



# Table of Contents

|           |   |    |            |   |    |
|-----------|---|----|------------|---|----|
| Section 1 | Public Relations Basics . . . . .               | 2  | Section 9  | Message Points: Key to Telling the Legion Story . . . . .       | 64 |
| Section 2 | PR Tools . . . . .                              | 7  | Section 10 | Interviews: Bountiful Variety – Unlimited Opportunity . . . . . | 69 |
| Section 3 | Who’s Who in the Media . . . . .                | 17 | Section 11 | Planning Special Community Events . . . . .                     | 74 |
| Section 4 | News: What Is It? How Do You Make It? . . . . . | 27 | Section 12 | Partnerships and Sponsorships . . . . .                         | 76 |
| Section 5 | The News Release and Media Advisory . . . . .   | 32 | Section 13 | National American Legion Press Association<br>(NALPA) . . . . . | 78 |
| Section 6 | Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds . . . . .      | 43 | Section 14 | The Speech . . . . .  | 82 |
| Section 7 | Successful Public Service Approaches . . . . .  | 45 | Section 15 | Copyright and Trademark Information . . . . .                   | 90 |
| Section 8 | Advertising: Sometimes It Makes Sense . . . . . | 58 | Section 16 | Community Relations . . . . .                                   | 93 |

# Public Relations Basics

What if your American Legion family hosted a large civic event and only your members came?

Chances are, the person in charge of Public Relations didn't have this handbook. The people who needed to know about it probably didn't get the word -- or if they did, they weren't convinced of the benefit of the event. Or maybe they just disagreed with the whole concept and decided to stay home. Whatever the reason, effective Public Relations would have played a deciding factor in the success of your event.

## What Is Public Relations?

As the term implies, Public Relations (PR) requires that you relate to the public in some manner. The question is, "What is a 'public' and how do we relate to it?" Several 'publics' require our attention as PR volunteers. These include but are not limited to:

- Our members
- The media
- Local and national elected officials and decision-makers
- Local community members
- U.S. citizens in general

You can narrow it further to specific target audiences, such as participants in The American Legion programs and recipients of our support and charitable contributions.

*HOW* you relate to the public depends on which public it is and what your message is.

In a nutshell, Public Relations is primarily about *IMAGE*. And every member of The American Legion plays a role in communicating our image to the various publics to which we relate. The positive and negative things seen and heard at every level of the organization affect peoples' perceptions of what The American Legion is and what we stand for. Perception is reality for most people.

The familiarity and reputation of its name are two of the greatest assets of any product or organization. In modern advertising terms, it's called "branding." It's the first thing you think of when you hear a name. For instance, what is the first thing you think of when you hear the word "Cadillac"? Do you immediately think of luxury and quality? How about "McDonald's" or "Yugo"? Now apply the same exercise to "The American Legion." Just remember that your perception will be different than everyone else's, because your image of a product or organization is based on your experiences and knowledge.

# Public Relations Basics

An organization's image is based on the character, integrity and total performance of the organization. It consists of every contact the organization has with its various publics. It is a composite of:

- The organization's history in dealing with people
- Internal attitude toward members
- External attitude toward community responsibility and involvement
- News releases and other dealings with the media
- Internal and external publications
- Institutional advertising

What is the image of The American Legion today? It depends on which public you ask. To the media in general, we are the largest veterans organization in the world and are considered to be a reliable source of information relating to veterans issues. In some local communities, The American Legion has no image because no community programs are conducted. In other local communities, members of The American Legion are champions of social issues and pillars of the community. Each public's perception is their reality.

## Responsibilities of a Post PR Officer

Public Relations representatives might have any number of titles in corporate and government circles. Public Affairs, Communications, Publicity, Marketing, Media Relations and several other like titles may be used. As discussed in this book, all these roles are combined into your job description as Public Relations officer or volunteer for your post or department.

In many ways, the Public Relations function is the most important function at any level of The American Legion. It is our job to inform, enlighten, persuade and convince our many publics of our beliefs, events and goals.

Your first responsibility should be to determine your image in your community, if you don't already know. And you should constantly review your organization's standing on the image meter. Ask media representatives how they perceive your organization when you talk to them. Talk to your community leaders and to your post's neighbors. Talk to your members – not just the ones who are always there to help, but the members who seldom show up for meetings or events. Find out why they don't show up so you can begin to change their perceptions about the post and get them involved.

Your primary responsibility now will be to alter or maintain the image of your post and/or The American Legion and to communicate your various messages to each of your many publics. Based on your knowledge of what your image is, you can better focus your message(s) to achieve your goals, whether it be to garner support for a veterans issue or convince members to support a post function.

# Public Relations Basics

Our assumption in preparing this handbook is that you, the post, district or department PR officer, will be responsible for the following primary tasks:

## **Internal Information**

Notify your members through newsletters, flyers and other means of what is going on at your post, as well as passing on local and national policy and program issues of importance to all members. Don't assume that just because your members pay their dues every year that they understand what The American Legion is all about. Keeping our members informed of ALL of the issues is critical to keeping them motivated and active at all levels.

## **External Communications**

Whether you are inviting members of your community to attend a ceremony or function at your post, having a membership drive or participating in one of our national campaigns, you may need to reach people who are not members of your post. This may involve coordination with one or more media outlets in your community and doing whatever is needed to reach those people.

## **Community Relations**

As good citizens of your community, your post members should ask to be represented at various civic functions or meetings. While the Post Commander will most often be the point of contact for civic and community functions, the PR officer should be the one to advise the commander on specific issues and will act as spokesperson on occasion.

## **Media Relations**

Why won't your local newspaper run your story about the fish fry you're having this weekend? What is that TV reporter doing outside your post with the photographer interviewing your members? How did that story get printed without me (or the Post Commander) knowing anything about it?

Effective media relations mean that you and the various media in your area have a good working relationship. It's a mutual relationship based on trust and honesty. They call you when they need answers on veterans' issues, and you know who to call to provide a local angle to a national story regarding The American Legion.

Good Public Relations begin with the Post Commander establishing policies and practices that are ethical, honest and in keeping with the public interest. Then the PR officer can take those policies and practices to the public for acclaim, understanding and, if need be, for clarifying any misconceptions.

# Public Relations Basics

The Post PR officer is expected to provide four basic services:

## **Advice and Counsel**

The PR officer should advise post officers of the PR impact policy decisions will have on the media, on the community and on members.

## **Communications Service**

The process of letting the members and the public know about events and policies via newsletters, booklets, speeches, news media, good citizenship, example and other means.

## **Public Relations Research**

Identifying, evaluating and communicating information of community or world events to the post leaders and members who would help the post manage its affairs better.

## **Public Relations Promotion**

A variety of programs and activities designed to gain acceptance for the post among members and within the community.

## Continuity Is Critical

Public Relations requires development of relationships with various officials, media representatives, and Department and national staff members. It's critical to have some form of continuity in your efforts to maintain these relationships. In a volunteer organization, it's difficult to saddle one individual with this much responsibility for an extended time. As an alternative, try to spread the responsibilities to several individuals, allowing them to specialize in various areas.

At the very least, maintain a comprehensive PR manual at your post/district/department to provide continuity for each person assuming the responsibilities. The book should include contact names, deadlines for various media, submission procedures for articles or public service announcements (PSAs) and a contact history for various individuals to include what was discussed, etc. (See sample contact sheets in Section 3.)

## Planning

Quite often as we plan events, we will know where every table and chair will be placed and exactly when everything will happen to the minute. But publicizing the event always is done at the last minute.

Because much of what we do in The American Legion is cyclical, creating an annual calendar should be the first step in the planning process. You also need to make sure PR is on the agenda for all planning meetings. Each aspect of the event should take into consideration the impact on Public Relations as it applies to all of the areas discussed above.

## SECTION ONE

# Public Relations Basics

Using this PR manual as a guide, you need to develop a publicity plan based on deadlines and submission requirements for the various media you intend to use. Back-time the submission dates to ensure plenty of time to get the word out.

For special news events and campaigns, your plan should include an objective statement and a detailed outline on how you intend to reach your target audience(s) with your message. What is your goal and how do you intend to reach that goal? How will you know you've reached your goal? Take advantage of the many products available from National Headquarters, such as speeches, message points, etc.

## Documenting

As an event or media campaign develops, document your activity and the results. This is done not only for you, but also for the person in charge of next year's event. Document anything you think might be useful for planning future events, including:

- Helpful contacts not listed in your manual.
- Missed opportunities or things you WISH you had done.
- Which media attended your event and/or reasons others gave for not attending.
- Things that went right AND things that went wrong, including the reasons why.

## Evaluating

As part of the documentation phase, make sure you provide an honest evaluation of how you think the event turned out. Whether it's a media event or a post holiday party, take the time to ask some hard questions and provide honest answers.

- Did I reach the target audience with my message?
- Although my message was included in various media, did I reach the people I needed to reach?
- What was the reaction to the message? Did it cause people to react and/or take action as I intended? Why?

## Conclusion

When you have everything documented and evaluated, make sure someone else knows about it. Share your plans and evaluations with others. Mentor new members and bring them in to help you so you will have some continuity for next year's event(s).

For many reasons, Public Relations can be considered the single most important function within your post, district or department. Every member is involved in it, most without even realizing it. Public Relations will have an impact on everything you do at your post, and everything you do at your post will somehow impact Public Relations.

# PR Tools

This handbook is intended to give you the basic tools and ideas to work with regardless of your level of experience and responsibility in The American Legion.

Can you imagine a plumber trying to fix a leaky faucet without tools?

Or a dentist filling a cavity without a drill and instruments?

The use of PR media tools in executing a post Public Relations strategy is just as crucial. Armed with an array of ad slicks for print media distribution, television spots designed to promote the latest programs of The American Legion and public-service radio spot announcements on compact disc, a post can easily reach out to media outlets in the area and successfully market these products. Getting placement means public outreach, education and image enhancement for The American Legion post, its programs, and its services to veterans, their families and young people in the community.

## What Are PR Tools?

Public Relations tools are stand-alone, camera or broadcast-ready materials that can be taken directly to media for publication or broadcast. They promote The American Legion, its programs, membership, latest advocacy campaigns and patriotic holidays. They are professionally produced by the national Public Relations commission office and are available FREE upon request in quantities needed by each post.

Whether the PR tool is print or broadcast, space or time is left open for post contact information. For example, a 60-second radio spot might leave 10 seconds of music only at the end (no announcer's voice) in which the local station announcer, or post spokesperson, can add, "For more information, call American Legion Post XXX at 222-2222." Printed ad slicks will have white space to add the post or contact name, address, telephone number and other pertinent information.

## Why Use PR Tools?

Every newspaper wants to publish the best, most professionally produced and eye-catching ad. Every electronic media wants the same for their medium. The Post Public Relations officer who can provide such a product enjoys a distinct advantage over others who may approach a media outlet with just notes scribbled on a piece of paper. Additionally, a professionally produced product is the end result of extensive research, editing and polishing of message points in compact, efficient packages.

American Legion PR media tools use advanced digital-editing techniques, professionally experienced talent, gifted writers, wide-ranging musical arrangements and sound effects. State-of-the-art graphics enhance television productions. The television spot available free to American Legion posts would typically cost more than \$10,000 to produce by a regional production facility. A professionally produced CD of a variety of 30- and 60-second public service announcements costs between \$6,000 and \$10,000, depending on studio time, talent fees, production technician hours, music license fees, CD packaging materials and complexity of different production elements. American Legion media products are all produced at The American Legion's own in-house, state-of-the-art, digital production facility at National Headquarters in Indianapolis. The Public Relations staff has worked profession-

## SECTION TWO

# PR Tools

ally as writers, broadcasters and editors for both the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service and commercial stations and newspapers. Thus, PR materials can be developed and distributed on a continuous basis to meet the emerging issues of American Legion advocacy in addition to the perennial requirements of membership recruitment AT NO COST to the post.

