

501st LEGION – TROOPER SURVIVAL GUIDE

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Trooper Survival Guide

Introduction

Welcome to the 501st Legion. You have chosen to become a member of the largest StarWars Imperial Costuming Organizations. Congratulations. This guide will help you understand what you can expect from the Legion and what the Legion expects from you. This book is a compilation of many of the tools and procedures that have been available in various forms on the 501st Legion web site and forums. Where possible we have endeavored to include examples and screen shots.

Kris Kuipers Legion Commanding Officer (2011) TK/RC/SL-6247

[Letter from Albin Johnson, Founder of the 501st Legion](#)

The Mission of the 501st Legion

The 501st Legion also know as “the Legion”, “the 501st”, and “Vader’s Fist” is a **Star Wars** fan club dedicated to celebrating the Star Wars universe through costuming; specifically the costumes and characters of the Stormtrooper and other Imperial forces, as well as non-affiliated villains and denizens. The Legion is an all-volunteer organization formed for the express purpose of bringing together costume enthusiasts under a collective identity within which to operate. The Legion seeks to promote interest in Star Wars through the building and wearing of quality costumes and to facilitate the use of these costumes for Star Wars-related events as well as contributions to the local community through costumed charity and volunteer work.

The Legion recognizes it holds no claim over the costumes and characters it portrays and that their use is a privilege extended by *Lucasfilm Ltd. (LFL)*. The members of the Legion acknowledge and accept that while in costume we represent the Star Wars brand and will do so professionally and responsibly at all times.

Members will find their place within this Mission, and some will go all in on every aspect, while others will focus more on one area than the other. As a Legion we should be championing all of these, while never expecting the same level of depth and reason of every member to be the same as us, or as others. And we should also be doing our best to discourage and NOT allow anyone to be pushed or shamed or expected to be more than they want to be within the Mission.

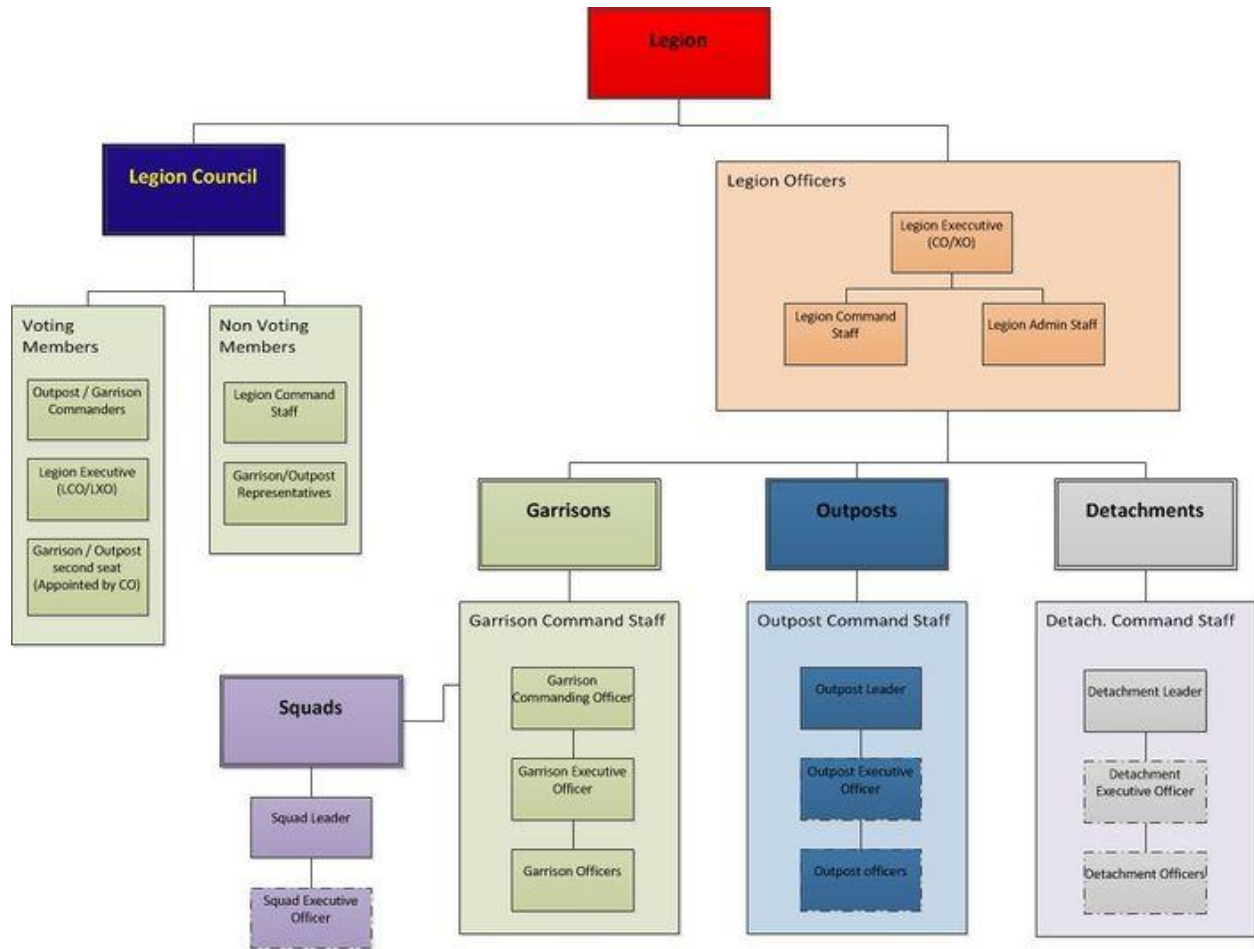
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Organizational Structure

