

SECTION EIGHT

Advertising Sometimes It Makes Sense

As a nonprofit veterans service organization, The American Legion conducts veterans and community-service programs that can be publicized for free with public service announcements in both print and electronic media. Newspapers and broadcast stations frequently donate space and time to free activities that benefit their audience. This service is offered voluntarily on a case-by-case basis as a public service as space and time allow. Clearly their priority is to “sell” the space or time commercially to bring in revenue – the reason they are in business.

There are a number of reasons to consider purchasing media advertising, even if you are successful in placing post program information as public service material.

Membership in Corporate Community

By doing business with local media, you establish a relationship as a respected corporate entity. It is clearly easier to open doors within the newspaper or broadcast station when your post is on the list of advertisers. Promoting a Legion news story or publicizing a veterans event may be easier when there is an established positive business interface.

Visibility When Needed

Purchasing advertising puts you in control. Your American Legion message will run exactly when you want it for as long as you want it. For example, a post could advertise for new members in time to process them well in advance of deadlines to qualify for appropriate awards. Promotion of the Oratorical Contest could solicit young students to apply in time to enter post competition. “Need-A-Lift?” booklets could be promoted in consonance with the time of year students and parents are seriously looking at colleges for graduating seniors. Whatever American Legion program or service a post may want to promote, running an ad in a newspaper or a spot on radio and television lets you select your audience when and in what media you choose.

Maximum Outreach

When you buy broadcast time, you can select the exact programs, radio station format and time of day to send your message. While a free public service announcement may not cost your post a penny, it may air at 3 a.m. when most folks you need to reach are sound asleep. If you buy time, you can select the exact personality and program you want the spot to run on and the specific time window to run it. Clearly, a radio spot about the benefits of joining The American Legion will reach a maximum audience during the morning or afternoon drive time when most people are going to or returning home from work in their vehicles.

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Target the Audience

Buying advertising enables narrow selection of the intended audience based on intent and budget. A post reaching out to young, active-duty military personnel can use rock or hip-hop format radio stations during the times when most are commuting to and from the nearby base or post. Looking for mid-grade NCOs and petty officers? Consider country and adult-contemporary radio stations. If older veterans are the targets of a current campaign, examine the possibility of advertising on talk, oldies or country format radio stations and the local newspaper.

Campaign vs. Targeted Advertising

When Procter & Gamble sells soap, it launches a media campaign to reach the maximum number of consumers to sell the highest number of bars of soap to make the maximum number of dollars. It does this by determining the best period of time to “saturate” consumers with its message. Then, it buys a blitz of advertising on television, radio, cable systems and newspapers that make it impossible to not see or hear the message within a two- or three-week period. For manufacturers, advertising campaigns pay off because consumers respond by buying products that more than pay for the cost of advertising.

Unless your post is unusually large or is enjoying the proceeds from a rich benefactor’s multi million-dollar estate, the full-blown campaign approach is probably not a viable option to reach out to your community.

Targeted Advertising

Selecting one or two media outlets at a time to carry your post’s message is a more practical and economic approach to advertising. It enables a message to be tailored specifically to the intended demographic at an affordable price for a measured period of time that can be analyzed for effectiveness and future use.

The key to effective advertising is maximum repetition of the message. The more often readers, viewers or listeners receive your message, the more prone they are to take the action step in your message.

What is the Best Medium in Which to Advertise?

Each media has advantages and disadvantages based on the type of message and audience you want to reach.

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Television

Allows highly defined selection of audience. Station sales representatives can tailor advertising based on your post's objective. For example, if recruiting young, active-duty military women is your objective, you would not choose advertising during an ice hockey game. Looking for younger male veterans? Don't put Oprah Winfrey as your first choice. You would do well to consider televised sports coverage or spots during the sports section of the local newscast. Television buys you a large number of viewers for your message. The potential downside is relatively high cost per spot.

Cable

As with local television stations, you have the high degree of selectivity of programs. The advantage of advertising with a cable system is a much broader range of programs and a significantly lower cost. Cable advertising executives can tailor a schedule to get your message to the widest number of the folks that you need to reach and usually are willing to assemble custom packages to suit your requirements.

Radio

Radio stations can provide some of the best advertising bargains for reaching out to specific audiences. As a rule, AM radio stations tend to feature news, sports, religious and talk formats with loyal audiences. Many cover veterans affairs, national security and social issues on a regular basis. FM stations tend to be formatted according to types of music and entertainment.

Radio advertising can be affordable, depending on the size of the station's audience, power of its transmitter and signal reach. Obviously the smaller the station, the lower the cost of advertising. Spending post dollars with the local "mom and pop" station in town will be affordable but must be weighed against the message and who you are trying to reach. If promoting American Legion "Need-A-Lift?" booklets is the goal, this would be a good selection. If recruiting young veterans is the objective, another station with a rock or hip-hop music format might be more appropriate.

When considering radio advertising, become familiar with all the radio stations covering your area. Select those you think might be best for your message, then meet with station sales executives. Be prepared to ask plenty of questions about their track record, personal recommendations and expected results.