### The Message Is Local

All PR media tools are available free to American Legion posts, districts and departments. They are designed to maximize post community information. Radio and television spots can have post contact information added at the bottom of the screen; ad slicks can include post contact information, enabling readers, viewers and listeners to respond directly. While each PR media package includes some tools that provide national toll-free or online information, posts are encouraged to use the localization features for maximum community impact and response.

### Variety

What is good for the goose may not necessarily be good for the gander. Some radio stations will readily air 60-second public service spots, while others may not accept any more than 30 seconds in length. The media products available for your use are designed to include a variety of sizes, lengths, formats and themes to accommodate nearly every type of print or broadcast station or cable system. The Public Relations officer can approach program and public-service directors armed with confidence and a full media tool kit to fit virtually any media requirement. Written copy for radio spots is included with each CD to enable stations that prefer to produce their own spots with their own announcers to use Legion materials.

### Marketing

No PR media tool can be effective without getting it printed, broadcast or distributed. While mailings to local media with a cover letter signed by the Post Commander may work, that correspondence becomes just one of hundreds received by the station or newspaper. The tried-and-true, most successful method to get American Legion public service materials placed on a broadcast schedule, short of paid advertising, is through personal contact with station directors or editors who have cognizance over the schedule or layout of the publication. Section 7 discusses marketing techniques in detail.

Bottom line: nothing is more effective than establishing amiable face-to-face relationships with area media executives.

## Print Media

In this section you will find a background information sheet and significant dates in the history of The American Legion for use in developing a post media kit. Every post should have at least five media kits on the shelf, ready to be given to reporters who may show up at the post on short notice. These materials should be augmented with another background information sheet listing the specific accomplishments of your post, including ongoing projects.

Ad slicks are available from the national Public Relations office on a variety of Legion programs. They can be previewed on The American Legion website at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) under public relations. Use available blocks of white space on ad slicks to insert a contact name, post number and telephone number along with any specialized message that might be appropriate. While the ad slicks are designed primarily for use in publications, both internal Legion newsletters and commercial newspapers, creativity is key. For example, some posts have added contact information, made 1,000 copies and placed them on the windshields of cars in shopping malls as handbills. Because most shoppers may not be veterans, this is a hit-and-miss technique. But if just five new members sign up, they can become active volunteers. Others have used the one column-sized ad slicks to reproduce and pass out as bookmarks at recruiting booths and area schools. Many post the slicks in windows of area businesses, the post office, train stations, etc.

Legion-specific clip art has been developed for use in post newsletters and advertising campaigns. Examples follow in this section. Art is updated periodically to reflect new themes of the organization as needed. Ideas for future development are always welcome.

## Message Points

Every post should maintain a set of American Legion Message Points. They provide talking points for virtually every issue of The American Legion as authorized by National Executive Committee or National Convention resolutions. They are sound-bite-sized and extremely useful in preparing for interviews with local media on veterans issues, national defense and the programs of The American Legion. They can be downloaded from The American Legion Web site under Public Relations, ordered by phone at (317) 630-1253 or by e-mail at [pr@legion.org](mailto:pr@legion.org). Section 9 includes a discussion of how to use them for a variety of media opportunities.

## Proclamations

Preparing a proposed proclamation for the mayor or county executive significantly increases the probability of having it signed and ready for use on an appropriate holiday. Positive news coverage can be garnered through use of proclamations to recognize veteran-oriented holidays and activities. On the following pages are suggested proclamations for The American Legion Birthday, Children & Youth month, Flag Day and Veterans Day. Using these as a guide, proclamations can be crafted for nearly any occasion or event. Try to get a draft to the mayor's office at least 30 days prior to the event.

Below is an example of an Ad Slick and how it is intended to be used. Ad slicks can be obtained by contacting The American Legion Headquarters PR division or by visiting the website: [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

**America is at war**



**... and a tradition continues.**

### Blue Star Service Banners are Back

Men and women in military uniforms are on the front lines of our war on terrorism. In wars past, a Blue Star Service Banner in the window of a home showed a family's pride in their loved one serving in the U.S. Armed Forces - and reminded others that preserving America's freedom demands much.



Every neighborhood has someone serving in the current war on terrorism. As we steel ourselves for a long and difficult war, the sight of Blue Star Banners in homes will remind us of the personal sacrifices being made to preserve our way of life.

From the more than 4 million men and women of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion...and all your fellow Americans...we say, "Thank you."

**Contact Smallville Post #7**  
**555-1234**  
If you have a family member on active duty.

**The American Legion Family**  
[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

The following two documents are included for you to duplicate and use in developing your post's PR materials.

- "Significant Dates in the history of The American Legion" sheet (two-sided document)
- The American Legion "Background Information" sheet (single-sided document)



## SIGNIFICANT DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

- March 15-17, 1919 – The American Legion is founded in Paris by members of the American Expeditionary Force.
- May 9, 1919 – Caucus meeting in St. Louis adopts “The American Legion” as the organization’s official name. The Legion’s draft constitution is approved, and so is its preamble, which begins: “For God and Country, we associate ourselves together...”The preamble, with its heartfelt dedication to freedom and democracy, is still recited today at official gatherings of The American Legion.
- June 9, 1919 – The National Executive Committee of The American Legion adopts the Legion Emblem.
- Sept. 16, 1919 – The U.S. Congress charters The American Legion.
- Nov. 10-12, 1919 – The American Legion convenes its first annual convention in Minneapolis
- Nov. 10-12, 1919 – The American Legion’s Constitution and Preamble are adopted at the convention in Minneapolis.
- Nov. 10-12, 1919 – The American Legion passes resolution supporting the Boy Scouts of America. Today, the Legion is the chartering agency for more than 1,700 Scouting units that involve 64,000 youths.
- Nov. 11, 1919 – Delegates to The American Legion’s first annual convention in Minneapolis vote 361-323 to locate the Legion’s National headquarters in Indianapolis rather than Washington, D.C.
- Aug. 9, 1921 – The U.S. Veterans Bureau, forerunner of the Veterans Administration is created as a result of efforts by The American Legion. Today, the Legion continues to lobby for adequate funding of the department of Veterans Affairs.
- June 15, 1923 – The first “Flag Code” is drafted during a conference called by The American legion in Washington, D.C. The code eventually was adopted by Congress in 1942. Today, the Legion is at the forefront of efforts to gain a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from physical desecration.
- July 17, 1925 – American Legion Baseball program is created. Today, more than 60 percent of professional baseball players are graduates of The American Legion Baseball program. About 89,000 high-school-age youths play on Legion-sponsored teams each year.
- 1931 – Membership in The American Legion increases to more than 1 million veterans.
- June 23, 1935 – The first American Legion Boys State is convened in Springfield, Ill. To help youths gain an understanding of the structure and operations of American government. The first Boys Nation was organized in 1946.
- June 1, 1938 – The final round of The American legion’s first annual National High School Oratorical Contest is held in Norman, Okla. Today, more than 25,000 high school students from around the country compete annually in the contest designed to develop a greater understanding of the U.S. Constitution. Winners are awarded thousands of dollars in college scholarships.
- Sept. 19-21, 1942 – The American Legion’s charter is amended to allow veterans of World War II to join the organization.
- Dec. 15, 1943 – Harry W. Colmery, past national commander of The American Legion, writes in longhand on hotel stationery the first draft of what will later become the “GI Bill of Rights,” the Legion’s greatest single legislative achievement. Today, the Legion is at the forefront of efforts to improve benefits for this nation’s newest veterans, those who’ve served during Desert Shield/Desert Storm.
- June 22, 1944 – The GI Bill is signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt.
- May 29, 1946 – A \$50,000 grant from The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary is presented to a small, struggling organization --The American Heart Association – to inaugurate a nationwide program for the study of prevention and treatment of rheumatic heart disease.
- Aug. 28, 1946 – Legion membership surpasses 3 million.
- Sept. 1, 1949 – The first World War II veteran is elected national commander of The American Legion.
- May 4, 1950 – The American Legion votes to contribute funds to the field of mental health with the provision that the three major mental health organizations then in existence be amalgamated into one. They accepted this provision and the National Association for Mental Health was born.
- Dec. 28, 1950 – Korean War veterans are approved for membership in the Legion.
- July 9, 1954 – The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation is formed. Since that time, the foundation has awarded \$4 million to youth-oriented organizations and projects designed to help America’s children.
- Sept. 1, 1966 – The American Legion voices great concern over the fate of POW’s in Vietnam. Today, the Legion continues to press for a full accounting of POW/MIAs and has formed a special group from among the nation’s major veterans organizations to take the lead on this issue.
- May 1, 1972 – The American Legion presents a \$1 million check to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund toward the construction of “The Wall” in Washington, D.C. The Legion, which had solicited donations from its members, eventually became the largest single contributor to the project.
- Aug. 26, 1982 – The American Legion presents a \$1 million check to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund toward the construction of “The Wall” in Washington, D.C. The Legion, which had solicited donations from its members, eventually became the largest single contributor to the project.

- July 21, 1983 – The American Legion announces its sponsorship of an independent study on the effects of exposure to Agent Orange on Vietnam veterans. The results of “The American Legion-Columbia University Study of Vietnam-era Veterans” were presented to Congress in 1989.
- Aug. 25, 1983 – The first Korean War veteran is elected national commander of The American Legion.
- Sept. 8, 1988 – The first Vietnam War veteran is elected national commander of The American Legion.
- Jan. 1, 1989 – The new Department of Veterans Affairs, elevated to cabinet-level status, begins operations. The American Legion had fought hard for the V.A. to become a cabinet-level department, arguing that veterans - as an important segment of society - deserved representation in the highest councils of government.
- Oct. 16, 1989 – A longstanding objective of The American Legion to improve adjudication procedures for veterans’ claims is achieved as the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals begins operations. Most of the provisions contained in the law creating the court originally were included in the Veterans Reassurance Act, which was written by the Legion and introduced in Congress in 1988.
- Aug. 2, 1990 – The American Legion files suit against the federal government for failure to conduct a congressionally mandated study of the effects of Agent Orange on the health of Vietnam veterans.
- Oct. 11, 1990 – The Family Support Network is formed by The American Legion to assist the families of military personnel deployed during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in the Middle East. The Network stepped in to help in a myriad of ways, from offering financial assistance to mowing lawns to babysitting to providing a sympathetic ear. Today, the Legion’s Family Support Network continues in existence to assist America’s newest veterans, particularly with employment, as they return to civilian life.
- Oct. 30, 1990 – Veterans of Lebanon, Grenada and Panama hostilities are approved for membership in the Legion.
- June 15, 1991 – The American Legion’s first Junior Shooting Sports National Air Rifle Championships are conducted at the Olympic Training Center at Colorado Springs, Colo. Each year, more than 600 high school students enter the annual contest, which is designed to teach gun safety and marksmanship.
- Dec. 3, 1991 – Veterans of Desert Shield/Desert Storm are approved for membership in The American Legion. Today, the Legion continues to press for improved educational and medical benefits for Gulf War veterans.
- April 5, 1993 – The first class of recently discharged veterans begins training in Sterling, Va., for eventual placement in well-paying jobs in the construction industry. The landmark training and job-placement program is a joint effort by The American Legion and the Laborers’ International Union of North America to assist veterans returning to an uncertain job market.
- Aug. 24, 1994 – The American Legion announces creation of the Citizens Flag Alliance, a coalition of organizations and individual citizens, to work for a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from physical desecration.
- Sept. 24, 1994 – The American Legion announces partnership with the Smithsonian Institute’s Air and Space Museum to develop an exhibit for the bomber Enola Gay, which dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Previous museum plans had drawn intense criticism from veterans, scholars and the public.
- Jan. 30, 1995 – The American Legion announces Legion’s acceptance of a scaled-down exhibit “without political commentary” for the Enola Gay, ending the greatest controversy in the Smithsonian Institute’s 149-year history.
- July 20, 1995 – SJR 31 passes Senate Judiciary Committee in a 12-6 vote.
- Oct. 1, 1995 – The American Legion forms its Persian Gulf Task Force to enhance TAL’s service to America’s newest generation of wartime veterans, thousands of whom suffer from illnesses linked to their service in region.
- Sept. 16, 1996 – The American Legion awards a \$20,000 postsecondary scholarship to each of the 10 inaugural Samsung American Legion high school scholars.
- June 11, 1997 – The American Legion National Emergency Fund surpasses the \$1 million mark in cash grants given in 1997 to flood victims who belonged to The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion. Most of the grant recipients reside in the Ohio River flood plains of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana as well as in Red River-flooded areas of Minnesota and North Dakota.
- Sept. 3, 1997 – The American Legion presents its first ever National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award to Cpl. William T. Rhodes of Huntington, Pa., during its 79th National Convention in Orlando, Fla.
- March 28, 2000 – The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion donate \$2.7 million to the World War II Memorial Fund. By the end of the year The American Legion family donation had grown to more than \$3.4 million.
- Sept. 5, 2000 – The American Legion presents the first “Spirit of Service” Awards to active duty service members for their off-duty volunteer activities. Recipients: Petty Officer Annette French, USN; Sergeant Evella Smith, USMC; Sergeant Laura Jernigan, USA; Marine Science Technician Second Class Corey King, USCG; and Staff Sergeant Billy Fly, USAF.
- Aug. 28-30, 2001 – The American Legion passes resolution to rekindle the Blue Star Service Banner Program.
- Sept. 12, 2001 – The American Legion reactivates the Family Support Network following terrorist attacks.
- Oct. 10-11, 2001 – The American Legion creates September 11th Memorial Scholarship Fund for children of military members killed in active duty on or after September 11, 2001.