The Legion is organized in the following manner:

- Legion
 - Legion Command
 - Legion Executive Officers
 - Legion Staff Officers
 - Legion Command Staff
 - Legion Council
 - Garrison Council Representatives and Outpost Leaders
- Garrison and Squads
 - Garrison Executive Officers
 - Garrison Staff Officers
 - Garrison Staff
- Outposts
 - Outpost Leader
 - Outpost Staff
- Detachments
 - Detachment Executive Officers
 - Detachment Staff

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Legion Command

The Legion Command is the chief administrative and management group of the 501st Legion. Its roles are encompassed by the elected officers who fill the offices of:

- Founder (permanent):TK-210 Albin Johnson
- Legion Commanding Officer (LCO) - Elected by the general Membership
- Legion Executive Officer (LXO) - Appointed by Legion Commanding Officer
- Legion Membership Officer (LMO) - Appointed by Legion Commanding Officer
- Legion Captain of the Guard (LCOG) - Appointed by Legion Commanding Officer
- Legion Public Relations Officer (LPRO)– Appointed by Legion Commanding Officer
- Legion Merchandise and Branding Officer –(LMBO) Appointed by Legion Commanding Officer
- Legion Web Master (LWM)- Appointed by Legion Commanding Officer
- Legion Charity Representative (LCR)- Appointed by Legion Commanding Officer
- Other Officers and Staff as required or Appointed by Legion Commanding Officer

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Question	Answer
What role do the Legion Officers fill, and how do they help me as a trooper?	<p>LCO: The Legion Commanding Officer is the chief executive and administrative officer of the Legion. The LCO coordinates the Legion as a whole and sets the agenda for the Legion Council.</p> <p>LXO: Assists the LCO with all Duties as assigned</p> <p>LMO: In charge of all things membership related including the approval of new members to the adjudicator of costume types and characters. The LMO are also the primary advocate of the membership with the Legion Council and the Command Staff in matters of membership.</p> <p>LCOG: Works with the LCO/LXO/ Garrison Commanders to resolve issues that are not able to be resolved on the local level. The LCOG office is the final authority on most disciplinary matters.</p> <p>LPRO: Responsible for the public face of the Legion. Manages publications, media, and pod casts. The LPRO are responsible for celebrity, charity, press, and fan group relations.</p> <p>LMBO: Manages and maintains the 501st Legion brand as it relates to club merchandise, outside use of the 501st images, logos, and material. The also LMBO approves monitors and oversees the creation, sale or distribution of 501st branded merchandise.</p> <p>LWM: Coordinates, manages and maintains the Legion's WEB presence, and IT forums, tools, and architecture.</p> <p>LCR: Coordinates, manages and maintains the Legion's relationships with charitable organizations, promotes (with the assistance of the LPRO) the Legion's charitable activity and assists the Garrison Charity Liaisons in organizing and documenting charity events and participation.</p>

Legion Council

The Legion Council is the chief legislative body and is comprised of Legion Command Officers, Garrison / Outpost Commanding Officers and their Executive Officers or appointees referred to as Second Council Seats. Each Garrison and Outpost with more than 25 members have 2 voting seats. Those with more than twelve but fewer than twenty five members have 1 voting seat and 1 non voting seat. Those with twelve or fewer members have one non voting seat.

The function of the Legion Council is to provide a body that communicates the activities of the Legion Command to their local members.

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The Legion Council also debates, discusses and votes on major policy and charter issues to present before the membership.

Garrisons and Outposts

Garrisons and Outposts are the local units that are the gathering of the troopers in their geographic location. They are responsible for ensuring that events are staffed etc. Outposts are located in geographic locations where there are not enough members to form a Garrison. Garrisons and Outposts are staffed by a central elected authority (Commanding Officer) and his or her appointed staff. Garrison Officers are comprised of:

- Commanding Officer (GCO or CO) - Elected by Garrison or Outpost Membership
- Garrison Executive Officer (GXO or XO) - Appointed by Garrison Commanding Officer
- Garrison Event Coordinator (GEC) - Appointed by Garrison Commanding Officer
- Garrison Membership Liaison (GML) - Appointed by Garrison Commanding Officer
- Garrison Web Liaison (GWL) - Appointed by Garrison Commanding Officer
- Garrison Charity Representative (GCR) - Appointed by the Commanding Officer
- Garrison Merchandise and Branding Officer (GMBO) - Appointed by Garrison Commanding Officer
- Garrison Public Relations Officer (GPRO) - Appointed by Garrison Commanding Officer
- Other Offices and Staff as required or appointed by Garrison Commanding Officer

Question

Answer

What role do the Garrison Officers fill, and how do they help me as a trooper?

