MEMBERSHIP/RETENTION

OBJECTIVE: To provide useful information regarding proven techniques in recruiting and retaining members in Idaho’s Veterans of Foreign Wars.

BACKGROUND: The Department of Idaho is not unique in having struggles to maintain our dwindling membership roles and attract those new members to provide for the future. The current economic climate, coupled with the rapid loss of our WW11 and senior Korean conflict population are factors to be dealt with. On the positive side we have a whole new era and recruiting base of eligible prospects in our “Citizen Soldiers” and regular military members currently serving our Country.

MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS:

- Lack of motivation to increase Post membership.
- Inability to process new member’s expeditiously by electronic means.
- Lack of training for those Comrades willing and eager to recruit

RED FLAGS FOR POST’ S THAT MAY NEED ATTENTION:

- Post’s with zero new or reinstated members on MEMSTATS
- Post’s needing few new members for 100% on 1 July each year.
- Post’s with Officer’s without Electronic Mail
- Post’s failing to provide timely reports to District/Department
- Post’s reaching 100% , but failing to continue to recruit new members
- Post’s with one or more of the above who fail to request assistance.

SUGGESTED POLICY FOR SUCCESS:

- Implement a Department Membership team consisting of:

  a. Membership Chairman

  Responsible directly to the Department Commander for the implementation, operation, and supervision of the team.

  b. Chief Recruiter/Trainer

  Assist the Department in training designated District representatives on recruiting techniques, membership processing through OMS, and retention procedures.

  c. District Membership Chairman
Identified by the District Commander as the point of contact for each District for all matters relating to membership productivity of the District.

**d. Post Membership Chairman**

Identified by the Post Commander, as the primary point of contact for issues regarding the recruiting, processing, and retention of Post members, including Chairing the Post Membership Committee.

**e. Necessary tools for each member of the Membership Team:**

- Business cards complete with name, title, and contact info including email, address, and phone number

- Computer access to Department Post membership rosters (viewing only)

- Ability to communicate electronically and other means with any member of the Team to facilitate inter-post transfers, report deaths, and other necessary membership related issues.

- Receive timely notification of contact information from the Department Membership Chairman/Chief Recruiter for any new/reinstated member to Department DAL/MAL Post 15013 residing in Post/s area of jurisdiction.

- Established rapport with the local media including TV, Radio and Newspapers.

**TEN RECRUITING TACTICS/IDEAS**

1. Every Post member should know that he/she is a valued recruiter and responsible to assist as they are able in the Post/District/Department recruiting effort.

2. Business Cards – highly effective – essential tool in promoting your availability to assist any potential prospect.

   a. See a veteran license plate, military decal, bumper sticker on a vehicle in any parking lot. Write a short note like “Thank you for your service” and sign it on the back of the card before placing on the windshield.

   b. Be ready to pass out a card and if possible, take the contact info for each and every person you meet with an interest and/or eligible for the VFW you visit with.

3. Always have extra VFW applications in each vehicle and with you when possible. Always fill them out on the spot or get the contact info before you pass them
Follow-up is essential. Just handing out an application rarely results in membership.

4. Always wear something noting your affiliation in the Military and/or the VFW. This makes it easy to break the ice with a stranger... Post/District/Dept. Officers should display their positions with the VFW with magnetic decals on their vehicles if possible.

5. Strike up friendly conversations with any obvious veteran with questions that will elicit a response regarding their eligibility (Blueprinting) for the VFW. After determining they are potentially eligible ask: “What VFW Post do you belong to?” You will be surprised how many new members report that they have never been asked that question. Always assume that they are – and if not, that they will join!

6. Know your product...What does the VFW offer the person you are talking to or his son/daughter overseas in a combat zone. There is always a good answer for every reason a prospect gives for not joining - learning the answers comes with time. Role play with your comrades!

7. Personalities play a vital role in recruiting. You blueprint a prospective member and can’t “close” the sale, pass the info you have to a fellow member and let him/her give it a try.

8. Everyone has a DBM (Dominant Buying Motive) find out what that is and you have a new member. It could be finances, it could be how much time they expect to have to dedicate to meetings etc., it could be fear of being rejection by members, etc.

9. Believe that there is no valid reason for you or your Post not to achieve your membership goal, and set that goal one step higher than you can imagine. Why should you believe this? Because it is true!! Just when you think every person in your area has been contacted, another will appear if you watch.

10. Attitude will dictate success every time. If you don’t have fun, or lack the competitive spirit to recruit new blood for your Team, your team will suffer and others will have to work harder.

**Remember!** Virtually every person you meet is a potential resource for membership. They either are eligible veterans, married to one, have children who are, or know someone that is. This is true for our VFW, Ladies and Men’s Auxiliary alike!