# The American Legion



*For God and country*

★ MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006  
★ (202) 861-2700, Ext. 1312 ★ Fax (202) 861-2785  
Web Site: [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

## The American Legion “Still Serving America”

Since its founding in Paris in 1919, The American Legion has been an advocate for America's veterans, a friend of the U.S. military, a sponsor of community-based programs for young people and a spokesman for patriotic values. Nearly 2.8 million members make it the nation's largest veterans group, with about 15,000 local "posts" in most communities and six foreign countries. Membership is restricted to men and women who served in the U.S. military during an official period of conflict.

### Recent American Legion Victories for Veterans

- A more than \$4 billion increase in veterans health care spending combined for Fiscal Years 2000-2002.
- A permanent cost-of-living adjustment for disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- VA disability compensation for Vietnam veterans with diabetes exposed to Agent Orange.
- VA benefits for children with spina bifida whose parents are Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange.
- By lawsuit and legislation, restored VA's "duty to assist" all claimants for VA benefits, reversing a court ruling.
- Lifetime access to Department of Defense medical treatment and discount pharmaceuticals for military retirees.
- A federal law mandating that VA creates a special treatment category for veterans who need long-term nursing care.
- Military pay raise of 4.1 percent and national defense spending of more than 3 percent of GDP in FY-2003.
- A special monthly allowance to get our financially strapped troops off "food stamps."
- More than \$150 million in annual federal investment in scientific studies on Gulf War illness.
- A federal law making it easier for Gulf War veterans with undiagnosed illnesses to receive VA benefits.
- VA compensation and health care for Gulf War veterans who have contracted Lou Gehrig's disease.
- Tougher veterans-preference laws to protect veterans' federal-advancement opportunities.
- A federal law mandating Department of Defense cooperation in military funeral honors for deceased veterans.
- Planning for the construction of six new national cemeteries.
- A Legion-sponsored Sept. 11 Memorial Scholarship Fund for the children of troops killed during the war on terrorism.
- Along with the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion, donated more than \$4 million to help build the National World War II Memorial. Fought for federal approval of its Rainbow Pool site on the National Mall.

### Historic Contributions

- Wrote the original GI Bill in 1944 and has successfully lobbied for increases in Montgomery GI Bill funding.
- Provides free, professional assistance -- for any veteran -- in filing and pursuing claims before any administrative or judicial body of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Conducts weeklong inspections of VA medical facilities conducted by trained Legion staff members.
- Advocates a GI Bill of Health to give military retirees, Medicare veterans and their families access VA health care.
- Strongly advocates adequate funding for training, equipment and quality-of-life improvements for the troops.
- The first veterans group to identify "Gulf War Syndrome."
- Through joint research with Columbia U., helped service members suffering from Agent Orange and radiation exposure.
- Assists families of deployed active-duty troops through the Family Support Network, (800) 504-4098.
- Spends more than \$25 million annually on programs benefiting young people: American Legion Boys State, American Legion Boys Nation, National High School Oratorical Contest, Junior Shooting Sports and American Legion Baseball.
- Largest collective donor of blood to the Red Cross: about 100,000 pints yearly.
- National Emergency Fund awarded grants totaling more than \$3 million since 1989 to help victims of natural disasters.
- Authored original "flag code" under federal law and has advocated recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in U.S. schools.
- Founded Citizens Flag Alliance to advocate passage of a flag-protection constitutional amendment.
- Provides honor guards at civic events and for the funerals of countless veterans.

#### For More Information

Indianapolis Headquarters: Joe March or Lee Harris (317) 630-1253 [E-mail: [pr@legion.org](mailto:pr@legion.org)].

Washington Office: Steve Thomas, (202) 861-2700, Ext. 1312 [E-mail: [sthomas@legion.org](mailto:sthomas@legion.org)].

## SECTION TWO

# PR Tools

## Suggested Proclamation

### The American Legion Birthday

WHEREAS, The American Legion was formed in 1919, shortly after the termination of World War I hostilities; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans united by a common bond of continued service to God and country; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion will observe the (number) anniversary of its founding, March 15-17, as an organization comprised of nearly 3 million men and women who have served their country with honor during one of the wars since the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, By giving meaningful service in conjunction with the theme “Still Serving America,” Legionnaires have made significant contributions to American thought and deed; and

WHEREAS, Endeavors of The American Legion, which strengthen our freedom and perpetuate our free institutions, characterize this gigantic fraternity of service as one of the great bulwarks of the American way of life; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has achieved its position of high esteem through programs of service to community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Such programs have become an integral part of (city or county, state); now, therefore

I (full name and title) of (city, county or state) do hereby proclaim the week of March (Sunday through Saturday of week of March 15-17) 200#, as American Legion Week, and do call upon all citizens, companies and organizations to join with me in commending the good works of this organization as an expression of appreciation for the wartime and peacetime services of our Legionnaires. They are truly “Still Serving America.”

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of (name of city, country or state) on this (number) day of (month), (year).

(Full Name)

(Title)

# PR Tools

## Suggested Proclamation

### Children & Youth Month

WHEREAS, The American Legion, since its founding in 1919, has devoted much of its talent, effort and resources to improving conditions for our nation's youth; and

WHEREAS, The Americanism, Children & Youth programs of The American Legion provide settings that permit children to realize and to achieve their full potential; and

WHEREAS, Legionnaires have labored unselfishly to achieve this goal through their untiring effort, dedicated leadership and devotion to the overriding principles of these benevolent programs; now, therefore

I (full name and title) of (city or county), (state) do hereby proclaim the period of April 1 through April 30 as The American Legion Children & Youth Month, and call to the attention of all citizens the good works of the men and women of The American Legion.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of (name of city, country or state) on this (number) day of (month), (year).

(Full Name)

(Title)

## SECTION TWO

# PR Tools

## Suggested Proclamation

### Flag Day

WHEREAS, the first official flag of the United States was adopted by an act of Congress dated June 14, 1777; and

WHEREAS, June 14 was designated National Flag Day by an act of Congress dated August 3, 1949; and

WHEREAS, Congress has requested an annual presidential proclamation designating the week in which June 14 occurs as National Flag Week; and

WHEREAS, on December 8, 1982, the National Flag Day Foundation was chartered to conduct educational programs and to encourage all Americans to pause for the Pledge of Allegiance as part of National Flag Day ceremonies; and

WHEREAS, Flag Day celebrates America's symbol of unity, a democracy in a republic, and stands for our country's devotion to freedom, to the rule of all, and to the equal rights for all; now, therefore

I (full name) (title) of (city or country) in the state of (state) do hereby proclaim June 14, (year) as Flag Day in (city or county) and do urge all citizens to pause for the Pledge at 7 p.m. (EDT), to recite along with all Americans the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag and nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of (name of city, country or state) on this (number) day of (month), (year).

(Full Name)

(Title)

# PR Tools

## Suggested Proclamation

### Veterans Day

WHEREAS, Veterans Day has its origins in the armistice which brought World War I to a conclusion at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918; and

WHEREAS, the Allied victory in World War I affirmed the strength of great nations acting together for high purposes; and

WHEREAS, the people of the United States caused through their elected representatives the designation of November 11 as a federal legal holiday, which in 1954 became officially known thereafter as Veterans Day; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Day continues to be celebrated and commemorated with solemn observances in honor of all Americans who have served their country in times of war and conflict; and

WHEREAS, the courage, honor, sacrifice, and dedication which veterans of the United States armed forces have displayed in the cause of justice, freedom, and democracy are most worthy of recognition; now, therefore

I (full name), (title) of (city or country) of the state of (state) do hereby call upon all citizens to commend America's veterans and observe with solemn pride November 11, (year) as Veterans Day and to take part in as many ceremonies and events as possible to honor these men and women.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of (name of city, country or state) on this (number) day of (month), (year).

(Full Name)

(Title)

## SECTION TWO

# PR Tools

### Media Campaign Kits

Complete media kits available from the National Public Relations office include a campaign-specific planning booklet, ad slicks, a television VHS spot video and a radio PSA spot CD. Ongoing campaign kits available free include:

- The Blue Star Service Banner and Flag Program
- “A Day to Remember,” annual remembrance program of the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on America
- The American Legion Family Support Network

Campaign-specific media kits will be developed as needed to address breaking veteran and national security issues of importance to The American Legion. All are designed to facilitate ease of post participation with fill-in-the-blank news releases, letters, editorials, speeches, milestones, event planning, etc.

### Radio Public Service Announcements

PR radio media tools include two formats: written and produced. Written copy included in Section 7 simply needs to be retyped, filling in the blanks with the appropriate local information and post contact, placed on post letterhead and marketed to area radio stations. The spots can then be read by the station’s on-air personalities when no commercials are sold for the time block. Additionally, a radio station may turn the copy over to the production department to add music, sound effects or multiple voices. The produced version would then be placed in digital memory for use during the normal PSA rotation within the station’s broadcast day.

Produced radio-spot packages are available on CD, including:

- Membership, including women and minority, recruiting
- American Legion Programs & Issues
- Patriotic Holidays
- Blue Star Service Banner
- “A Day to Remember”

Membership recruiting spots may or may not be accepted as public-service announcements by stations. Since a fee is charged for membership, some stations consider these spots advertising and require payment for broadcast. Section 8 will address the best methods of approaching this technique of reaching out to the community. Other stations will air The American Legion membership spots once they are aware that The American Legion is a tax-free 501(C)-19 veterans service and patriotic youth-oriented organization.

As with all products, each CD contains spots with music beds at the end for post contact information.

## Television Public Service Spots

The current inventory of television PSAs includes:

- Blue Star Service Banner (three 30-second PSAs)
- Membership (two 30-second PSAs)
- “A Day to Remember” (one 30-second PSA)

Spots are provided on a VHS videotape or DVD for use in presenting to television stations and cable systems. Professional BetaSP format tapes of higher quality can be sent directly to the broadcast facility by the National Public Relations office when a commitment to use is provided to the post. This service is free to the post or the broadcast facility.

## Videos

- *Good PR Equals Membership Success* (Length: 15:54) — American Legion Public Relations training video. It highlights all available PR tools and covers marketing, use of appropriate media, interview tips and basics of good post Public Relations strategy and planning. This is an excellent video for the entire post or the Public Relations committee.
- *America's Veterans* (Length: 23:00) — A video for school students about veterans, Veterans Day and military service to America. Comes with a teacher's guide and volunteer presenter's outline.
- *Reconnect* (Length: 14:16) — A motivational video for post showing on reaching out to younger, active duty veterans.
- Others as required, including National Convention highlights, instructional videos on Legion programs, Protect Our Flag, etc. Contact National Public Relations for a complete listing.

