



Department of Texas Historian Guide



This document aids Post Historians in assuming the responsibilities for their positions at the Post level.

**Department of Texas
Historian - Al Alford**

The American Legion

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2 SECTION I – POST HISTORIAN ROLE

2.1 PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for Department of Texas historians to maximize their effective in documenting the historical records of the post.

2.2 NATIONAL HISTORIAN

The National Historian is responsible for Legion history and helps department and post historians coordinate, unify and promote their work. The national historian is assisted by the organization's librarian and archivist.

2.3 DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS HISTORIAN

The Department Historian keeps an accurate history of the principal events pertaining to the Department, Posts and members thereof, and perform such other duties as may be assigned to the Department Historian by the Department Commander and the Department Executive Committee.

2.4 POST HISTORIAN

The Post Historian is responsible for the individual records and incidents of the post and post members. The Post Historian is given the responsibility of preserving and compiling the records of the post. There should be close and effective cooperation between the adjutant who works with the records on matters of current interest and the Historian who works with matters of historical matter.

The Post Historian:

- Work closely with all Post Officers to compile and preserve records of the post
- Prepare annual Post narrative history and yearbook and file with the post records
- Attends post functions and document events with written notes and photographs.
- Charged with individual records & incidents of Post and Post members,

The Historian keeps in touch with the Department Historian and submit a report to the Department Historian just before the department convention. The Historian performs such other duties that properly pertain to the office as may be determined by the post or the executive committee.

The Historian should deposit whatever is printed concerning the post in the local and state libraries, the department archives and the post files. The Post Historian



should attend Department conventions and keep in touch with other Post Historians. The office of Historian is of growing importance. It is a suitable position in which a Past Post Commander may serve. Some helpful suggestions for the Post Historian to become involved are the Post Yearbook, Narrative History, and the Annual Department/National American Legion Oratorical Contest.

2.5 TEXALPA MEMBERSHIP

It is highly recommended for post historians to join the Texas American Legion Press Association (TXALPA). The purposes of TXALPA is to foster publications and advance the standards and practices of communications within The American Legion, Department of Texas in the Department, Divisions, Districts, and Posts, and in their Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, or affiliated organizations as may be represented by the membership.



Membership: Membership in TEXALPA is open to Public Relations Officers, Publicity Committee Chairpersons, and staff members of publications of American Legion organizations at all levels, their Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion organizations, and to other persons closely allied with public relations, publications, and news services of The American Legion, provided no person shall be eligible for TEXALPA membership unless he/she is a member in good standing in The American Legion, Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, or affiliated organizations.

TXALPA dues are \$5.00 per year. The membership year runs from Sept. 1 - Aug. 31 of each year. Recommend you pay your dues at the Department convention for TXALPA and NALPA (\$15).

The purpose of TXALPA is carried out through specific objectives:

- a. To promote understanding, cooperation and an exchange of ideas among members.
- b. To promote the development and application of improved methods and programs of communications.
- c. To demonstrate the practical value of effective communication and public relations, both internal and external.
- d. To promote the training and development of individual members through the collection and dissemination of information of value and interest to the members.
- e. To encourage the professional development of members.



- f. To assist in promoting the purposes and programs of The American Legion.
- g. To act as the voice of TEXALPA membership before The Department of Texas, The American Legion.
- h. To strive for the highest ethical standards in carrying out these objectives and the National American Legion Press Association; and to consider legislative proposals affecting publications or mailing of the publications.

2.6 NALPA

The purpose of the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) shall be to foster publications and advance the standards and practices of communication within all levels of The American Legion Family. NALPA was established to facilitate communications, from the national organization to the post level, within The American Legion. Through a network of active members, NALPA fulfills its mission by encouraging idea exchanges among members; promoting the development of local communications; advancing training through information dissemination; enhancing professional development; promoting the Legion's goals; and acting as a voice of the association's membership.



