterans and the community, and the benefits to them becoming an active, loyal and well informed member.

The hostility we find in many branches is due in great part, because members are not well informed and are therefore not proud of their Legion membership or the Organization they belong to.

Therefore, it is an important role of the Membership Chairman along with the Leadership & Development Chairman to have a **NEW MEMBER GET-ACQUAINTED AND WELCOME PACKAGE**.....

Each branch will be different on how it puts together this package. The following are a few recommendations. You can make your own additions according to your branch culture.

1. **Plan a tour of your Legion Branch.** New members will not necessarily know where everything is, where they can go and places that are for authorized persons only, such as behind the bar etc. Include outside of the building also. Explain who looks after the building, inside and out, and briefly describe what needs to be done to take care of the property.  
  
**Explain the Safety Rules – Fire Plan** and review the **Branch House Rules.** It's amazing how many members just expect everything to happen, they do not realize that volunteers and perhaps paid staff are needed to take care of everything.
2. **Prepare a brief history of your branch.** If you don't already have one, this could be a good exercise for a small committee to research and put together.
3. **Show a copy of the Legion Organization Chart** and explain where the Branch fits into the organization, and the reporting line. ie: branch > Zone > District > Provincial Command > Dominion Command. Reporting is always done from secretary to secretary. Decisions for the organization are made at Conventions at each level. This is all in the little Welcome Booklet you can get free of charge from Dominion Command. Give every new member a copy.

4. **Provide the new member with a welcome kit.** This could start with a simple plastic bag to carry everything in, or a dual-pocket folder to look more professional.
5. **Provide the new member with a copy of the following:**
  - Provincial By-Laws & Branch Regulations
  - Branch House Rules
  - Latest Branch Newsletter (if one is published)
  - List of current Branch Executive names and their positions.
  - New Member Welcome Book (from Dominion Command)
  - Copy of the Membership Oath
  - Copy of "Responsibilities of members" (see attached)
  - Copy of the description of the Legion Dress (see attached). Explain that the Legion Dress is optional, but all members are entitled to wear it. The Legion Uniform is complete and must not be mixed with other apparel. Review the wearing of lapel pins, what is allowed and what is not (Ritual Protocol & Awards Manual)
  - List of Terms of Reference for Standing and Optional Standing Committees
  - Membership Pin (upon initiation)
  - Membership Card (upon initiation)

**Optional:** A Branch Pin, A Branch Ribbon, A Branch pen, a Welcome Letter, the Poppy Bookmark with the In Flanders Fields Poem

6. **Describe the Election process** and the elected offices and explain that these form the Executive Committee (management team) for the term elected and they are responsible for managing the policies, by-laws and administration of the branch.
7. **Branch Information:** Make sure the new member has the correct Branch Name and Number, along with the address and telephone number. (Branch Business card) Remind them that they must notify the Branch Membership Chairman of any change of address otherwise this will affect receipt of the Legion Magazine, Branch Newsletters and notices.
8. Tell the new member what the **Branch Operating Hours** are, and office hours if they are different. Advise them when the General Meetings are held.
9. Give information on the **Legion Websites and branch website if you have one.** Most people are computer literate these days and these avenues are an excellent way to gather information and stay up to date with the organization.
10. Review with the new member, **the initiation process** and give them a copy of the OATH to read from, along with the installing officer. (Optional: have all members recite the Oath along with the new members to renew their Oath.)
11. Make sure the **Initiation Ceremony** is done properly and with dignity and that the Initiating Officer(s) and the Sgt. at Arms know their roles. Make sure all the emblems are in place for the ceremony. Everything on this is in the Ritual Awards and Protocol Manual. Work with your Branch Secretary.

12. Ensure that the new member understands that the organization is run by volunteers, encourage them to get involved and attempt to find out what they would be interested in, then introduce them to the appropriate Committee Chairman to get them started. We are a non-profit organization and receive no funding from anywhere. The Branch raises its own funds through volunteer work, to maintain the Legion Branch and its programs
13. Offer the new member assistance with anything he/she wants to know and how he/she can get information when needed. And, of course, make sure the new member knows when the General Meetings are, and what usually happens at General Meetings.
14. You are now well on your way to making a new member welcome. Make sure they are contacted on a regular basis. Some branches have an email contact list, to keep people up to date with what is happening at the branch. Ask them if they want to be included on that lists. Remember, the member's information, including their Service Number are private and confidential under the Privacy Act and you can only publish their information, with their written permission.

Be creative and put yourself into the imaginary position of being a new member - think of what the new member may need to know. Take good care of your members and especially the new members by being friendly and informative and get them involved.

Pat Smith  
Provincial Leadership Development Chairman

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