Commanding Officer: Coordinates activities and members of the Garrison.

XO & SL: Assists the GCO and coordinates activities and members of the Garrison. Note that SL is an elected position and not appointed.

GEC : Coordinates garrison events.

GML: The primary contact for new members at the Garrison Level. The GML is in charge of costume reviews for new members or new costumes for existing members as well as ensuring rosters and profiles are up to date.

GWL: Manages and maintains the membership profile images.

GPRO, GMBO, GCR, GCOG, GWM: Perform the same duties as their Legion counterparts only at the local level.

Squads

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Squads are sometimes formed in larger Garrisons to facilitate the administration of the Garrison, cohesion and enjoyment of members who are too spread out within the geography of the centralized Garrison, enabling their members to troop, become active on the central Garrison boards and to facilitate the overall enjoyment of the Garrison experience. Squad Officers are comprised of:

- Squad Leader (SL) – Elected by the Squad Membership
- Squad XO- Appointed by the Squad Leader via the GCO
- Other offices and Staff as required or appointed by Squad Leader

Detachments

Detachments are the costuming units of the Legion. Their role is to assist new and old costumers alike in the understanding, formation and building of costumes. Detachment Leaders and their administrative staff assist the LMO and GMLs in understanding unknown or misunderstood basic standards for costumes within their category of expertise. Detachment Officers are comprised of:

Detachment Leader (DL)– elected by the Detachment Membership Detachment Executive Officer or assistant detachment leader(DXO)-appointed by Detachment leader

- Detachment Leader (DL) – Elected by the Detachment Membership
- Detachment Executive Officer or Assistant Detachment Leader (DXO) - Appointed by Detachment Leader
- Detachment Public Relations Officer (DPRO) - Appointed by Detachment Leader
- Detachment Captain of the Guard (DCOG) – Appointed by Detachment Leader
- Detachment Web Master – Appointed by Detachment Leader
- Detachment Forum Moderators – Appointed by Detachment Leader
- Detachment Costume Advisor (DCA) – Appointed by Detachment Leader
- Other offices and Staff as required or appointed by Detachment Leader

Question

Answer

What is the Role of the Detachment Leader?

The Detachment Leader Facilitates upkeep of the Costume Reference Library in conjunction with the Legion Membership Officer, assists members in finding the right information for their specific costumes, assists the Garrison Membership Officers with costume reviews, and coordinates and directs Detachment operations.

Honorary Members and Friends of the Legion:

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Honorary Member -- Any individual who has been universally recognized as having made a contribution to or impact on the Star Wars universe / IP. This honor is typically granted to actors, authors, production crews, production concept artists, voice actors, and so forth that have worked on licensed Star Wars IP.

Friends of the Legion -- Any individual or group who has given continued and ongoing support to multiple Garrisons/Outposts. This honor is typically granted to individuals or groups that work directly with and regularly support multiple units within the Legion.

A complete list of Honorary Members and Friends of the Legion can be found on the legion website: [Honorary Members](#)

Membership

What the Legion and the Garrison Expects of you

Ok so you're a trooper now what? The first and most obvious answer is get out there and troop.

As a member of the 501st Legion there are certain rules of decorum you agree to follow during your career. They are fairly simple and if followed will guarantee and long and enjoyable trooping career. As an active member of the Legion you are an ambassador of *Star Wars™*, the 501st Legion, and your units.

When trooping your goal should be to spread joy and wonder to the public and other fan based clubs and organizations by portraying your character in an upstanding and professional manner. The Legion code of conduct can be found here: [Code of Conduct](#)

Other expectations / benefits include:

- **Maintain your Legion Profile:** Your Legion profile is your face to the world and provides contact and costume information for the Garrison and Legion staff. As a member you are required to maintain your profile to make sure it is accurate and complete during the annual online census, typically held in October.
- **Stay in touch:** Contact is typically maintained by monitoring the Garrison or Outpost forums and participating in trooping events.
- **Complete the Legion Census:** Filling out the Census is an annual requirement of all members to remain in active and good standing with the 501st. It is a simple process and only takes a few minutes to complete. If you have questions or need more help to complete the census, don't hesitate to consult the Census guide here: [Census FAQ](#), [Census FAQ Espanol](#), and [Census FAQ Francais](#).
- **Vote:** As an active member of the Legion entitled to vote in polls and elections related to Legion, Garrison, Squad and Detachment Operations. As with any democracy participation is the key. You are encouraged to participate in local forums, the Legion forums and your Detachment forums.
- **Help with Legion, Garrison/Outpost, Squad, or Detachment work:** While several positions are elected, as outlined above, there are many opportunities to serve the Legion and the public

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through appointed staff positions, charitable opportunities, and mentoring and assisting your fellow members and new people interested in joining the Legion.