PR media tools produced by The American Legion Public Relations Commission Office have no copyright restrictions. Maximum use and reproduction is encouraged.

## Suggested Speeches

The National Public Relations Division office writes prepared public remarks every year for the following observances:

- American Legion Birthday, March
- Memorial Day, May
- Flag Day, June
- Veterans Day, November

## SECTION TWO

# PR Tools

Each speech can be read without modification or used as a basis to adapt for delivery to specific audiences as appropriate. These speeches are normally available about four weeks in advance of the day. You can download them from [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) or request them via mail.

Stock speeches also are available by request from the Public Relations office for the following special events and programs:

- Dedication of a New Post Home
- Women Veterans
- Presentations to Civic and Community Groups about Legion Programs
- “We Call Ourselves Legionnaires”
- Americanism
- Flag Retirement Ceremony
- POW/MIA
- Our Preamble

Legionnaires frequently called upon to provide remarks are invited to add their names to the speeches mailing list to automatically receive them as they are written and distributed.

## PR Tools On The Internet

As media technology evolves, so does the ability of The American Legion to provide media tools directly to Legionnaires via the Internet. Nearly all American Legion media tools can be downloaded from [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org). Radio and television spots can be viewed or heard and immediately ordered online. Compact disc technology enables Legion radio spots to not only be top digital broadcast quality, ready for airing by radio stations, but also played on personal computers or “boom boxes.”

Even American Legion ad slicks are available on CD, enabling post photos to be interchanged for those already on the slick and copy to be adjusted or edited for local requirements.

As your American Legion national staff produces new media products, your suggestions and comments are always welcome. The PR staff stands ready to answer any questions on PR media tools or conducting your community Public Relations campaign.

All American Legion PR Media Tools are available FREE upon request. Call (317) 630-1253.  
E-mail [pr@legion.org](mailto:pr@legion.org). Write to The American Legion Public Relations Office,  
P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

# Who's Who in the Media

The list of job titles in today's media seems to take your breath away. How do you know who is the right person to contact when you have a story to tell?

Talk to the receptionist who answers the phone. Remember the old axiom from our military days: you get the best information from the people who answer the phones and do the work. It's still the same today and it works with any company, anywhere.

Just pick up the phone and call the newspaper, radio, television station or cable system main number. Ask the person who answers to whom you should send a news release to or who you should speak with to suggest a topic for a talk show. Ask that person to cut through the "red tape" by simply giving you the information. Get the correct contact person's name, phone, fax and e-mail information. Armed with that information, you can begin the communication process.

Every media operation is different. That's why you want to work with the people closest to doing the story, not upper management. Still, understanding where some of the division lies in a media operation can be helpful. So consider the following:

## Daily Newspapers

- **City Editor** – Probably as high in the working chain as you want to go. This is generally the individual who makes reporter assignments for local stories. He or she also is the person who edits the stories.
- **Reporter** – A great place to start. Besides being told what stories to write, reporters have a responsibility to suggest stories. If you can convince a reporter your story is important, you are ahead of the game.
- **Editorial Page Editor** – An individual who works separately from the newswriting side of the business. This individual helps develop editorial positions of the newspaper, etc. When you want to place a guest editorial written by your commander in a newspaper, this is where you will most likely be directed.
- **Op-Ed Editor** – An individual who selects the commentary and opinion pieces that appear on the page opposite the editorial page in most papers, thus the name "op-ed." Sometimes a column written by your commander can be used as an op-ed piece.
- **Letters to the Editor** – Generally one individual in the editorial department handles the selection of letters. Most newspapers also have information on how to submit letters to the editor via mail, fax and e-mail. Never overlook the potential of a short, to-the-point letter reinforcing the positive community perception of our organization.

## Weekly Newspapers

- **Editor** – Weekly papers have just a few staff members to handle all the jobs, so don't be surprised if the person who answers the phone also is the person you need to speak with. In the weekly newspaper business, the editor is a Jack or Jill of all trades.

# Who's Who in the Media

## Television Stations

- **Assignment Editor** – The person who is the big traffic cop for stories. This is the person who assigns reporters and videographers to cover a story.
- **Reporter** – The person who does the work, talks with people, tries to find contacts and gets the job done. Once you have been handed from the assignment editor to a reporter, you can usually make future calls directly to the reporter.
- **Community Affairs Director** – The individual who coordinates all the station's activities in the community. If you were looking to establish a partnership (Section 12) with a station for a special event, this is probably the person you will be told to contact.
- **Public Affairs Director** – The individual who produces and often hosts station programs that tackle issues of interest to the public. If you have an event you want to promote, this is who you will most likely work with.

## Radio Stations

- **News and Public Service Director** – Unless you live in a major city, the individual hired as the news director is generally also doing the job of the public service director, hosting or producing a taped weekend radio talk program of community interest and more.
- **Promotion Director** – The individual who coordinates appearances by on-air personalities at events and develops other relationship projects to increase listener participation and awareness of the station.
- **Continuity Director** – The individual who schedules the time of all commercials. At smaller radio stations this person may also schedule public service announcements.

So remember, talking to the top person in charge is seldom where you want to start. Don't try to figure out who to call; let the workers help you navigate the maze of job titles.

## Media Contact Sheets

Regardless of whom you end up talking with you need to use a Media Contact Sheet to keep the people and the stories straight. Your Media Contact Sheet can be as simple as a 5"x8" card or as detailed as a computer database. Take a moment to review the sample Media Contact Sheets on the next few pages and decide how you can use either of them or if you want to create your own.

If you are comfortable maintaining a computer document you will find a template for that Media Contact Sheet at [www.legion.org/pr.htm](http://www.legion.org/pr.htm) or create your own on your computer.

Regardless of your choice of Media Contact Sheet formats, never lose sight of the real key: **keep a written copy**, not something simply stored on a computer. Think of it as insurance for when the hard drive fries. Better yet, think of it as preparing the way for the individual who will take over your Public Relations officer duties someday.

## Who's Who in the Media

It will take some time and effort to develop media contacts but the work will pay long-term dividends for your post and community. By keeping a written Media Contact Sheet, your efforts will provide continuity. As you learn little gems over time, jot them in the “Notes” area. For example, a media outlet tells you what stories it is interested in covering. Make a “note.” Then let them know of those stories and not the other stories. Your time is valuable, so don't spend it and your post's money sending news and information a media outlet does not want.

As a Public Relations officer, your efforts to build relationships with local media will go a long way toward strengthening the image of the organization.

SECTION **THREE**

# Who's Who in the Media

## Media Contacts

MEDIA CONTACT

Media Name:

Mailing Address:

Street Address:

City, State, ZIP

Contact Name(s):

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Note:

---

MEDIA CONTACT

Media Name:

Mailing Address:

Street Address:

City, State, ZIP

Contact Name(s):

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Note:

# Who's Who in the Media

## Media Contacts

### Media Contact Information

|                       |  |             |  |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|--|
| Company:              |  | Media Type: |  |
| Circulation/Audience: |  |             |  |
| Remarks:              |  |             |  |
| Deadline Information: |  |             |  |
| Special Requirements: |  |             |  |

### Contacts

| Contact 1 |  |                 |  |
|-----------|--|-----------------|--|
| Name:     |  | Title:          |  |
| Address:  |  | Business Phone: |  |
|           |  | Home Phone:     |  |
|           |  | Cell Phone:     |  |
|           |  | Pager:          |  |
|           |  | E-mail:         |  |
|           |  | Fax:            |  |
| Remarks:  |  |                 |  |

| Contact 2 |  |                 |  |
|-----------|--|-----------------|--|
| Name:     |  | Title:          |  |
| Address:  |  | Business Phone: |  |
|           |  | Home Phone:     |  |
|           |  | Cell Phone:     |  |
|           |  | Pager:          |  |
|           |  | E-mail:         |  |
|           |  | Fax:            |  |
| Remarks:  |  |                 |  |

| Contact 3 |  |                 |  |
|-----------|--|-----------------|--|
| Name:     |  | Title:          |  |
| Address:  |  | Business Phone: |  |
|           |  | Home Phone:     |  |
|           |  | Cell Phone:     |  |
|           |  | Pager:          |  |
|           |  | E-mail:         |  |
|           |  | Fax:            |  |
| Remarks:  |  |                 |  |



# Who's Who in the Media

## Media Contacts

Sample Form In Use – Electronic Media

### Media Contact Information

|                              |  |                    |                    |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Company:</b>              | WTFO   | <b>Media Type:</b> | Television Station |
| <b>Circulation/Audience:</b> | #3 station in market. Mainly 18-36 year old.   |                    |                    |
| <b>Remarks:</b>              | FOX affiliate. Morning news program from 7am - 9am. No midday. Evening news at 6pm and 10 p.m. |                    |                    |
| <b>Deadline Information:</b> | Community calendar items due by noon the day before airing.                                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Special Requirements:</b> | Video = BetacamSP or DVCam formats. Graphics can be PhotoShop or EPS.                          |                    |                    |

### Contacts

| <b>Contact 1</b> |  |                        |                    |
|------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Name:</b>     | Joe Headline   | <b>Title:</b>          | News Director      |
| <b>Address:</b>  | 123 WTFO Drive<br>Anywhere, OH 12345   | <b>Business Phone:</b> | 206-555-1234       |
|                  |  | <b>Home Phone:</b>     | 206-555-4321       |
|                  |  | <b>Cell Phone:</b>     | 206-555-5678       |
|                  |  | <b>Pager:</b>          | 866-555-8765       |
|                  |  | <b>E-mail:</b>         | jheadline@wtfo.com |
|                  |  | <b>Fax:</b>            | 206-555-9128       |
| <b>Remarks:</b>  | Is very interested in promoting veteran's issues. Contact him between 11am and 2 p.m. He's too busy with newscasts at other times. |                        |                    |

| <b>Contact 2</b> |   |                        |                         |
|------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Name:</b>     | Jane Smith  | <b>Title:</b>          | Public Affairs Director |
| <b>Address:</b>  | 123 WTFO Drive<br>Anywhere, OH 12345  | <b>Business Phone:</b> | 206-555-1234            |
|                  |   | <b>Home Phone:</b>     | 206-555-1234            |
|                  |   | <b>Cell Phone:</b>     | 206-555-1234            |
|                  |   | <b>Pager:</b>          | 206-555-1234            |
|                  |   | <b>E-mail:</b>         | jsmith@wtfo.com         |
|                  |   | <b>Fax:</b>            | 206-555-9128            |
| <b>Remarks:</b>  | Handles all of the PSAs for the station and is a good contact for discussing special promotions and sponsorships. |                        |                         |

| <b>Contact 3</b> |  |                        |  |
|------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| <b>Name:</b>     |  | <b>Title:</b>          |  |
| <b>Address:</b>  |  | <b>Business Phone:</b> |  |
|                  |  | <b>Home Phone:</b>     |  |
|                  |  | <b>Cell Phone:</b>     |  |
|                  |  | <b>Pager:</b>          |  |
|                  |  | <b>E-mail:</b>         |  |
|                  |  | <b>Fax:</b>            |  |
| <b>Remarks:</b>  |  |                        |  |



# Who's Who in the Media

## Media Contacts

### Sample Form In Use – Print Media

#### Media Contact Information

|                              |  |                    |                 |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Company:</b>              | The Daily Circular File  | <b>Media Type:</b> | Daily newspaper |
| <b>Circulation/Audience:</b> | 13,000 general circulation   |                    |                 |
| <b>Remarks:</b>              | The only newspaper in the area. Morning delivery.  |                    |                 |
| <b>Deadline Information:</b> | Ads must be in 3 days prior to issue date. News deadline is generally 3 p.m. prior to pub date unless it's BIG news. |                    |                 |
| <b>Special Requirements:</b> | Ads must be camera-ready. No electronic files accepted. Standard column width.                                       |                    |                 |