Link to NALPA - <https://www.legion.org/nalpa>

Historians as members of NALPA can submit for several awards. Entries must be postmarked by May 1, of the current year, and be accompanied by a copy of a current NALPA membership card. The following NALPA Awards include:

1. Category III - A Al Weinberg Award: Larger Post - Over 750 members
2. Category III - B Al Weinberg Award: Posts - 250 - 750 members
3. "Category IV Jack R.C. Cann Award: Smaller Posts, Units, Squadrons "
4. Category V - B Mary B. Howard Award: All Other Websites
5. Category VII - B Robert L. Morrill Award: All Other Social Network Sites
6. Category VIII - A Visual Medial Award: Photographs
7. Facebook
8. Twitter
9. Category VIII - B Visual Medial Award: Videography
10. Category VIII - C Visual Medial Award: Graphic Designs



2.6.1 Join NALPA

When you become a National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) member, you will have quick access to National Headquarters communication resources as well as members-only content and advice for using these resources. You will be connected to a time-honored and respected communications team that values and rewards those who spread the word about The American Legion in communities around the world.

The membership year runs from Sept. 1 - Aug. 31 of each year. Annual dues are \$15.

2.6.1 NALPA Departments

A department press association is a subsidiary of the National American Legion Public Association (NALPA). NALPA is not permitted to accept dues for any department press association. Departments that have established a press association may collect their department press association and NALPA dues together.

NALPA dues are sent to: **NALPA, c/o Media and Communications Division, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**. Include with your check a transmittal list of names and addresses of those covered by the payment. NALPA membership cards will be mailed as payment is received and recorded throughout the year. **The NALPA year is Sept. 1 to Aug. 31 of each year.**

There is no PUFL membership for NALPA.



3 DEPARTMENT HISTORY AWARDS

3.1 HISTORY AWARDS GUIDELINES

Guidance for formulating and submitting History awards for the Department of Texas are based on the guidelines contained the "Post Officer's Guide Manual of Ceremonies". Do a thorough review the Post Officers Guide, Section 4 for the national standards by which history books will be judged.

3.2 DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS HISTORY AWARDS

All entries must be submitted by 10am on Friday of the Department Convention. Plaques will be presented at the Department Convention:

- Post Yearbook
- Post Narrative History
- District Narrative History

3.3 DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS HISTORY AWARDS DUE DATE

All entries must be submitted by 10am on Friday of the Department Convention. Plaques to the Department Historian at the Department Convention:

- **Note:** First place winners at the Department level will be submitted to National Headquarters for judging in the National Contests
- **There is no national contest for District Narrative** – therefore, these books will be returned after department convention.
- Other History Books will be returned to the Post/District with a critiques sheet on suggested changes to improve the opportunity to win the History Contests.



4 THE ONE-YEAR POST HISTORY NARRATIVE

This outline has been developed to be helpful to the historian. It would be advantageous to check any compilation against this outline to include as much of the material suggested here as possible.

4.1 PART 1 - FORMAT

(1) Cover A standard three-ring binder, or similar type, to accommodate 8 ½ x 11 bond paper must be used with The American Legion emblem centered (left to right) on the cover with the name and number of the post. Binders with embossed American Legion emblems are available through Emblem Sales.

Each book is not to exceed three inches between the front and back cover. If you submit two or more binders, you must indicate on the cover and title page the wording "Volume 1," "Volume 2," etc.

(2) Name/address of compiler: The full name and complete mailing address of the history author should appear on the inside front cover in the lower left corner. It will be neatly typed, or computer generated and centered on a 3x5 index card.

(3) Title page: This will be the first page facing the reader as the history book is opened. It should be centered on the page (left to right, top to bottom) and in a logical arrangement with double spacing or more and contain as a minimum the following:

History of
(Name of post) **Post No.** _____ (Number of post)
The American Legion
(city and state)
For 20_____ to 20_____
By (person compiling history)

(4) Introduction: Every history should include a forward or introduction setting forth the reasons for the organization and may include:

- Mention of the national organization's founding with a tie-in of the department and post. (See www.legion.org/history or "Capsule History of The American Legion," listed later, as a possible beginning, and see your department historian for a capsule history of the department.)
- Selection of the post name. If named for a departed comrade or comrades, include a short biographical sketch of their lives and include available photographs.