- **Active members are eligible to acquire and produce 501st Legion swag and merchandise.**
- **Instantly a member of a tight knit “family” of *Star Wars*[™] enthusiasts.**

As with any family there will be politics, disagreements, squabbles and tensions. As a trooper you may need to remember from time to time that “we’re all adults who dress up in plastic and spandex and go for a stroll in public”. It is expected that you will treat your fellow Legion members with respect and courtesy in all things.

It is always important to remember why you joined the Legion and to also recognize that your reasons and goals may not always be identical to your fellow members respect and personal integrity are the key to achieving enjoyment and fulfillment during your Legion career.

What you can expect from the Legion and your Garrison or Squad

The 501st Legion is an inclusive, equal-opportunity fan club and will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, sexual orientation, religion, or body type. The only requirements for membership are “ownership” of an accurate, complete, and professional-quality costume celebrating the Imperial (Dark Side) characters from the Star Wars films or its expanded universe sources, that the member is able to wear said costume(s).

Upon admission, members are assigned a unique identification number following in the tradition of the stormtrooper character, TK-421, mentioned in A New Hope. Preceding this number is a two-character prefix code denoting the costume of the member. The prefix codes and what costumes they identify are listed below. Members owning more than one costume still have only one identification number but are referred to using whatever prefix codes are applicable. Identification numbers will be maintained by the Legion Membership Officer and are permanently assigned. If members convert to Reserve or Retired status, their numbers will be retired until such time as the member returns to active status.

The Legion

The Legion command is the international face of the Legion. It is there to manage and assist the local garrisons and troopers in coordinating and managing events and projects that transcend local boundaries. The Legion command is also responsible for maintaining the Legions focus and mission.

From Article I of the Legion Charter

“...The Legion is an all-volunteer organization formed for the express purpose of bringing together costume enthusiasts under a collective identity within which to operate. The Legion seeks to promote interest in Star Wars through the building and wearing of quality costumes, and to facilitate the use of these costumes for Star Wars-related events as well as contributions to the local community through costumed charity and volunteer work...”

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- **Promote** Interest in Star Wars. A growing number of people are experiencing a reawakening of their Star Wars fandom, new generations are seeking ways to celebrate their passion for George Lucas's modern mythology. The 501st Legion brings these fans together, reinforcing the enduring longevity of the Star Wars saga.
- **Facilitate** the Use of Costumes.

Some fans are content to collect action figures...other fans want to be action figures. Nothing professes your passion quite like building your own detailed costume replica of a classic Star Wars villain, and there's nothing quite like the feeling that comes from bringing the characters of Star Wars into the real world and sharing the magic with others.

- **Contribute** to the community.

The Legion was founded to simply provide a collective identity for costuming fans with similar interests, the 501st is proud to put its resources to good use through fundraising, charity work, and volunteerism.

The Legion cannot exist without the members. All that is required of you by the Legion is that you maintain the enthusiasm that brought you to the Legion and support the mission of the Legion by being an active and participating in your local garrison with professionalism and respect towards your fellow Legion members. Since the Legion is an entirely volunteer organization you may be asked to utilize your talents to help support and promote the mission of the Legion. As outlined earlier there are many opportunities within the Legion to serve the Legion, your local Garrison and your community.

Garrison, Squad, Outpost

Garrisons, Squads and Outposts are the local "chapters" of the legion. Garrisons and Outposts are typically set up along regional boundaries. Squads are sub-units of a garrison. A Garrison or Outpost will be your primary unit within the Legion, you may also choose to be affiliated with a squad if one is located in your area.

The Garrison structure is similar to that of the Legion with a CO, XO, GML, GWL, GPRO, etc. and their roles are identical to those at the Legion level only focused on their local area.

Squads are an administrative sub-unit of the Garrison in regions that are either geographically vast or where there is a high concentration of troopers within a Garrison. Squads are led by a Squad Leader who is a member of the Garrison Command Staff and reports to the Garrison.

Outposts are similar to a Garrison but are in regions where there is not a sufficient membership to form a Garrison. Typically Outposts only have a CO who performs all the administrative duties for their area. These units exist to facilitate the mission of the Legion and to assist you in your goals as a Legion member.

The Garrison command is responsible for the organization and coordination of events and the promotion of the Legion at a local level. As an active trooper you should expect to be treated with respect, asked to fill supporting roles in the garrison as needed and to be contacted regularly by the Garrison command, either directly or through the garrison forums about events and activities in your local area and the regions around your Garrison. You should also expect to be kept up to date on Legion level activity and issues being discussed at Legion level.

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However your membership is in the Legion. Garrisons and Outposts may not enact local rules or regulations that are in conflict with or more restrictive than those established in the Legion Charter or by Legion Counsel Resolutions or Legion Command policies. If you feel you are being treated unfairly by your local command you have the right and responsibility to bring the matter to the attention of the Legion command staff through Legion Membership Officer, the Captain of the Guard or directly to the Legion Commanding Officer or Legion Executive Officer.