#### Contacts

| <b>Contact 1</b> |  |                        |                   |
|------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Name:</b>     | Joe Headline   | <b>Title:</b>          | News Editor       |
| <b>Address:</b>  | 123 News Drive<br>Anywhere, OH 12345   | <b>Business Phone:</b> | 206-555-1234      |
|                  |  | <b>Home Phone:</b>     | Not available     |
|                  |  | <b>Cell Phone:</b>     | 206-555-5678      |
|                  |  | <b>Pager:</b>          | None              |
|                  |  | <b>E-mail:</b>         | jheadline@dcf.com |
|                  |  | <b>Fax:</b>            | 206-555-9128      |
| <b>Remarks:</b>  | Likes to have advance copies as soon as possible. Do not send him editorial copy. He'll throw it away. |                        |                   |

| <b>Contact 2</b> |   |                        |                |
|------------------|---|------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Name:</b>     | Jane Smith  | <b>Title:</b>          | Publisher      |
| <b>Address:</b>  | 123 News Drive<br>Anywhere, OH 12345  | <b>Business Phone:</b> | 206-555-1234   |
|                  |   | <b>Home Phone:</b>     | 206-555-1234   |
|                  |   | <b>Cell Phone:</b>     | 206-555-1234   |
|                  |   | <b>Pager:</b>          | 206-555-1234   |
|                  |   | <b>E-mail:</b>         | jsmith@dcf.com |
|                  |   | <b>Fax:</b>            | 206-555-9128   |
| <b>Remarks:</b>  | Contact for all editorials, letters to the editor, etc. Husband is VFW member and she will favor their events, but works with us. |                        |                |

| <b>Contact 3</b> |  |                        |  |
|------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| <b>Name:</b>     |  | <b>Title:</b>          |  |
| <b>Address:</b>  |  | <b>Business Phone:</b> |  |
|                  |  | <b>Home Phone:</b>     |  |
|                  |  | <b>Cell Phone:</b>     |  |
|                  |  | <b>Pager:</b>          |  |
|                  |  | <b>E-mail:</b>         |  |
|                  |  | <b>Fax:</b>            |  |
| <b>Remarks:</b>  |  |                        |  |



# News: What is it? How do you make it?

## Definition Of News

### Random House Dictionary

- A report of a current event
- A report on current events in a newspaper or on radio or television
- Such reports taken collectively

### American Heritage Dictionary

- Recent events and happenings
- A report about recent events
- New information

### Oxford Shorter Dictionary

- New things, novelties (1565)
- Tidings, new information of recent events; new occurrences as a subject of report or talk
- A newspaper

*“It is better to be making the news than taking it; to be an actor than a critic.”* —Winston Churchill, 1898

A key element in conducting an effective American Legion post Public Relations program is establishing your post as an authoritative news resource for media. Sure, there will always be an ongoing need to publicize programs and events conducted by the post, but much more can be done to enhance the image of The American Legion in your town.

First of all, understand the definition of “news” from a media perspective. It must be breaking; of interest to a large number of people; be a significant event, disaster or controversy; affect a lot of people’s wallets; or be emotional and heart-rending. Post fish-frys, bingo nights and dances, while important to members, are not news to reporters. The Secretary of Defense or Secretary of Veterans Affairs announcing deployments or cutbacks in health care is national news, yet both stories will likely have a direct impact in your town. That’s where your post enters the picture.

Become a real source for breaking news in your area.

How do you do that? It’s easier than you might think.

As an organization, The American Legion passes resolutions every year that guide the legislative lobbying efforts in Washington. Issues range from veterans affairs and a strong national defense to Second Amendment rights, flag protection, secure borders and safety programs for children. Several hundred standing resolutions at any given time represent the official position of The American Legion.

As the chief spokesperson for The American Legion, the National Commander promotes Legion ac-

## SECTION **FOUR**

# News: What is it? How do you make it?

tivism by using the resolutions to testify before Congress and discuss the Legion's advocacy in these areas with national media.

When a national news story breaks on an issue covered by an American Legion resolution, the National Public Relations Commission distributes a news release providing the National Commander's reaction and call for action, if appropriate. News releases are posted immediately on the national Web site at **www.legion.org**.

Here is where your post can become a news resource in your community.

When a national story breaks in Washington, the mainstream media rushes to cover it. The major networks, wire services and cable news channels all converge on the "newsmakers." Interviews and soundbites are included in both print and electronic stories.

For every breaking national news story, reporters in newsrooms in your hometown are scrambling to find a "local angle" to the national story. A Post Commander or Post Public Relations officer can satisfy that requirement and become a local newsmaker, thrusting the post into the community eye as an authoritative voice on major issues affecting the lives of folks in the neighborhood. Taking action to get out The American Legion position not only demonstrates the pro-active advocacy of the organization, but it lets local elected leaders, veterans and their families know that your post is making a difference for the better in your community, state and nation. Positive visibility will enhance membership, organizational influence and community support.

## How To Piggy-Back on Breaking National News

Promptness is crucial to success in being a community newsmaker. It is important to contact local media newsrooms as quickly as possible following the national event. Here are the steps to follow:

1. When you see or hear of a breaking story, check out the national Web site. Download and save The American Legion news release from **www.legion.org**.
2. Write a paragraph or two using quotes from your Post Commander supporting the Legion position. Cite any specific actions your post may be taking in support of the story – calling local congressional representatives, starting a petition drive, etc.
3. Insert the information into the national release and print it on post letterhead.
4. Fax or e-mail the post release to your contacts in newsrooms of area newspapers, radio and television stations. Be sure to include a post contact name and telephone number for reporters to call if they want to set up an interview.
5. If conducting an interview after sending the release, advocate The American Legion position on the issue and inject personal experiences. If the story is about VA health care, discuss your personal observations about a local VA health-care facility that supports the Legion advocacy position on the issue.

## News: What is it? How do you make it?

You have just provided your area media with a reason to do a story of local impact on a breaking national story and established your post as a credible newsmaker in the community.

Here is an example of a national story localized:

### **VA health-care system backlog sparks action by The American Legion**

WASHINGTON (Dec. 11, 2002) – Prompted by a growing number of complaints about lengthy waits for initial doctor visits at Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers across the nation, The American Legion is launching a national program to gather personal stories about these complaints.

“We are launching the ‘I am Not a Number’ campaign to help lawmakers understand that behind the growing pile of statistics are real veterans who are hurting,” said Ronald F. Conley, national commander of the nation’s largest veterans organization. “In a mailing to every American Legion post across the nation I am asking our members to help identify those men and women veterans in their communities who have been waiting more than six months for their first medical examination at a VA medical center.”

*(CITY) American Legion Post XX is among the first to reach out to area veterans. “I ask every veteran here in (CITY) who has been waiting way too long for an appointment to call me at the post and fill out a form that we will send to Washington,” Post Commander (NAME) said. “You don’t have to be a post member. All veterans who have waited to see a doctor at the (NAME) VA hospital over six months need to take part in this. Our lawmakers need to see the faces of their constituents and realize we are indeed not just numbers.”*

Reports indicate more than 300,000 veterans are waiting for primary-care appointments in VA health-care facilities all across America. “Some have been waiting months. Some have been waiting a year or more for an initial appointment to see a doctor. Their health care is being rationed due to inadequate funding and a failure by our nation’s leaders to fulfill their obligations to those who fought for our freedom,” Conley said.

VA predicts another 600,000 veterans will enroll in its health care system in 2003. By the end of next year, the system’s patient load will reach nearly 5 million. If that happens without widespread change in the way the system is perceived and funded, the backlog will grow even worse.

“The American Legion is an advocate for veterans, the VA health care system and for everyone of the dedicated men and women who toil within the system every day,” Conley said. “But the bottom line is that there simply is not enough money. Only by making funding of the VA healthcare system mandatory, instead of discretionary, can we be assured our nation’s heroes will receive the care they so richly earned in service to their country.”

--MORE--

## SECTION **FOUR**

# News: What is it? How do you make it?

### **“VA Health Care” 2-2-2-2**

With more than 15,000 local posts, The American Legion’s goal is to identify as many “backlog” veterans as possible and present the personal side of the problem to the nation’s lawmakers early next year. Each post is receiving an “I Am Not a Number” booklet with information on the effort and forms for veterans waiting for service to complete. All of the information is also available on The American Legion’s Web site, [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

***Veterans wishing to participate can call Post XX Commander (NAME) at (NUMBER) or visit The American Legion Internet Web site at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).***

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CONTACT: *Jane Doe, (888) 555-1212 (office) or (888) 555-1212 (home).*

Now, with two localized paragraphs in the story you are ready to print the news release on post letterhead and get it to your media outlets. Because it takes two pages for the story you use the “--MORE--” and portion of the headline with page number - in this case “2-2-2-2” - so newspaper staff can be certain they see all information, especially if pages get separated.

### Post News Conference

If your post plans to conduct a specific event or action in your community based on a national news item, you should consider conducting a news conference. For example, an announcement that your post is launching a local campaign to join a national effort provides an excellent platform for a news conference. The “I Am Not a Number” campaign was able to get media attention to help inform veterans of the Legion effort in the community. Posts that conducted news conferences increased their visibility and received forms from area veterans, many of whom joined their posts.

News conferences should have a definite message. They should be visual for the television media (use props), and include major participants (mayor, youth champion, etc., as applicable.) Issue a media advisory (Example found in Section 5) announcing the news conference. Be prepared to answer questions after reading a prepared statement. Dress in a business suit, wear your Legion cap and have The American Legion emblem positioned behind you.

Conduct the conference mid-morning. The best time is around 10:30 a.m. This gives assignment editors and crews plenty of time to get to the post and ample time to return and edit the story for the evening news. If your stations have noon newscasts, you may want to conduct the conference at 9 a.m. or 9:30 a.m.

Do not conduct a news conference unless you have a major event, action or campaign to announce that will impact the community.

# News: What is it? How do you make it?

## Pitching News Stories

Now that you have written and assembled a news release you are only halfway done. Do not fall into the “Fax into Oblivion” syndrome. Sending the release blindly to a listed fax number of the TV station and sitting back waiting for a phone call will most likely not yield any calls. Successful Public Relations practitioners know exactly who to call to “pitch” a story, confirm receipt of the faxed news release and verbally add additional information. Section 3 has a detailed discussion. Radio news stations might very well record an interview when you call and use the sound-bites over a series of newscasts throughout the day. So be prepared with message points before you place the call.

The importance of personal contact with media reporters, editors and assignment editors cannot be over-emphasized. Unless you talk with a known contact in the newsroom, chances are high that your fax may be ignored or placed in “File 13” by a passing station intern. Call, identify, confirm and follow up on news releases and advisories. Eventually, media will have you in their contacts file and will be calling the post when stories break in areas of Legion expertise. Remember, every time the post appears in the paper, a Legionnaire is interviewed on television or the name is heard on the radio, people learn more about The American Legion and your post.

## How To Avoid Negative Coverage

- Ensure that the local media have one point of contact for your post — preferably the Public Relations officer, Post Commander or Post Adjutant as appropriate.
- Take whatever steps are necessary to avoid unannounced media interviews in the bar area of your post facility. Don't perpetuate the stereotype of veterans sitting around telling war stories while drinking. Have reporters set up appointments in advance with a post spokesperson.
- Always conduct interviews in the post meeting room with The American Legion emblem in the background. If the reporter wants to talk with a number of veterans, have them in the room. Brief them on the Legion's message points on the story the reporter is working. During good weather, an interview outside the post with the Legion emblem in the background is appropriate.

Winston Churchill was right. Become a newsmaker in your community and your post will reap dividends in service, community support, membership and public recognition.

# The News Release and Media Advisory

An old axiom says, “All politics is local.” It’s true. Apply that thinking to your Public Relations efforts at the post, district and department. **Local** news attracts **local** media attention. As a key member of The American Legion, the nation’s largest wartime veterans organization, the Post Public Relations officer must use the **local** angle to gain maximum coverage.

In each case, **local** refers to your community and neighborhoods. What The American Legion family does in Washington may or may not be of interest in your community. You can make it more interesting to **local** media by taking a news release issued by National Headquarters and **localizing** it for your media.

