

Some Observations on Starting a Post Publication

Every American Legion post should have a paper, magazine or bulletin, sent regularly to its membership for the purpose of keeping the membership advised of post and American Legion activities and programs.

This is necessary because no post gets more than a token percentage of its membership out to meetings. Therefore, a letter, bulletin, newspapers or magazine is necessary if the membership is to be informed and to have its interest in the Legion's programs continued or increased. Since individual letters are out of the question because of the time and labor cost, the bulletins or papers is the logical answer. Incidentally, the mailing cost of such bulletins or papers is much less than a letter - if a letter was a possible solution - (which it isn't.)

First of these is personnel. Unless you have an editor and associates who will produce a paper that is so interesting that it will be consistently read, and who will produce a paper that is so interesting that it will be consistently read, and who are willing to put in the time, paper after paper, to get the job done, you may as well call the rest of it off. If the paper is not read, it might as well not be printed in the first place.

Second of these is finances. Money should be provided to pay for the paper, from some source or other. Do NOT depend in advance on selling enough advertising to pay for it. If the paper is worth anything, it is worth what it cost. Make provisions so that these costs will be met; that the funds are appropriated to pay the bills promptly. More papers have started with a bang, then died ignominiously because they "cost too much", than from any other cause. Actually, the real reason in most cases was because the operation was not adequately financed at the start.

What will the paper cost? That will depend on a lot of things. Here are some of them:

- \ How many copies will be required to reach your mailing list?

- \ How much postage will it require to mail each issue? (You can save money on mailing if you take advantage of the proper entry and get the required permit.) Will it be a copy, offset processor a printed (letterpress) publication; what will be its number of pages; what will be the depth and width of the pages?

- \ What will the frequency of the paper? Weekly; monthly; semi-monthly; quarterly?
(Note: In the opinion of this writer, once a month is the least frequently you should mail it. Don't go with a quarterly; it isn't worth what it cost. Twice a month will be required in some cases; there are some papers issued every week. Your

local situation will determine this. However, it would be better to start out with a one-a-month paper and later go to a semi-monthly, than it will to reverse that order.

Content of paper. There will be a lot of material available from your department and from ALNS. However, in my opinion you should take care of your own local American Legion news first. Then, if there is room for outside material, use such appeals to the editorial staff. In handling and preparing local news, do not neglect the personal news items about your members. Nothing can substitute for this sort of news when it comes to building readership for a post paper or bulletin. Folks will read the paper for the personal news and this will expose them to the other material in the paper.