Detachments:

From Article III of the Legion Charter:

“Given the diversity of costumes encompassed in the Legion’s collective costume repertoire, special themed units called Detachments may be created to improve the quality and awareness of a specific costume category in the Legion’s CRL. These units serve as a resource for costumers both in and out of the Legion. Accordingly, their websites and forums may contain both public and 501st-only areas. ...”

Detachments are non-administrative sub-units of the Legion. They have a command structure similar to the Legion with an elected Detachment Leader and typically a Detachment XO, Merchandise Officer, Web Master, and Costume Advisor.

Detachments are virtual units that have no physical or geographical boundaries. Detachments provide a place for Legion members and the general public to research, discuss and find assistance in acquiring and building their costumes in a manner that can lead to approval in the 501st Legion. Detachments also assist the LMO and the GMLs in the assessment of membership applications to help ensure the accuracy and quality of the submitted costume.

Detachments do not approve memberships or set policy regarding which costumes are eligible for Legion membership. However they are often tasked to give advice to the Legion Membership Officer and Garrison Membership Liaisons regarding specific costume submissions.

Detachments may also have a 501st Member only section on their forums where they may produce and provide Detachment / 501st related merchandise to their membership.

Trooping

Trooping Guide

Ok you’ve got your armor and are ready for your first troop, or your 100th troop. Here is a compilation of the words of wisdom from your fellow members of the 501st Legion. It has been compiled from many posts on the Legion forum as well as personal experiences and anecdotes heard throughout the years.

There are many reasons for trooping with the 501st Legion, including but not limited to: raising awareness for a cause, promotional appearances, assisting in fund raising for charities, and just plain having a good time.

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An official 501st event is simply an event that went through your garrison/outpost proper event confirmation process. They are the only one where you can be clearly identified as a 501st member.

There are typically two event classifications, canon and non-canon. A canon event is an event where the requesting organization requires a specific group of characters. Typically canon events are either Original Trilogy (OT), Prequels (Clone Wars) or Clone Wars Animated Series.

- For an OT event only screen accurate original trilogy characters will be allowed to participate in the event.
- For a canon Prequel event only screen accurate Clone Wars era costumes from the movies or television series will be allowed.
- For a canon Animated Series event screen accurate Clone Wars era costumes may be the only characters allowed. Typically the sponsors of Clone Wars Animated Series events will have specific character type requests. Your CO or event coordinator will post the requirements for canon Animated Series events as they have been provided by the event sponsor.

Non-canon events are everything else. Parades, hospital visits, parties, conventions, etc. The majority of the events the 501st Legion participates in are non-canon events. The event sponsor may request specific characters, in the absence of a specific request from the event sponsor for character limitations, all characters are eligible for non-canon events.

Screen accurate means unmodified armor, no custom paint schemes, no added badges, pauldrons, or overt identification or tags on the armor. Special note for Expanded Universe (EU) characters: Expanded universe characters are characters that are only documented in non-movie or television sources such as books, comics, graphic novels and video games. Some EU characters may be excluded from canon events at the request of the event sponsor.

If the event coordinator has concerns that a specific costume may be inappropriate for an event, the event coordinator should provide a photo of the character to the event sponsor for review.

- **Formal Event:** Formal does not necessarily mean "canon" a formal event would be one where the event sponsor wishes to have all characters in traditional garb with out special additions. In other words special squads, such as "Alabama's Red Rain (They look like Sandtroopers but have non-canon pauldrons and color details) may still be acceptable to a sponsor but "Fem Troopers" and Kilted Troopers may not. If in doubt be sure to check with your event sponsor and post accordingly.
- **Informal Event:** Have FUN, Kilted troopers, Fem Troopers, Santa Hats, Leprechaun Hats, beads, zombie troopers, etc... all are allowed within the bounds of taste, go for it.

Legion Events are typically multi-garrison or large regional events such as national and international promotional events like the Cartoon Network Clone Wars television series or DK Star Wars book releases. National events often require a coordinated effort across many garrisons and will be locally coordinated by the garrison command staff. Frequently final event details are still being arranged up until a few days before the troop so don't lose heart if you think things are a bit vague.

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Most troops will typically be posted on your Garrison Web Forums. There may be specific call requirements for an event, set by the requesting organization such as 1-Vader, 6 Stromtroopers, arrive at 5:30 pm troop from 6:30 until 9:00pm.... Etc. Or an event may be a general call for as many troopers as the garrison can muster. Your garrison command staff should list all the requirements in the event posting.

Typically for new events the garrison staff or event captain will post an interest request post it is important that you respond to these posts especially if you are interested in trooping the event. The interest post is used by the Garrison Command Staff to determine if the troop will be viable. If little or no interest is expressed by the Garrison Members than the Command Staff will likely decline the event request and tell the event requester that the 501st Legion is unable to appear at this time. If there is sufficient interest the staff will typically request confirmation that you are defiantly able to troop the event. Important note: DON'T commit to doing an event if you don't intend on doing the event! Conversely if you do commit to doing an event make every effort to attend, we all know stuff happens and unforeseen emergencies can arise that may prevent you from attending, however once committed the reputation of the Legion and Garrison are now on the line to provide the confirmed troopers for the event.