- If possible, a brief résumé of your community’s history, especially the part played by that locality in furnishing men and women during wars and conflicts.
- A photograph of the post and street address, if your post has a post home.
- Acknowledgment of any assistance or contributions used in compiling the history.

(5) Table of contents: This is a “must” for any good history, which will list the pages of the chapters and appendices and should be in the front of the history immediately following the introduction. If there is more than one volume, each volume should contain a complete table of contents.

(6) Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion: Identifying the principal aims of The American Legion, the preamble is a fitting introduction and should follow the table of contents. It should be centered on the page and spaced in a neat and logical arrangement. Multicolored 8½ x 11 prints of the preamble may be purchased through Emblem Sales.

(7) Index: The alphabetical index is a “must” for any good history. This comprehensive index of names, places and events mentioned in your history, with page references, shall be at the end of the history following the appendices. Be sure to include every person and activity in the history. If a person has a title, put that in with a cross-reference to the name. If there is more than one volume, each volume should have a complete index.

(8) Page numbering Do not forget to number the pages. Be consistent in placing page numbers, either at top or bottom of pages. Numbering will start with the title page.

Order of page numbering The above pages should appear in order with Arabic numerals or Roman numerals:

Title Page 1 or i
Introduction 2 or ii
Table of Contents 3 or iii
Preamble 4 or iv

List each page in consecutive order using Arabic numerals. If you use Arabic numerals, the next number will follow your last number (e.g. if the preamble is 4, the first page of the history is 5). If you use Roman numerals, then the first page of the history is 1 (e.g. if the Preamble is iv, then the first page of the history is 1).

4.2 CHAPTERS

Following the preamble, the chapters may be sequenced in this suggested manner:



- (1) **Chapter 1 – Roster of Post Officers** Photographs of current post officers should be included in the history. If it is not possible to obtain photographs of every officer, make a special effort to include photographs of the commander and the adjutant.
- (2) **Chapter 2 – Roster of Post Committee Chairmen** Include a roster of post chairs with photographs, if available.
- (3) **Chapter 3 – One-Year Post History** This should be a one-year post chronicle. The history is to cover one year, beginning with the installation of officers, up to and including the installation of the next year's officers. This timeframe may vary in some departments. This is the most important chapter in your history, and must be as complete as possible with a graphic account of the post and its activities. The historian should relate in narrative form, and in chronological order, all important events and programs conducted during the year by the post or events conducted jointly with the Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, or county, district, department and national levels. (Remember, this is the post's history, not the department or National Headquarters.)

Historians may use information from the minutes of meetings as a basis for information about the post's activities. Then contact members who were chairs of the committees for further details. Include anything that you deem a special attribute of the post, setting it apart from all others.

Do not use any photographs or newspaper articles in this chapter of your narrative history. However, photographs may be included in dedicated committee chapters and newspaper articles in the appendices.

- (4) **Other chapters:** While many American Legion programs and post projects are of a continuing nature and may run through several administrations, such activities might be better covered in a separate chapter following those devoted to the individual administration.

The activities of all standing post committees should be given considerable coverage, particularly if one committee performs an outstanding service. You may want to include each committee in separate chapters:

Americanism, Membership, Boys State, School Award Medals, Oratorical Contest, Junior Shooting Sports, Baseball, Children & Youth, Sons of The American Legion, patriotic observances, post parties, Boy Scout troops and other sponsored groups, to name a few. Collect and record for posterity all post activities.

Including photographs in the committee chapters adds to the attractiveness of the entry. Give attention to the arrangement of illustrations in relation to the text and use of captions (identification) under each photograph.

