

The American Legion Membership through the Great Depression:

'29 – 794,219;

'30 – 887,754;

'31 – 1,053,909;

'32 – 931,373;

'33 – 769,551;

'34 – 831,681;

'35 – 842,855;

'36 – 956,273;

'37 – 973,841;

'38 – 974,637;

'39 – 1,032,989;

'40 – 1,078,119;

'41 – 1,107,075;

'42 – 1,136,148.

The annual membership dues ranged between \$2 and \$5 in 1933 (with National getting \$1, which amounts to \$16.32 in today's money). In 2008 dollars that translates into annual dues of between \$32.72 (\$2) and \$81.60 (\$5). From the heart of the Great Depression, with dues averaging more then, than they do now (about \$30 nationwide), The American Legion held its own and even grew.

Times are tough – that's true – and yet we have a product to sell that is well worth the money, irrespective of the economy. If we have

people in our Posts who have fallen on hard times, our devotion to mutual helpfulness should guide us in giving those persons assistance to ensure that they keep their membership. Moreover, we need to ensure they know about Temporary Financial Assistance and other benefits of veterans helping veterans.

www.mygibill.org is getting plenty of hits and being constantly updated. Hard copies of the original booklet are available also, and are being reprinted on demand. Let us know if you need them and what your deadline is. There is no cost.

Also, a new DVD about the Heroes to Hometowns program is being reproduced right now by VA&R working with PR. It provides a great rundown on the program and is suitable for showing as either a training film or an informational film – it's got elements of both. It also features some useful feedback Legionnaires involved in the program and beneficiaries affected by the outreach. Each department will be sent 3-5 by Jan. 1, but you may order as many as you can use.

Also, if you go to www.legion.org and click on “Publications, Guides and Resources” (at the bottom of the page, right), and then scroll down to “Membership/Internal Affairs,” and click on the last item, “Guide to Post Training,” you will find a new feature that includes many of the training items that are available from national. These pamphlets, DVDs, and booklets can assist Posts with training or can be used for Department training sessions or colleges. The training DVD for District Commanders is especially useful, I have heard. If you think of other training tools that you could use, don't hesitate to let us know. WE are here to serve YOU. – Dan Wheeler