Orientation, mentorship guide helps onboard veterans

When a new recruit first joins the military, they aren’t simply thrown into uniform and expected to know their role within their respective branch of service. There is a transition period, or an orientation of sorts, better known as boot camp or basic training. There, they learn how to dress and act, their roles and—perhaps most importantly—what is expected of them.

The same approach to acclimating new members to roles and operations of the organization holds true in DAV’s 1,351 Chapters. Mentoring and nurturing new members through orientation provides them with a clear understanding of their Chapter’s mission, history and goals, and the newly released DAV New Member Orientation/Mentoring Guide is a resource tool that Chapter leaders can use to accomplish this.

“The importance of new member orientation cannot be emphasized enough,” said DAV National Membership Director Doug Wells. “When new members are properly informed, they are more likely to feel comfortable with the organization and become actively involved in Chapter activities right away.”

The guide touches on all the important steps of not only implementing the program but how to do so effectively.

“Successful new member orientation does more than inform the member; it inspires and motivates them to be the best DAV member or volunteer they can be,” said Wells. “This pamphlet is intended to help fraternal leaders conduct new member orientation successfully. When new members are properly introduced to DAV, they are more likely to remain involved for years to come.”

The guide touches on numerous important topics, such as the
value of training and who should conduct it, the core curriculum, what a successful orientation looks like, and where to find products and materials.

“The DAV new member orientation/mentoring guide makes a substantial contribution to the continued operation and growth of this organization,” said Tom Dempster, Commander of Chapter 114, Livonia, Mich. “The rewards are great knowing that you can help a veteran and his family in need, and with knowledge, you can produce measurable results. As a new member, you’ll have more knowledge about the DAV organization and what our mission statement is about and how important our legislation is for our injured heroes on Capitol Hill.”

The New Member Orientation Guide was the brainchild of an interim membership committee that was formed to identify the needs of new members and help local Chapter leaders successfully bring in new members.

“When I joined DAV, there was a World War II veteran who mentored me for six months,” said Warren Tobin, Chairman of the Interim Membership Committee and Department of North Dakota Adjutant and Treasurer. “He provided a lot of guidance and encouragement. Each Chapter is a little different, and the New Member Orientation Guide is meant to give each Chapter some tips and some ideas, as this was our opportunity to help our Chapters.”

“How new members are introduced to DAV is important,” said National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. “Their time is their most precious commodity. If we can show them they are making substantive impact through DAV, if they feel like they are encouraged and heard, they’re more likely to get involved. The new members’ sense of belonging is vital to their direction within the organization, and a successful orientation is the first step in this process.”

To download the new member orientation documents, visit
dav.org/membership/members/new-members and log in with your DAV membership number.