- (5) **APPENDICES:** Appendices are pages of statistical data that should be carried at the end of the history, following the chapters and before the index, and might include:



- Organization of the post with a list of charter members and dates of temporary and permanent charters.
- A roster of all past post commanders and adjutants since the charter date with their years served.
- If the post is not too large, add a roster of members listed in alphabetical order. This may include, after each member's name, the member's branch of service or the date he or she joined the post.
- A record of the post's citations and awards received, as well as awards presented by the post.
- A list of members who served as delegates to the national and department conventions, or national and department officers and commission and committee appointees, including the county and district.
- ••Complete records of annual elections showing all nominations and votes received by various nominees.
- ••The post's membership standings by year since the charter date; a list of new members for the current year; a list of life members and Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) members; "In Memoriam," also known as Taps or Post Everlasting, listings for the current year; the post's constitution and by-laws; the annual post budget; and any other important statistics.

4.3 PART II - GRAPHIC ACCOUNT / READABILITY

The emphasis should be on the narrative rather than the statistical style of presentation. Use your imagination and be original in thought and presentation.

A high degree of literary style is not essential to success, but the method of presentation should be pleasing to the general reader. The reader must be able to follow the post's story without difficulty or confusion.

The most common error is in not writing in the third person. This means you should write as an observer, not as a participant. The history should be written as a chronological and detailed account of events arranged in order of time without any analysis or interpretation.

Statistics are of great value but should be included in the appendix rather than being placed indiscriminately throughout the book.

4.4 PART III - ILLUSTRATIONS

All photographs must be identified by occasion, individuals, date and place of event with the exception of individual photographs of post officers and chairs (name and title/committee only). Provide left-to-right subject identification, and if necessary, by row.



Be sure all photographs are clear, as blurry prints will not aid materially and will take away from rather than enhance your history. Proper arrangement with the text is a must to achieve an eye-catching history book. Avoid using pictures with alcohol or cigarettes in them.

4.5 PART IV - JUDGES OPTION / ORIGINALITY

Under this category, judges will consider a number of qualities or items of content in the history that are not readily cataloged under the preceding headings. Some histories, for example, have a complete roster of members. In other words, judges will determine features that make a history especially attractive or useful, i.e. a spine label, etc. By the same token, if inaccuracies come to the judges' attention, they would have a negative scoring effect.

4.6 FORMAT SUGGESTIONS

- Use plain and unruled 8½ x 11 white and/or colored bond paper for your history binder filler.
- The history should be typed or computer generated on one side of the paper using black ribbon or print. Single sheets of paper may be placed back-to-back using transparent plastic protective covers.
- Margins are a must for neatness, readability and standardization. Use a 1-inch margin on all sides (except one inch from the perforation side of paper, if necessary).
- Where feasible, provide double-spaced copy on pages with a three- to six-space indentation for new paragraphs and single-spaced lines for photograph identifications.
- If you have any doubt of the spelling of a word, use a dictionary. Also double-check the spelling of all names.
- Some entries would have a better chance in the contests as a yearbook, even though they were submitted as narratives. Consider your entry. Is it a narrative or a yearbook? There is a difference. Read the outlines for each category.

4.7 NATIONAL JUDGING STANDARDS

You will note that Part I, Part II, Part III and Part IV, as identified, coincide with the categories of the national judging standards. The "etc." listed after several of the scoring elements shows that there are additional requirements necessary to achieve total score points. It is suggested that you re-examine the outline, using the standards as a checklist, before submitting your contest entry.