Know The Code

Trooping is intended to be a fun and rewarding experience. It gives us all an outlet for creative expression through the construction and creation of our costumes and the development of our personae as Star Wars characters. It important to note that although we are all in this for fun we are representing the Star Wars universe to the public and should behave in a professional manner at all times when in costume. The Legion code of conduct is the guideline for behavior when in character and as a member of the 501st. community.

Pre Troop Briefing

Before trooping you need to make sure everything is in working order. Look for wear and tear, dirt, stains, scuffmarks etc. Clean and polish as necessary. Stock up on extra batteries, bottled water and repair supplies, in general just do a basic check of your kit. Try on your armor before your first troop. Wander around try the stairs. You will quickly discover what fits and what doesn't and learn the meaning of the term "armor bite"

Some Helpful Hints

- Create a packing list, laminate it and keep it in your armor bin.
- Check your armor kit the day before. (make repairs as needed)
- Always have printed or written directions of where you are to meet.
- Share cell phone numbers with your fellow troopers.
- Take care of your feet! Wear insoles for those long troops.
- Check your repair kit, restock what ever is missing.

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Remember: The longer you're in the armor, the hotter it gets. Testing out your armor at home for 15 minutes is not the same as trooping for two hours. Even in air conditioned locations, heat can be an issue.

Use black permanent marker or other permanent label method to discreetly write your TK id# on the inside of ALL your armor parts. If you drop a part during the event or forget anything while packing up it will increase your chances of having it returned from a fellow member.

If you are on special medication or require special medication due to allergic reactions, be sure to share that with those around you and let them know where they can find it for you and how to administer it in an emergency. Let them know the warning signs.

Trooping

Trooping is why we are all here, the important thing is to have fun, entertain the crowd and stay safe and healthy. There are two potential dangers that can easily be overlooked while trooping, Heat Exhaustion and Hypothermia. Heat exhaustion occurs when your body gets overheated and can no longer support its natural cooling mechanisms, See side bar for more information on the symptoms and treatment of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Hypothermia, although less common for a trooper than heat exhaustion is a potential danger in colder climates or at outdoor events in a cool, wet and windy environment such as a parade, see side bar on the symptoms and treatment of hypothermia.

Arrive Early

Check in with your fellow Legion Members and the event coordinator when you arrive at the event. If you are the first trooper there, check in with the event sponsor or venue point of contact. If possible, before you suit up, walk the venue or area you're going to be trooping look out for potential hazards, choke points, and blind steps.

- Use bathroom BEFORE getting into armor.
- Don't troop if you are sick, dizzy, tired or under special medication.

Hydration is Important

Make sure you have enough food and drink during the whole trooping time (as trooping is quite exhausting, especially for beginners). The nature of our costumes and trooping events can put a lot of stress on a trooper. Always make sure to take frequent breaks and stay well hydrated. You may not always feel thirsty when taking a break but you may still be getting dehydrated, so grab a quick drink whenever possible. The lack of breaks and proper hydration can lead to heat related illnesses even under mild conditions.

Heat Exhaustion and Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion: Heat Exhaustion is a condition whose symptoms may include heavy sweating and a rapid pulse, a result of your body overheating. It's one of three heat-related syndromes, with heat cramps being the mildest and heatstroke being the most severe.

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Causes of heat exhaustion include exposure to high temperatures, particularly when combined with high humidity, and strenuous physical activity. Without prompt treatment, heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke, a life-threatening condition. [\[1\]](#)

Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion may come on suddenly or may develop after days of heat exposure. Possible heat exhaustion signs and symptoms include:

- Cool, moist skin with goose bumps when in the heat
- Heavy sweating
- Faintness
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Weak, rapid pulse
- Low blood pressure upon standing
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea
- Headache

Heatstroke: Heatstroke is a life-threatening condition that occurs when your body temperature reaches 104 F (40 C) or higher. Heatstroke can be brought on by high environmental temperatures, by strenuous physical activity or by other conditions that raise your body temperature.

Heatstroke is the escalation of two other heat-related health problems: heat cramps and heat exhaustion. In these conditions, you develop signs and symptoms that are milder than those of heatstroke. You can prevent heatstroke if you receive medical attention or take self-care steps as soon as you notice problems. [\[2\]](#)

Heatstroke symptoms include:

- **High body temperature.** A body temperature of 104 F (40 C) or higher is the main sign of heatstroke.
- **Lack of sweating.** In heatstroke brought on by hot weather, your skin will feel hot and dry to the touch. However, in heatstroke brought on by strenuous exercise (trooping), your skin usually feels moist.
- **Flushed skin.** Your skin may turn red as your body temperature increases.
- **Rapid breathing.** Your breathing may become rapid and shallow.
- **Racing heart rate** and strong pulse (tachycardia).
- **Headache.** You may experience a throbbing headache.
- **Neurological symptoms.** You may have seizures, lose consciousness, hallucinate,

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- **Difficulty speaking** or understanding what others are saying.
- **Muscle cramps or weakness.** Your muscles may feel tender or cramped in the early stages of heatstroke, but may later go rigid or limp.

