American Legion North Carolina District 12

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// district website toolbox

There are always questions about blogs and websites and how they work. Our website is built using WordPress.com no cost website software and hosting. You can get a post domain name for your site for just $15 per year.

There is also a WordPress.com site help center that will take you through the specifics on how things work.

Internet Communications are essential to the growth of your post. It is just that simple. It is the way you inform your community. Your website it their 911 and 411!

- People in your post need to know what is going on and when.
- Members and their families need to see photos of post activities.
- Your community needs to find out about you and what you are doing in their town.
- Families need to quickly find information about veteran's benefits and get help.
- Members need to feel like they are contributing to their post and community.

Getting Started. It costs no money to get setup on the web. All the tools you need are free of charge to your post. Your only cost is for a domain name, if you want to get it. What you need first, however, is an interested person who can write stories. Look for someone who sends out informative email. If they can write an email, this is the job for them. In fact, they will find that it will make their email notices no longer necessary! And, their audience will be beyond the post and local community.

- Blogs are read by service members everywhere, including combat zones.
- Blogs are read by local news bureaus.
- Blogs are linked to by other groups; i.e., Tricare, Durham VA, other posts, newspapers, clubs, etc.
    o Your short story for 30 subscribers may be seen by hundreds, even thousands!

Essential Tools. Besides having a hosted site, you will need a solid word processor (office suite), a post email account, and a photo editor. You also need to ensure that you have the ability to use the same email account if you change ISPs. Recommended:

1. Gmail by Google. Create an account with a post-unique name; i.e., ALPost11NC@gmail.com.
    a. Use the Gmail account to open a Youtube.com account.
    b. Anyone can open the account and transfer the account to a new user later.

2. [Google Apps](#) by Google. An on-line in the cloud storage site and software for your Gmail, a post calendar, sharing post files, and creating on-line forms.
3. [LibreOffice](#) Office Suite. Includes word processor, spreadsheet, presentations and a database.
4. [Picasa by Google](#). Photo cataloger, editor, photo resizer, photo marking, and database.
   a. Open account using your gmail.com username.
   b. Can create videos and slideshows of post activity photos.
5. [Picasa Web Albums](#). On-line storage of post photos. Use to publish slideshows.
   a. Open account using your gmail.com username.
6. [LibreOffice](#) Office Suite. Includes word processor, spreadsheet, presentations and a database.
7. [Skype by Microsoft](#). Communicate by web phone free to other posts. Hold video conferencing,
   a. Get a unique Post telephone number and call to a land line (small cost involved, but worth it). Replaces answering machines.
8. [WordPress.com](#). Publish post news, create a web presence.
   a. Open account using your gmail.com username.
9. [Facebook](#). Smartphones are the rage. Link your web stories to a Post Facebook wall.

Security and Changing Post Blogmaster. An important first step for our posts is to ensure continuity. Get a Gmail account and use it to open the other needed accounts. When you change the blogmaster, you just open the Gmail account and change the primary email user address. The new blogmaster now has access to all other accounts.

Training. Every site listed above, as a resource, has on-line training and a user forum. You also have training available through videos on YouTube.com.

- Individual assistance with WordPress web sites for the district is available from your Sr. Vice Commander. You will need a Skype account so that there are no costs for telephone calls. Many sessions are quite lengthy.
  - Post blogmasters are walked through the essentials of the new post website and how to post new stories, add photos and flesh out the static web pages.
- It will take some work on your part as Post Commander to encourage and motivate your new blogmaster. You will also need to keep the flow of information flowing to him or her.
  - Don't email information, photos or forms to your members. Give it to the blogmaster and let them post it.
    - Have your members subscribe to the post site. They will get an alert on the new posting whenever it is published.
    - You will be saving email file space, too. The files are in the "cloud" and you now point to it. It can be accessed from anywhere.

Building your Legion presence in the local community. Let people know you are active, benevolent and there for the veterans, their families and the youth of your town. Be proud to be an American Legionnaire.