PART I – FORMAT (40 POINTS)		
(1) COVER Standard three-ring binder for 8½ x 11 bond paper, emblem, etc.	(5)	
(2) NAME/ADDRESS OF COMPILER Inside front cover/lower left corner, etc.	(3)	
(3) TITLE PAGE Centered in logical arrangement/double spacing plus, etc.	(5)	
(4) INTRODUCTION Post background, tie-in with department and national, community, etc.	(5)	
(5) TABLE OF CONTENTS Page reference of chapters, appendices, etc.	(5)	
(6) PREAMBLE Includes Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion, etc.	(2)	
(7) INDEX Comprehensive alphabetical listing at end of history book, etc.	(10)	
(8) PAGE NUMBERING Table of contents, chapters, appendices and index, etc.	(5)	
Subtotal	(40)	
PART II – GRAPHIC ACCOUNT/READABILITY (30 POINTS)		
(1) NARRATIVE Rather than a statistical style of presentation	(10)	
(2) PRESENTATION Chronological order and in third person, not to detract from general readability	(10)	
(3) CLEAR/GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT Pleasing to the general reader	(10)	
Subtotal	(30)	
PART III – ILLUSTRATIONS (10 POINTS)		
(1) IDENTIFICATION All photographs must have names, occasions, sources, dates, etc. Provide proper left-to-right identifications.	(5)	
(2) CLEAR PHOTOGRAPHS Blurry or foggy prints detract from presentation, etc.	(5)	
Subtotal	(10)	
PART IV – JUDGES OPTION / ORIGINALITY (10 POINTS)		
(1) JUDGES WILL CONSIDER a number of qualities or items of content in the history not readily cataloged under the preceding headings.		
(2) JUDGES WILL DETERMINE features that make a history especially attractive or useful as a source of reference and historic value.	(10)	
TOTAL POINTS OF ENTRY	(90)	

4.8 POST SCRIPTS

Consider making a copy of your entry in the event it should become a national contest winner. With your permission, it will be retained in the library archives of The American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis for visitors to view.

In the event that your post records are missing and there is no history, the post historian may search the local newspaper files and interview past commanders, adjutants and older members. Many important post events can be found using these methods.

Information about the post charter can be obtained by writing to the Charter Clerk, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

The serious post historian will find informative and interesting any one of the following published histories about The American Legion: Michael J. Bennett's



“When Dreams Come True: The GI Bill and the Making of Modern America” (Brassey’s, 1996); Thomas A. Rumer’s “The American Legion: An Official History” (M. Evans, 1990); Raymond Moley’s “The American Legion Story,” (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1966); Richard Jones’ “A History of The American Legion” (Bobbs-Merrill, 1946); and Marquis James’ “A History of The American Legion” (William Green, 1923).

Where possible, use digital voice recorders or video cameras to record oral histories and interviews of American Legion post founders and leaders to capture firsthand information about the post’s history.



5 THE ONE-YEAR POST YEARBOOK

A post yearbook is a pictorial history of the post's annual activities. Remember, though, that this is a permanent record that will be seen by others for years to come, so the suggested outline should be followed as closely as possible. It would be advantageous to check any compilation against this outline so as to include as much of the material suggested here as possible.

5.1 PART 1 - FORMAT

(1) Cover The size of the yearbook cover must not be smaller than a standard three-ring binder or larger than 12x15 inches, with The American Legion emblem centered (left to right) on the cover with the post's name and number. Each book is not to exceed three inches between the front and back cover.

If two or more binders are submitted, you must indicate on the cover and title page the wording "Volume 1," "Volume 2," etc. Acceptable yearbook binders and standard three-ring binders with the American Legion emblem embossed on the cover are available from Emblem Sales

(2) Name/address of compiler: The full name and complete mailing address of the history author should appear on the inside front cover in the lower left corner. It will be neatly typed, or computer generated and centered on a 3x5 index card.

(3) Title page: This will be the first page facing the reader as the history book is opened. It should be centered on the page (left to right, top to bottom) and in a logical arrangement with double spacing or more and contain as a minimum the following:

Yearbook of
(Name of post) **Post No.** _____ (Number of post)
The American Legion
(city and state)
For 20_____ **to** 20_____
By (person compiling history)

(4) Introduction: Every history should include a forward or introduction setting forth the reasons for the organization and may include:

- Mention of the national organization's founding with a tie-in of the department and post. (See www.legion.org/history or "Capsule History of The American Legion," listed later, as a possible beginning, and see your department historian for a capsule history of the department.)



- Selection of the post name. If named for a departed comrade or comrades, include a short biographical sketch of their lives and include available photographs.
- If possible, a brief résumé of your community's history, especially the part played by that locality in furnishing men and women during wars and conflicts.
- A photograph of the post and street address, if your post has a post home.
- Acknowledgment of any assistance or contributions used in compiling the history.