Avoiding Heatstroke and Heat Exhaustion

- **Take Frequent Breaks**
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of fluids before during and after a troop. Water and "sports drinks" are the most beneficial to help avoid dehydration. Alcohol and sodas should be avoided as they can actually aggravate your dehydration.
- **Listen:** One of the symptoms of heatstroke mentioned above is a decrease in mental understanding. You may not be aware that you are developing symptoms of a heat illness. So, **listen to your handlers**, if a handler or fellow trooper tells you it's time to take a break **do it**.
- **Don't be a Hero:** Even if you're in a parade or other venue where there isn't an easy exit or place to get out of view of the public if you start experiencing symptoms of heat exhaustion or heat stroke get to the side, find shade, sit down if possible, get your bucket off, get a handler to help, find water, rest. It is much better to have you break character in public than to have you pass out in public.

Trooping Etiquette

- Always behave as a stormtrooper is expected to, don't force public to do things they don't want (being prisoners... and so on).
- Watch out for kids, they are short and our field of view isn't the best. You don't want to hit them by accident
- Be polite
- Always carry extra batteries for your fans.
- If you had been asked for something you are not sure about, always send them with your officers! Do not invent an answer!!!
- Always make reference to your local unit website and 501st website
- Remember: We DO NOT SELL anything!!!! We make our own costumes.
- Never troop alone! always have some friend with you (cases where you are a lone trooper in your area)
- DO NOT expect ANYTHING in return. Don't expect free parking, don't expect food, don't expect gifts, they may happen but don't expect them.
- Remember to take a break every now and then.

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- Always be aware of your surroundings

Even if you are in costume and not a handler, be mindful of your fellow troopers and if you notice someone badgering them, get a handler or step in yourself and discreetly move the trooper out of the situation.

- Always walk with a wall behind you (don't think anything funny guys), because there is always THE idiot willing to look smart in front of his friends to sneak behind and grab the detonator or steal your gun in the holster (breaking the whole belt by doing so).
- Watch out for people who are too enthusiastic... they could be dangerous for your costume. Over friendly hugs really hurt when in full costume

Trooping and physically or mentally challenged

- Treat them as you would anyone else in a friendly manner and with respect.
- Don't push, if they don't wish to interact with you, move along, move along. (this should be true of anyone you meet while in costume)
- Don't "react" to their disability.
- Get down on their level, if possible. Kneel, play "peek-a-boo" (give them a peek under your lid to show you're a person in there).
- If they wish to communicate with you then be patient, take your time.
- Be friendly and cheerful.

Handler

The handler or Imperial Support Staff is a vital part of any successful troop. You are the eyes and ears of your fellow troopers. It is your job to keep everyone safe, on time and damage free. You will likely be asked questions about the Legion and be asked to take photos of people with the troopers.

- Be the eyes and ears of the armored troopers:
- Watch out for children that get underfoot easily, so they don't get stepped on or whacked with a blaster or backpack. Children are a big part of any event, since they love stormtroopers, and are usually a little too overjoyed to see them. (Some adults act the same way too)
- Stop the troopers when someone wants a picture and you have time, if not try to play ambassador and let them know you're in a hurry to get somewhere.
- If the event has specific times and places for things "herd" the troopers to where they need to be when.
- Be the time keeper, keep the troop on schedule. Often troopers will need to be somewhere specific at an event. If the troops need to be somewhere keep an eye on the time, at a reasonable time before they need to be there, politely inform the people around the troops that

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they need to go and escort the troopers to their new destination. You might want to add some extra time because invariably they will get stopped along the way for “just one more picture”

- Remind the troops of breaks and make sure they take them. From time to time, about every half hour or so, check in with your helmeted characters to make sure they are doing ok, this can be as simple as a look and a “thumbs up sign” or discreetly stepping up and asking how they’re doing. If the troops need a break politely let the public know that your trooper needs to go for a few minutes and escort them back to the pre-event staging area / dressing area.
- Act as a buffer / body guard for the troop. (Someone always wants to push Vader’s Buttons or try to “steal” a nice E-11 Blaster, hijack a thermal detonator, or stick stickers on the armor.)

This is when a handler is really needed. They should step in between the costumer and the child and the costumer should then turn their back and walk away. You don’t want to touch the child if you can avoid it, but you want to become a barrier between them and the costumer.

First Aid Note	Stay calm. Check whether your surroundings are safe. Don’t put yourself or the injured person at risk. If you are certified to perform first aid / are a medical professional, proceed as your training dictates. If not, stay with the injured person, provide much needed reassurance, and call for assistance.
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- Street Sweeper / Pack Mule:
 - Pick up various random pieces of armor that may fall off during the troop.
 - Carry look after, wallets, watches, cell phones etc.
 - Purveyor of Water (giver of life)
- Act as “official” garrison photographer:
 - Take lots of trooping shots.
 - Offer to help take shots for the public. “hey would you like to get in the picture too?”
- Dresser:
 - Help people armor/de-armor if needed.
 - Carry a fix-it kit.
- Garrison Ambassador
- Answer questions on the Garrison / Legion, why we are there, etc so the people in costume can act that character...
- Hand out PR stuff like stickers, temporary tattoos, business cards, flyers, etc.