**Localization** of a news release is easy to do. Section 4 has a detailed discussion. The greatest advantage to **localizing** the story is creating in your hometown media employees’ minds the understanding that when it comes to key issues to veterans and their families, they can always turn to The American Legion for the **local** angle.

Creating a **local** story from a story on The American Legion Web site is easy and a great tool.

Yet, at times you will need to inform the news media of a unique event or program your post is conducting. In such cases you can write a complete news release or issue a media advisory.

You won’t find a set formula that tells you whether to use a completely written news release or an abbreviated page called a media advisory. Use the format you are most comfortable in providing. In the research stage of developing either a news release or a media advisory you still need to answer the basic journalistic “five Ws and the H”: who, what, where, when, why and how.

When writing a news release, you must determine which of the five questions is the most important to answer and use that as the lead. All six of the questions should be answered in the first two paragraphs of a news release. The remainder of the release will provide details.

As the Post Public Relations officer, one of your biggest writing challenges will be to look at the news release through the eyes of a non-member. Approaching the story from that perspective will help you determine what is most important. It will seldom be your post or commander. It most often will be students, community, etc., as your focal point.

Here’s one way to look at it: when you have a contestant in the High School Oratorical Contest in the State Finals, the high-school student is the most important part of the story – not the Post Commander or The American Legion. The media cannot tell the full story without mentioning The American Legion and your commander, but they should not be the lead of your story. The focus would naturally be the student.

Having that mental picture also will help you if you choose to use a **Media Advisory** as your means of communicating with the **local** people on your **Media Contact Sheet**. The simplicity of a **Media Advisory** makes it a favorite of many volunteers and even those in the media. It answers the five Ws and the H. It provides a bit of background material. Then they write their own story. When you are dealing with larger media outlets, this should be a successful way to work with them. After all, their reporters are trained to write stories; you might as well let them put their training to use.

# The News Release and Media Advisory

## Media Advisory

Here's a sample **Media Advisory** based on the contributions of your post to the community in the past year. The statistics for this advisory would come from your Consolidated Post Report.

### Suggested Media Advisory

#### MEDIA ADVISORY

***(Community)*, local organizations benefit from generosity of veterans, their families**

- WHO:** The citizens of *(community)* and members of (list key organizations).
- WHAT:** Benefited by programs and cash contributions conducted by *(Full name of your post)*.
- WHEN:** *(During the past year.)*
- WHY:** Post (###) members are committed to serving veterans, their families, the children of our nation and the community.
- WHERE:** *(Street address of your post)*
- HOW:** *(Using highlights from the Consolidated Post Report list the major programs, events, contributions, etc., amount of money spent or given and number of people helped.)*

#### BACKGROUND

***(Full name and number of your post) was chartered in (month and year) to serve veterans, their families, and the children and citizens of (community). As members of the nation's largest wartime veterans organization, Legionnaires and members of the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion (if applicable in your community) believe in volunteerism and the importance of being a positive influence for the next generation of America's leaders. That is why members and their families place a special emphasis on serving others while taking care of our own. It is a common bond of service that spans the generations.***

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**CONTACT:** *Jane Doe, (888) 555-1212 (office) or (888) 555-1212 (home).*

Use of a **Media Advisory** in this case lets the news reporters and editors know the scope of your post's community service and provides them the opportunity to develop several approaches to a story.

## SECTION FIVE

# The News Release and Media Advisory

Letting media know about the financial and service impact of The American Legion family in every community is an important tool. Even if they do not publish a story, you have planted a seed of information in minds that just may help them remember The American Legion when looking for a special holiday story angle, etc.

The American Legion in your community must be perceived as contributing, active and involved. Keeping your community good deeds in front of them is a big step in making all citizens aware of what you do and why you do it.

The decision to use a **News Release** or a **Media Advisory** is entirely up to you. Whatever your decision, keep trying. No one in Public Relations at any firm or organization bats 1,000. The key is to be persistent. Develop your **Media Contact** list. Keep it current. Send information that is newsworthy to your contacts. Over time, your efforts will be rewarded.

# The News Release and Media Advisory

## News Release - The American Legion Birthday

*For Immediate Release*

*(Date issued)*

### **Still serving *(Community)* after all these years – That's The American Legion**

The American Legion will observe its *(ordinal number)* birthday, and Legionnaires of *(Community)* plan a celebration of this significant milestone, Commander *(Full Name)* of *(Name of post)*, Post *(No.)* announced today. Since its founding in 1919, The American Legion has served veterans their families and the children of the nation. That legacy of service continues today through programs such as (list two or three of the biggest community programs in which your post is involved).

***(Insert full details concerning your post's birthday celebration. Include the names of keynote speaker, distinguished guests, highlights of the program, special recognition planned, etc.)***

The program in *(Community)* is part of a celebration at the more than 15,000 American Legion posts located throughout the United States and in many parts of the free world.

The American Legion was responsible for the creation of the original GI Bill, used by millions of veterans to obtain assistance in education and home loans. The organization was instrumental in the passage of legislation creating the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Today The American Legion continues to work for a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from desecration; securing mandatory funding for adequate operation of the Veterans Affairs Medical facilities; and operates a Family Support Network for families of active duty military personnel and members of the National Guard and Reserves.

Additionally, the work of The American Legion to support the nation's youth continues to grow, as more young people are involved in Legion-sponsored programs. The Boy Scouts of America, American Legion Baseball, Junior Shooting Sports and the National High School Oratorical Contest are just a few examples of how The American Legion continues to strive to provide a solid foundation on which the youth of America may grow.

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CONTACT: *Jane Doe, (888) 555-1212 (office) or (888) 555-1212 (home).*

## SECTION FIVE

# The News Release and Media Advisory

After reviewing this suggested news release, you should have spotted the second paragraph in which to insert the five Ws and an H information for your event. Using this suggested release gives you the benefit of linking the national impact of The American Legion with the **local** impact of your post and an event to honor the members.

In the remaining pages of this section you will find a variety of suggested news releases ready for you to retype, add your important **local** information, and distribute them as appropriate. It will give you another opportunity to create a **local** angle to a national story.

The suggested news releases that follow are just that – suggestions. They are designed to help you succeed as a Public Relations officer. Use them as a guide. Put the five Ws and the H information in the story and you will soon find yourself exceeding all your expectations.

# The News Release and Media Advisory

## News Release - Americanism Month (February)

*For Immediate Release*

*(Date issued)*

### **Month for presidential tributes, love creates opportunity to preserve American traditions**

February is a busy month for presidential birthdays and expressions of love. It's also a month for remembering hospitalized veterans and focusing on this nation's cherished traditions which can influence future generations.

February is "Americanism Month" for members of *(full name and number of your post)* in *(community)*. To celebrate this time Legionnaires and members of American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion (if applicable) are conducting a program to help young citizens understand some of the most cherished traditions of the American way.

#### ***(Full details of your post event)***

"The members of our American Legion family invite everyone to attend and bring their children and grand children," *(full name of post commander)* said. "Following the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and the uncertainty of the future, helping our fellow citizens understand our nation's foundation is something we feel is important," *(last name)* added.

Founded in 1919, The American Legion's commitment to the nation's veterans, their families and all children has not dulled over the decades. "Veterans develop a bond of serving others while in uniform, so it is only natural for us to continue that service through volunteerism after our military days," *(last name)* said.

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CONTACT: *Jane Doe, (888) 555-1212 (office) or (888) 555-1212 (home).*

SECTION **FIVE**

# The News Release and Media Advisory

## News Release - Children & Youth Month (April)

*For Immediate Release*

*(Date issued)*

### **Well-being of children takes center stage in April**

While every day of the year children should receive special attention the members of *(name and number of your post)* in *(community)* are planning a special event to help area children and their families in April.

“To The American Legion family April is Children and Youth Month,” *(Full name)*, commander of Post *(###)* said. “We are taking the initiative to ***(briefly state what you are going to do)***. We do it because we believe children are America’s most precious natural resource.”

***(Provide all the remaining details of the event here)***

For more than 80 years The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion have devoted hours of volunteer time and donated millions of dollars in support of programs and activities which benefit the nation’s children and youth.

In *(community)* these volunteers have *(list examples of post/unit/squadron projects and contributions in support of children and youth in the past year)*.

“As Americans, we need to remember amid the problems we face daily the one constant that will make or break this nation is our young people. They are our future, and our dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow rest in their hands,” *(commander’s last name)* said.

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CONTACT: *Jane Doe*, (888) 555-1212 *(office)* or (888) 555-1212 *(home)*.

# The News Release and Media Advisory

## News Release - Memorial Day

*For Immediate Release*

*(Date issued)*

### **Modern Memorial Day ceremonies prove bond formed in military service spans generations**

A tradition, which dates back more than 150 years, continues to bring veterans and families together in *(community)*. The tradition: decorating the graves of America's war veterans, known now as Memorial Day.

"The members of *(full name and number of post)* understand that bond and tradition, that is why we are *(briefly highlight your activity)*," *(full name)*, post commander, said. "We hope many citizens of *(community)* will join us in remembering those who died for our freedom."

***(Insert full details of your Memorial Day program here. Keynote speaker, special music, public participation opportunities, etc.)***

"The veterans we pause to remember on Memorial Day are the patriots who left their homes and families when their country called. They gave the last full measure of devotion in defense of our freedom. We are committed to keeping the memory of their sacrifice alive for generations to come," *(last name)* said.

Formed following World War I, The American Legion continues to work for all veterans their families and the children of the nation. The largest wartime veterans organization has 2.8 million members in nearly 15,000 posts around the globe.

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868, by Gen. John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic. It was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

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CONTACT: *Jane Doe*, (888) 555-1212 (office) or (888) 555-1212 (home).

SECTION **FIVE**

# The News Release and Media Advisory

## News Release - Flag Day

*For Immediate Release*

*(Date issued)*

**(Community) veterans, families  
prepare to salute 'Old Glory'**

On a day to celebrate the American flag, members of (name and number of post) also will honor "Old Glory" in a special ceremony.

***(Insert full details of your ceremony: who, what, where, when, why and how. Be sure to include the name of your community and words that help citizens understand they are welcome.)***

The American flag was authorized by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777, but commemoration of this significant event was slow in its development.

The Stars and Stripes first flew in a Flag Day celebration in 1861 in Hartford, Conn. The first national observance of Flag Day came on June 14, 1877, 100 years after the original resolution establishing the nation's symbol.

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CONTACT: *Jane Doe, (888) 555-1212 (office) or (888) 555-1212 (home).*

# The News Release and Media Advisory

## News Release - Veterans Day

*For Immediate Release*

*(Date issued)*

### **Veterans Day observance reflects history, current events**

Veterans Day, the annual time for remembering the end of World War I and the brave Americans who served in the “war to end all wars,” also draws from the news headlines of the day.

“What we now call ‘Veterans Day’ began as ‘Armistice Day.’ It is historically significant that this day continue to be observed on the month, day and hour that the guns fell silent in World War I 11 a.m., Nov. 11, 1918,” (Full Name), commander of (full name and number of post) said.

While the day has strong historical roots, current events continue to add meaning to the day. “Today, thousands of Americans are serving in uniform. They sacrifice in the war on terror and in hundreds of locations around the globe so we may remain free. They, too, are veterans,” (last name) said.

To mark Veterans Day in (community) ***(insert all the local information at this point. Focus on answering the five W’s and the H).***

The American Legion is the nation’s largest wartime veterans organization. Founded early in 1919, the delegates to the first National Convention in Minneapolis broke from business sessions to parade down a main street in a heavy snowstorm at 11 a.m. Nov. 11 to mark the anniversary of the armistice.

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CONTACT: *Jane Doe, (888) 555-1212 (office) or (888) 555-1212 (home).*

## SECTION FIVE

# The News Release and Media Advisory

## News Release - Post Annual Report

*For Immediate Release*

*(Date issued)*

### **(Community) benefits on many fronts from (full name and number of post)**

When the members of (full name and number of post) extend a hand of friendship or assistance to those who live in the (community) area, they make an impact. The annual report of Post (number), submitted to the national organization, will be combined with thousands of others to give The American Legion some measurement of the extent of the services provided by the nation's largest veterans organization.