(5) Table of contents: This is a “must” for any good history, which will list the pages of the chapters and appendices and should be in the front of the history immediately following the introduction. If there is more than one volume, each volume should contain a complete table of contents.

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5.2 PART II - CHAPTERS

Following the preamble, the chapters may be sequenced in this suggested manner:

- (1) **Chapter 1 – Roster of Post Officers** Photographs of current post officers should be included in the history. If it is not possible to obtain photographs of every officer, make a special effort to include photographs of the commander and the adjutant.
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Historians may use information from the minutes of meetings as a basis for information about the post's activities. Then contact members who were chairs of the committees for further details. Include anything that you deem a special attribute of the post, setting it apart from all others.

Do not use any photographs or newspaper articles in this chapter of your narrative history. However, photographs may be included in dedicated committee chapters and newspaper articles in the appendices.

- (4) **Other chapters:** While many American Legion programs and post projects are of a continuing nature and may run through several administrations, such activities might be better covered in a separate chapter following those devoted to the individual administration.

The activities of all standing post committees should be given considerable coverage, particularly if one committee performs an outstanding service. You may want to include each committee in separate chapters:

Americanism, Membership, Boys State, School Award Medals, Oratorical Contest, Junior Shooting Sports, Baseball, Children & Youth, Sons of The American Legion, patriotic observances, post parties, Boy Scout troops and other sponsored groups, to name a few. Collect and record for posterity all post activities.



Including photographs in the committee chapters adds to the attractiveness of the entry. Give attention to the arrangement of illustrations in relation to the text and use of captions (identification) under each photograph.

5.3 PART III – JUDGES OPTION/ORIGINALITY

Judges will consider a number of qualities or items of content in the yearbook that are not readily catalogued under the preceding headings. Some yearbooks have features that make them especially attractive, useful and of historic value.

By the same token, if inaccuracies should come to the attention of the judges, they will have a negative scoring effect on your entry.

5.4 NATIONAL JUDGING STANDARDS

You will note that Part I, Part II and Part III, as identified, coincide with the categories of the national judging standards. The “etc.” listed after several of the scoring elements shows that there are additional requirements necessary to achieve total score points. It is suggested that you re-examine the outline, using the standards as a checklist, before submitting your contest entry.



PART I – FORMAT (40 POINTS)		
(1) COVER Size of 12x15 inches, emblem, etc.	(5)	
(2) NAME/ADDRESS OF COMPILER Inside front cover and lower left corner, etc.	(3)	
(3) TITLE PAGE Centered in logical arrangement, double spacing plus, etc.	(5)	
(4) INTRODUCTION Post background, tie-in to department and national, community, etc.	(5)	
(5) TABLE OF CONTENTS Page references covering programs and events	(5)	
(6) PREAMBLE Includes Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion, etc.	(2)	
(7) INDEX Comprehensive alphabetical listing carried at end of yearbook	(10)	
(8) PAGE NUMBERING Carried on post memorabilia pages and index	(5)	
Subtotal	(40)	
PART II – PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES/READABILITY (40 POINTS)		
(1) ARRANGEMENT Systematic and logical arrangement, with material recorded in chronological order. Readers must be able to follow the illustrations (pictures, clippings, copies of programs, tickets, badges, etc.) with little difficulty or confusion.	(20)	
(2) IDENTIFICATION All clippings and/or photographs must have names, occasions, sources, dates, etc., listed to properly identify the subject matter. Provide proper left-to-right identifications.	(10)	
(3) CLEAR PHOTOGRAPHS Blurry or fuzzy prints will detract from presentation	(10)	
Subtotal	(40)	
PART III – JUDGES OPTION/ORIGINALITY (10 POINTS)		
JUDGES WILL CONSIDER a number of qualities or items of content in the yearbook not readily catalogued under the preceding headings. They may determine that some yearbooks include items and features that make them attractive and especially useful.	(10)	
TOTAL POINTS OF ENTRY	(90)	