One part of being a handler, beyond all of the standard helping out here and there, is to be mindful of where you are at. When we make an appearance, those in costumes should be up front and center. You want to make sure when your a handler your not “in the shot” when people take photos of video. Group shots for us are different obviously. However, when walking in parades or mingling at events, you want to

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stay behind those in costumes so you're not blocking someone's shot or having someone try and figure out why that trooper is hanging out with someone in civilian attire.

Parades

Parades are special cases. Frequently a parade organizer will set specific rules and limits on non-costumed support personal. In a televised parade you may be requested to march on a specific side of the troopers so as to minimize the possibility of you being in the television shot. Parade duties typically include taking photographs of your troopers, picking up bits and pieces of dropped armor (watch for hand back plates and thermal detonators) and herding cats. Troopers like to interact with the crowd and may have a tendency to slow down or get side tracked by photo requests, Keep them moving.

If you are a photographer at any given event:

- Try to cover as much of the event as possible, taking pictures of as many of the costumers as you can.
- If there are multiple photographers, split the venue/workload in half for more coverage.
- The expectation of a photographer is that they record the event to the best of their ability, with fairness and equity, and provide the photographs within a reasonable amount of time (a week or two at best).
- With that said, the first duty of any wrangler is to the costumers, photography is secondary.

Interviews

If you don't feel up to it or feel unprepared, don't hesitate to direct the interviewer towards a member of your unit command staff.

When being interviewed by members of the press, or independent media producers it is important to maintain the distinction between Lucas Film and the 501st Legion. While we are typically happy to grant interviews requests for interviews need to be evaluated to make sure that we will not be put into a situation where we may be requested to speak on topics not related to the 501st. Legion.

Lucas Film has requested that when conducting an interview we do so with "buckets off" to make a clear delineation between our membership and the characters we portray. For example it's appropriate for us to discuss specific charity involvement as a member but not appropriate for Darth Vader to say that "XYZ Foundation" is his favorite charity.

Interview Tips

- **Buckets off:** Identify your self as a member of the 501st either by name or TK-ID.
- **Avoid controversial topics:** No discussions of Religious or Political issues.
- **Promote the Legion in a favorable light.**
- **Be Positive:** Don't comment negatively on other Costuming Groups and Star Wars organizations.
- **We Build our own costumes:** stress that our costumes are all fan made.

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Talking Points

- The Legion officially began in 1997.
- We currently have over 13,000 Active Members.
- The Legion currently occupies approximately 61 countries world wide.
- The 501st Legion is a totally volunteer organization
- How do I join: Visit www.501st.com and/or your garrison website.
- Discuss your Garrison troops and accomplishments.
- Discuss your Detachment
- Mention Kids and Fun.
- We don't "get paid to troop" : Mention our charitable contributions and activities.

Care and Feeding of Your Costume

Pre Troop Briefing

- Unpack everything.
- Inspect your Armor, and or Hard props
- Ensure that your armor is free of cracks, dents, large scratches
- Fans are working inside your helmet
- Hard parts are clean and polished
- Inspect your footwear, make sure the sole is securely attached and the entire boot is presentable.
- Inspect your soft parts for storage damage. Iron or dry clean your soft parts where applicable.
- Repair any damage.
- Re glue things.
- Replace Velcro.
- Buff scratches.
- Touch up paint dings.
- "Magic Erasers" are great for removing marks on TK armor.
- Plastic polish.
- Ensure that you have everything packed and ready to go before your troop. An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure.

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Post Troop Briefing

- Unpack everything.
- Clean your armor and under suit!
- Wipe out the inside of your armor with Clorox Wipes or other mild cleaner. Dry thoroughly. There is nothing worse than stink moldy armor.
- Put you bucket on a bucket stand or mannequin head. Make sure there is plenty of air circulation.
- Vader’s (and other leather suits) turn your suit inside out and hang on a padded hanger to dry. You may want to give “problem areas” a quick spay of Febreze or a cheap vodka to help eliminate odors.
- Set shoes or boots out to dry. You may want to invest in a pair of shoe or boot trees they will help with drying and help the boots maintain their shape.
- Repair any damage.
- Re glue things.
- Replace Velcro.
- Buff scratches.
- Touch up paint dings.

Leadership and Discipline

Good leadership and discipline go hand in hand. As a member of the 501st you are expected to abide by the rules. The rules have been thought about and debated by your leadership teams from the inception of the Legion to current day. These rules encompass behavior, trooping and costuming standards. Many can be read in the Legion Code of Conduct, found in the [Operations Protocol](#). Your unit may also have its own rules to direct its operations. Many are simply not written in stone because we expect you to understand the basics of good stewardship and behavior.

Foot Notes

[1],[2] [MayoClinic.com](#)