For Post (number) the report includes (dollar amount) in direct aid to needy veterans, and an additional (dollar amount) to the voluntary services program.

(Full name) commander of Post (number) notes that contributions are not restricted to cash. "Besides the money donated to various organizations, we sponsored (number) of young men and women to American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State, supported our American Legion Baseball team, as well as volunteering more than (number) hours to the VA medical center," (last name) said.

***(At this point you should include information on other community projects: number of units of blood donated, scholarship funds or savings bonds for Oratorical, Junior Shooting Sports or other activities. Don't omit the unique things members of your post undertake to help the community).***

As a federally chartered organization, The American Legion must submit an annual report of its activities and programs to Congress. The national organization's report represents the compilation of the summaries turned in by its thousands of posts.

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CONTACT: *Jane Doe, (888) 555-1212 (office) or (888) 555-1212 (home).*

# Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds

Serving as a Public Relations officer for The American Legion is a challenging undertaking. Often you become frustrated because your news releases are not used and you feel your message is important.

That's a good time to consider writing a letter to the editor or a guest editorial for the local paper.

Your local newspaper's editorial page is another opportunity to excel in telling The American Legion story. A newspaper's editorial gives the position of the publication's editorial board, a panel comprised of those responsible for the content of the various sections. Similarly, an op-ed or letter to the editor from a Legion official states the position of The American Legion on an issue.

Every newspaper has its own guidelines for submission of letters to the editor and op-eds. Heed those guidelines which specify the ideal word count, manner of submission and author background. Ensure also that a letter or op-ed is consistent with American Legion policy if someone expressly representing The American Legion, such as someone who uses his or her American Legion title after the name, submits the piece. (Example: Jane Doe, Commander, American Legion Post 00, Someplace, USA.)

It is advantageous to use the editorial page. First, it is a relatively unfiltered means of telling The American Legion story, free from the risk of having your most eloquent statements left out of a regular news story. Second, it is proactive, a way for you to take The American Legion message to the newspaper instead of depending on someone to assign a reporter to cover the organization. Third, the letter or op-ed identifies The American Legion in terms of the organization's legislative agenda, one of the most important considerations that prospective members might have.

Most newspapers require letters to the editor and op-eds to be exclusive submissions. They don't want to publish something another paper prints the day before they do. Keep these efforts exclusive to the newspaper you want to work with.

## Letter to the Editor

Generally, a letter to the editor is approximately 200 words long and responds to an item published in a previous edition of the newspaper. It's short and sweet.

The letters most likely to be published follow a simple structure. The first paragraph states the position of the organization vis-à-vis a perspective revealed in a previous article. The middle section explains the key message points that reinforce the lead paragraph. The final paragraph either reiterates the lead paragraph or gives an "action statement" that explains how The American Legion will address a situation. Use American Legion resolutions, news releases and the Message Points found on The American Legion Web site, [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), to verify your facts.

An easy way to send your letter to electronic media in your congressional district, a tremendous asset when the letter's topic is pending legislation is to simply click on the icon on The American Legion's Internet homepage for the Legislative Action Center.

## Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds

Once you open the Legislative Action Center, click on Media Guide. Plug in your ZIP code or any other pertinent information. You will get e-mail links to media in your area, perhaps even an avenue through which you can send your letter to the local newspaper. It's just a matter of cutting and pasting to share that same letter with other media and with your member of Congress.

If you take this route, include something on all versions you send to electronic media that explains you submitted the following letter to the editor as a representative of The American Legion and would welcome the opportunity to assist a reporter in developing a piece on the issue. Who knows? Other media might take you up on the offer.

### Op-Ed

Op-ed is short for "opposite editorial," a piece that makes a point, regardless of whether the topic has been covered in a previous issue. It is rarely more than 700 words. An op-ed follows the same structure as a letter but uses more facts and figures to make its point, much the way a regular newspaper column does.

Avoid clichés. However, a memorable quote from a historical figure is a good thing. Stay on your message. Do not fill your precious space with arguments tangential to your main point.

To ensure you have your facts correct, rely on the same resources as you would to write a letter to the editor: resolutions, news releases and message points.

Linking the point of your op-ed to a patriotic day, while using your American Legion title in your byline, might enhance the likelihood of being published. For instance, an editor might be more receptive to an op-ed on the flag-protection constitutional amendment just prior to Flag Day. Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Independence Day and American Legion Birthday are opportunities both to satisfy an editor's need and to explain to the general public -- including members and potential members -- The American Legion's advocacy.

For a column on The American Legion Birthday, pull out a copy of your annual Post Report and glean whatever statistics you deem impressive. On or about March 15 to 17, you have a tremendous opportunity to market an op-ed dealing with The American Legion community service about which most people may know little.

Before you sit down to write, contact the newspaper's opinion or editorial page editor to determine whether he or she would consider your op-ed. Meet the deadline.

If you simply want a bit of inspiration for your own op-ed, visit [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), click on Public Relations and review the latest news releases. You'll find what is "hot" and how the issue is being made. Simply take that information and put it into a straightforward bit of writing from your heart.

# Successful Public Service Approaches

**By Bill Perkins**

*President, The Perkins-Nichols Media Group, Indianapolis*

Radio or television coverage for your post and/or its activities can be one of the most effective means of improving awareness in your community.

While radio and television stations are first and foremost moneymaking organizations, most have a very real interest in relating to the communities they serve. Such community involvement helps them build listener interest and loyalty, and they know that building audiences is important to their commercial success. Getting their attention for a not-for-profit campaign is not easy — not impossible, but not easy.

While all broadcasters devote some “public service” time to local organizations and nonprofit causes, the number of organizations seeking support far exceeds the amount of available time. Organizations ranging from the Girl Scouts to local churches to the Cancer Society routinely flood stations with requests for help in publicizing their efforts with public service announcements (PSAs).

Success comes most to those who have thought through their approach and best make their “case” to the station.

**PUBLIC SERVICE SCRIPTS:** The sample public service announcements in this section can be adapted to meet the needs of your individual American Legion post.

**FACT SHEET:** Equally important is a concise fact sheet that helps station personnel understand your post’s place in the community, why you are important as an organization and why the current subject should be of interest. This approach helps you convince the station that your material is of interest to its listeners. It also can provide information for station announcers to insert as “liners” — brief mentions as they talk with their listeners, as differentiated from full 30-second or 60-second PSAs.

For example: Who are you? A simple listing of facts such as how many members, location and history (since the post was founded) provide some context for your message.

What? Subject, i.e. an event, open house, parade or display.

When? Dates and times.

Where? Location.

**WHO TO CONTACT:** Most large stations have public-service directors to whom materials and or calls should be directed. In small stations, the continuity director will handle public-service spot placement in available spot locations after the paid commercials have been scheduled.

In all but the largest stations, a letter or call directly to the station manager also may be appropriate. If you or someone in your post is personally acquainted with the manager or another executive at a station, a letter or call soliciting help may be an advantage. A good word from management will usually move you much higher on the public service director’s list of PSA candidates.

## Successful Public Service Approaches

Offer to deliver scripts personally and, if needed, to have a member of your post available to record announcements for the station. Some stations like to have well-known members of the local community on the air with this sort of effort. Others prefer to have all announcements delivered by their own staff.

Finally, offer to make your service officer or other knowledgeable individual available to the station for programs that discuss VA benefits, etc.

### Paid Advertising

If you have even a small advertising budget, a paid commercial schedule will guarantee coverage and offer substantial leverage for your attempt to gain public service spot coverage.

In this case, we suggest you approach a station sales manager with a modest approach: “We have an important public service message to get out to the community. But we know you have far more not-for-profits looking to you for time than you can possibly accommodate. Would it be possible to get some effective coverage out of a very limited budget such as \$\_\_\_\_\_?”

Continuing, you might say, “We understand that different stations find a variety of ‘ways to help’ organizations like ours. We’ve heard of stations that build a special spot package for a good cause, which includes a number of bonus spots, while others build an advantageous spot package for the cash schedule and put our public-service spots into a good spot on the PSA list. How could you help us?”

Frequently — not always, but frequently — this approach will help you break through the attention barrier, getting you on the air and getting your post the additional public awareness you seek.

What follows are sample radio public service announcements for you to retype, inserting the correct local information. Then give a new approach a try.

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Radio Copy

### Radio Copy

Simply follow these steps to place public service announcements on stations in your area:

1. Retype the copy, putting the appropriate local information where indicated. Be flexible and open to changing the copy to make it fit station needs, etc.
2. Consider who you want to hear your announcement and which station's listeners would likely be your target. Perhaps you will work to place different announcements on different stations to properly target your message. The same message can be carried on more than one station. Do whatever it takes to make your American Legion post visible in your community.
3. Rehearse your sales pitch. Before you call the station, rehearse what you will say to the public service director to convince her or him that you need their help in promoting your service or community contributions. You may have only 60 seconds to tell your story — be prepared to do it.
4. Call the station and ask for the name of the public service director. Be certain you get correct spelling of the name. Then ask if you can speak with that individual. Set up a personal appointment if possible.
5. Make your sales pitch.
6. Be prepared to provide someone from the post to visit the station to deliver the scripts and perhaps record the announcement. Stations often seek the voice of a local citizen to deliver the message because it enhances the station's local service image.
7. If you are turned down this time, don't think you can never approach the station. Ask if another time of year is better to have the station use your message.
8. Regardless of your success, ask if you can provide a guest for a public affairs program to discuss one or more issues. For example, if you are trying to place the public service announcement about your service officer, offer to have the service officer be a guest on a program to discuss VA benefits, etc.

SECTION **SEVEN**

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

“Need-a-Lift?”

60 Seconds  
(155 words)

THE COST OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION JUST CLIMBS HIGHER!

EVEN A SCREAMING HEADLINE ABOUT THE CONTINUING INCREASES DOESN'T GET YOUR ATTENTION — UNTIL YOU OR YOUR CHILDREN FACE THE AFFORDABILITY CHALLENGE.

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN'T AFFORD COLLEGE — “THINK AGAIN. ”

COUNTLESS SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS OR LOANS FROM PRIVATE CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE AVAILABLE — IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK AND HOW TO APPLY.

I HAVE A SUGGESTION — TURN TO AMERICAN LEGION POST   #  . THAT'S RIGHT — TALK WITH   town   LEGIONNAIRES.

THEY HAVE A PUBLICATION LISTING SOURCES OF COLLEGE MONEY. IT'S CALLED “NEED-A-LIFT?” YOUR HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR SHOULD HAVE A COPY. IF NOT, CALL POST   #   AT   phone #  . TELL THEM YOU WANT TO LOOK THROUGH THE “NEED-A-LIFT?” PUBLICATION.

CALL   phone #  . FIND MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP YOU CHOP THE COLLEGE EDUCATION COST DOWN TO SIZE.

“NEED-A-LIFT?” — AN EXAMPLE OF AMERICAN LEGION DEDICATION TO THE FUTURE LEADERS OF AMERICA.

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# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

### Service Officers

60 Seconds  
(168 words)

TWENTY-SIX MILLION AMERICANS ARE MILITARY VETERANS. THEY'RE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE EARNED BENEFITS BECAUSE OF THEIR SERVICE AND SACRIFICE.

YET, TOO MANY AMERICAN VETERANS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEIR BENEFITS ARE — OR HOW TO CLAIM THEM.

ARE YOU A VETERAN WHO NEEDS TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR BENEFITS? ARE YOU GETTING WHAT YOU EARNED BY YOUR SERVICE? DO YOU NEED HELP WITH A VA CLAIM? IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, YOU NEED TO TALK WITH AMERICAN LEGION POST    #    SERVICE OFFICER           *full name*          . HE/SHE IS READY TO HELP YOU — AT NO COST.

CONTACT           *first name*           BY CALLING           *phone #*          . THAT'S           *phone #*          .

IF YOU'RE A VETERAN — IF YOU NEED ANSWERS ABOUT YOUR EARNED BENEFITS — YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF TO PICK UP THE PHONE AND MAKE THE CALL. AMERICAN LEGION POST    #    SERVICE OFFICER           *full name*           IS READY TO HELP YOU. CALL HIM/HER AT           *phone #*          .

HELPING VETERANS IS WHAT THE AMERICAN LEGION IS ALL ABOUT. WE'VE BEEN DOING IT SINCE 1919. HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

###

## SECTION **SEVEN**

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

### Youth Programs

60 Seconds  
(166 words)

HERE'S A QUICK QUIZ FOR YOU. WHAT DO GOOD CITIZENSHIP, SELF-RELIANCE AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING HAVE TO DO WITH AMERICA'S VETERANS? (PAUSE) TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF AMERICAN LEGION POST     #     IN     city/town     THE ANSWER IS — EVERYTHING.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF EVERY AMERICAN LEGION YOUTH PROGRAM. YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD OF THEM — WITHOUT ASSOCIATING THEM WITH THE NATION'S LARGEST VETERANS ORGANIZATION.

AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE AND BOYS NATION, THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST, JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS AND AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL.

OTHER PROGRAMS SUCH AS SCOUTING, MCGRUFF "TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME" AND SUICIDE PREVENTION ALLOW THE AMERICAN LEGION TO JOIN WITH OTHERS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE RIGHT HERE IN     city/town    .

IF YOU'RE A VETERAN WILLING TO MAKE A COMMITMENT TO THE YOUTH OF     city/town     — GIVE US A CALL.     phone #    . THAT'S     phone #    . ASK FOR     full name     AND TELL HIM OR HER YOU'RE READY TO HELP.

HELPING AMERICA REMAIN STRONG THROUGH VALUABLE YOUTH PROGRAMS — THAT'S THE AMERICAN LEGION.

###

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

### Post - Community Support

60 seconds

(148 words + selected text — do not exceed 170 words)

WHEN BAD NEWS IS THE FOCUS — GOOD NEWS IS OVERLOOKED. THAT'S A SHAME. HERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS FOR \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_.

A GROUP OF PEOPLE HERE DOESN'T WANT TO MAKE HEADLINES — BUT IT CERTAINLY DOES KNOW HOW TO HELP. THESE MEN AND WOMEN HAVE:

*(DONATED \_\_\_\_\_ **units** \_\_\_\_\_ OF BLOOD)*

*(CONTRIBUTED SCHOLARSHIPS WORTH \$\$\$)*

*(GAVE \$\$\$ TO COMMUNITY CHARITIES)*

*(GAVE \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ STUDENTS SCHOOL AWARDS)*

*(SPENT \$\$\$ FOR SCOUTING, YOUTH SAFETY, ETC.)*

*(THESE STATS AND/OR OTHERS AS APPROPRIATE FROM CONSOLIDATED POST ACTIVITY REPORT. BE SELECTIVE AND EDIT ITEMS TO ACHIEVE TIME.)*

WHO ARE THESE VOLUNTEERS? THE MEN AND WOMEN OF AMERICAN LEGION POST \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ RIGHT HERE IN \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_.

SINCE \_\_\_\_\_ *Year Post Chartered* \_\_\_\_\_ THESE PROUD AMERICAN VETERANS HAVE BEEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR LIVES. IF YOU'RE A VETERAN AND WOULD LIKE HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_ IN THE 21ST CENTURY — GIVE \_\_\_\_\_ *name* \_\_\_\_\_ A CALL AT \_\_\_\_\_ *phone #* \_\_\_\_\_.

THE UNIFORM IS GONE — BUT THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE REMAINS STRONG FOR MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION. CALL \_\_\_\_\_ *name* \_\_\_\_\_ AT \_\_\_\_\_ *phone #* \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_ NEEDS THE ON GOING SERVICE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION.

###

SECTION **SEVEN**

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

### American Values

60 Seconds  
(166 words)

RIGHT HERE IN \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_, WE HAVE A DEEP SENSE OF PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITY — IN THE AMERICAN FLAG THAT FLIES AT COUNTLESS HOMES AND BUSINESSES — AND IN OUR COUNTRY.

A SPECIAL BREED OF PEOPLE HERE IN \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_ NOT ONLY SHARE THIS PRIDE — THEY DO THEIR BEST TO SEE CORE VALUES PASS ALONG TO A YOUNGER GENERATION.

THEY'RE THE MEN AND WOMEN OF AMERICAN LEGION POST \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_. THAT'S RIGHT — THE AMERICAN LEGION.

THE NATION'S LARGEST VETERANS ORGANIZATION HAS FOSTERED AMERICAN PRIDE SINCE ITS FOUNDING MORE THAN 80 YEARS AGO. RIGHT NOW, THE LEGION CONTINUES TO EMPHASIZE WHAT IS RIGHT ABOUT AMERICA. LEGIONNAIRES ARE COMMUNITY LEADERS IN PRESERVING AMERICAN VALUES.

CAN LEGIONNAIRES HELP YOUR YOUTH GROUP LEARN AMERICAN PRIDE AND VALUES?

CALL \_\_\_\_\_ *full name* \_\_\_\_\_ AT \_\_\_\_\_ *phone #* \_\_\_\_\_. LET LEGIONNAIRES FROM \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_ HELP YOU. CALL \_\_\_\_\_ *phone #* \_\_\_\_\_ — WE'LL HELP YOU INSTILL THE PRIDE AND VALUES NECESSARY IN THE LEADERS OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

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# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

### Membership #1

60 Seconds  
(157 words)

BASIC MILITARY TRAINING — REMEMBER THOSE DAYS? MARCHING EVERYWHERE. EXERCISING. HURRY UP AND WAIT. SURE AM GLAD I DON'T HAVE TO MESS WITH THAT STUFF ANYMORE.

I DO MISS THE FEELINGS OF TEAMWORK AND ACCOMPLISHMENT I HAD IN THE SERVICE. AT WORK IT SEEMS EVERYONE IS INTERESTED IN GETTING AHEAD — AND THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYONE ELSE.

THEN I MET A GROUP OF VETERANS WHO HELPED ME FIND THAT OLD FEELING OF TEAMWORK. THEY'RE THE MEN AND WOMEN OF AMERICAN LEGION POST   #   IN   city/town  . WE'RE NOT MARCHING IN FORMATION — WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER FOR VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THE CHILDREN OF   city/town  .

IF YOU'RE AN ELIGIBLE VETERAN LOOKING TO ENJOY THE SENSE OF SERVICE, YOU ARE NEEDED IN THE AMERICAN LEGION TODAY.

CALL US AT   phone #  . LET US TELL YOU WHAT WE DO FOR OUR SCHOOLS AND   city/town  .

YOU'LL FIND A ROLE TODAY — MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR TOMORROW.

###

## SECTION **SEVEN**

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

Membership #2

60 Seconds

(162 + variable info-words)

WHEN I CAME BACK FROM THE GULF SOMEONE ASKED ME TO JOIN THE AMERICAN LEGION. I SAID, "NOT ME — I'M NO FLAG-WAVER."

WELL, I'VE GOTTEN OLDER SINCE THEN AND I'VE LEARNED THAT THE AMERICAN LEGION IS THERE TO FIGHT FOR ALL VETERANS' RIGHTS.

THE AMERICAN LEGION WAS THE FIRST TO TELL US GULF VETS TO GET A GOOD PHYSICAL BEFORE WE GOT OUT, JUST IN CASE HEALTH PROBLEMS CROPPED UP. THEY WERE RIGHT. HERE IN           *phone #*           MEMBERS OF OUR POST ARE DOING WHAT THEY CAN TO HELP VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND ALL OUR CHILDREN.

JUST LAST YEAR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF POST       *#*      :

(In the next few lines use only what is applicable to your post and will fit within time restraints)

*(DONATED           units           OF BLOOD)*

*(CONTRIBUTED SCHOLARSHIPS WORTH \$\$\$)*

*(GAVE \$\$\$ TO COMMUNITY CHARITIES)*

*(GAVE       #       STUDENTS SCHOOL AWARDS)*

*(SPENT \$\$\$ FOR SCOUTING, YOUTH SAFETY, ETC.)*

*(THESE STATS AND/OR OTHERS AS APPROPRIATE FROM CONSOLIDATED POST ACTIVITY REPORT.*

*BE SELECTIVE AND EDIT ITEMS TO ACHIEVE TIME.)*

SO, IF YOU'RE A VETERAN CALL           *full name*           AT           *phone #*          . HE'LL/SHE'LL BE GLAD TO TELL YOU MORE ABOUT WHAT WE DO.

CALL           *first name*          . YOUR LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ARE UNLIMITED AS A MEMBER OF POST       *#*      . AS FOR BEING A FLAG-WAVER — WELL, I GUESS I AM.

*###*

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

### Membership #3

60 Seconds  
(154 words)

IF YOU'RE A VETERAN OF WARTIME SERVICE THERE ARE MANY REASONS TO BELONG TO THE AMERICAN LEGION. IT'S A SOUND VALUE FOR A FEW BUCKS.

AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERS ENJOY BENEFITS SUCH AS:

A DISCOUNT EYE-WEAR PLAN — A DISCOUNT PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM —

A SUBSCRIPTION TO AN AWARD-WINNING MAGAZINE — HOTEL AND RENTAL CAR TRAVEL DISCOUNTS — POSSIBLE FINANCIAL AIDE FOLLOWING A NATURAL DISASTER — AND MUCH MORE.

WHEN I RETURNED FROM THE PERSIAN GULF, I JOINED THE AMERICAN LEGION BECAUSE IT IS MAKING SURE OUR HEALTH CONCERNS ARE HEARD BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THAT'S JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. IF YOU'RE A VETERAN AND WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT THE AMERICAN LEGION HERE IN \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_ IS DOING — GIVE US A CALL. CALL \_\_\_\_\_ *phone #* \_\_\_\_\_ AND TALK WITH \_\_\_\_\_ *name* \_\_\_\_\_. THE NUMBER AGAIN: \_\_\_\_\_ *phone #* \_\_\_\_\_.

CALL TODAY — THERE IS MORE TO THE AMERICAN LEGION THAN MEETS THE EYE.

###

SECTION **SEVEN**

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

Membership #4

60 Seconds

(129 + variable words)

HERE ARE A FEW WORDS FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE TIRED OF FANCY PRODUCTIONS. THIS IS A NO-FRILLS COMMERCIAL.

THE AMERICAN LEGION IS INVOLVED IN \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_ — HAS BEEN FOR FOUR GENERATIONS.

IF YOU'RE AN ELIGIBLE WARTIME VETERAN, YOU COULD TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN HELPING US SERVE MORE VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THE CHILDREN OF \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_ IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

(AT THIS POINT LIST SOME OF THE PROGRAMS INVOLVING SCHOOLS, VETERANS AND THE COMMUNITY. AT LEAST FOUR OR FIVE PROJECTS YOU WOULD LIKE POTENTIAL MEMBERS TO BE AWARE OF.)

NOT ONLY CAN YOU HELP RIGHT HERE IN \_\_\_\_\_ *city/town* \_\_\_\_\_ — YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD ENTITLES YOU TO COST SAVINGS PROGRAMS FOR EYEWEAR AND FOR PRESCRIPTIONS.

CALL \_\_\_\_\_ *phone #* \_\_\_\_\_ TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN BECOME A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION. THAT'S \_\_\_\_\_ *phone #* \_\_\_\_\_. FOUR GENERATIONS OF VETERANS HAVE STOOD FIRM FOR YOU — NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO STAND FIRM FOR THE FUTURE.

JOIN THE AMERICAN LEGION!

###

# Successful Public Service Approaches

## Sample Radio Scripts

### **Want to have these radio commercials custom-made for your post — FREE?**

**Write to:**

The American Legion Public Relations Division,  
P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

Provide the necessary names, phone numbers, etc., for the commercials and we will produce the spots and send them directly to the radio station account executive on audio cassette, digital audio tape or via e-mail.

This is a new service. Please allow three weeks for delivery to the station.