Radio executives can offer a variety of specials, including two free spots for every one purchased and discounts for length of time spots are run, as well as different time periods during the day. Cost can range from \$2 a spot with small stations up to several hundred dollars for spots on clear channel, 50,000-watt stations that transmit over several states.

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Metro Traffic

Found in most mid- to large-size markets, Metro Traffic provides rush-hour traffic reports to a good number of radio stations serving the city or metro area. Sponsors “buy” individual traffic reports by the week. A common purchase would be 180 reports over a two-week period on a number of different stations. The advantage is being able to reach out to virtually all target audiences during peak hours with the undivided attention of commuters. The reports can include all format stations. Each report includes a “brought to you by The American Legion.” The report ends with a 10-second trailer such as the following:

OPEN: This report brought to you by The American Legion...

(Report on traffic)

Closing messages:

- #1 If you're a military veteran, you know there's strength in numbers. Join The American Legion of the 21st century. Become a Legionnaire. Call Post # at (number).
- #2 Serving men and women in uniform – today and tomorrow. There's a place for you in The American Legion. Join today's American Legion. Call (number).
- #3 Today's military is the best ever – and you need the best pay and technology. We believe you should have it. Join the nation's strongest voice for a strong military — The American Legion on the Web at (post Web site address).
- #4 Active duty or retired – you need to be a member of The American Legion of the 21st century. Continue the legacy of the American veteran. Become a Legionnaire. Call (number).
- #5 Military service builds a common bond – The American Legion continues that bond for the future. Find your role in The American Legion of the 21st century. Join on the Web at (post Web site address).
- #6 Duty. Honor. Country. Legionnaires share that commitment with you today. Won't you share that commitment with us? Become a Legionnaire. Call (number). Start making a difference for tomorrow – today.
- #7 The world is a dangerous place. The service and sacrifice of active-duty and retired military members deserve the best benefits. Become a Legionnaire and help fight for your rights. Call (number).
- #8 Want to get involved in American Legion Baseball, Boys Nation, High School Oratorical, youth programs and health care for veterans? Join today's American Legion. Call (number).

In keeping with the old adage “you get what you pay for,” metro traffic is highly effective but relatively expensive. As an economic alternative, consider approaching one radio station of your format choice that does traffic reports and request a traffic sponsorship with their station alone.

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Newspapers

Placing an ad in newspapers can also reach specific audiences, depending on which section the ad is placed, the size (full page to small column) or insert (a postcard or membership application). Weekly newspapers are more cost effective. Daily newspapers more expensive depending on area served and size of circulation.

Consider neighborhood sections in major metropolitan dailies.

Advertise in the section that best reaches your target audience – sports, gardening, cooking, national news, neighborhood news or even the obituary section. Cost will vary according to placement, size and frequency.

Specialty Advertising

Billboards offer long term, high visibility for The American Legion message. They offer the advantage of frequent repetition of the message for commuters who see it several times a day. Cost will vary depending on location (more for placement on high volume arteries), size, lighted or electronic board, and length of showing. One month is an industry standard, but all lengths are negotiable.

Regional publications such as pennysavers, city magazines and local corporate in-house newsletters offer additional exposure at widely varying ad rates.

School newspapers and broadcast stations sometimes offer opportunities to advertise. Check locally for advertising opportunities to reach your ads on Legion youth programs.

The Internet offers thousands of opportunities to advertise, including annoying “pop-up” ads that may do more harm than good. As a method of reaching out to veterans within range of your post, use of this medium is not recommended. Internet advertising is expensive because it reaches a world-wide audience.

Bottom Line: Cost vs. Expectations

American Legion posts don't sell widgets or framistans, so the direct result of advertising goes frequently unmeasured. Depending on the number of phone calls, membership applications or Web site hits immediately following ads or spots promoting them, success can sometimes be immediately determined. At other times, results will be purely subjective, merely enhancing the image of your post in the community.



Advertising

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A post advertising campaign can run anywhere from several hundred dollars to tens of thousands, depending on the media selected and length of run. Regardless of your budget, advertising will enhance your post image, improve relations with local media, and expose The American Legion to both veterans and the general public.

As with all American Legion Public Relations techniques, advertising is not a requirement. It is but yet another tool in the box of telling The American Legion story and reaching out to your community. If your post can afford it, try it — but ease into it. Like investing in the stock market, immerse your post slowly into advertising. You might just find it more successful than expected.

National American Legion Advertising

The question frequently is asked: why doesn't National Headquarters conduct a national campaign to advertise for members?

The answer: money. As a nonprofit, member-based organization, money from dues is primarily directed to fund the programs of The American Legion. A three-week national advertising campaign to saturate newspapers and television networks would cost literally millions of dollars. While a small amount of funds is reserved for advertising with targeted media such as the *Army Times*, *Navy Times*, *Air Force Times* and *Marine Corps Times*, the focus of the National Public Relations Commission is the production of camera-ready and broadcast-ready media products for use by posts in their local media relations program. As a grassroots organization, each post is the heart of The American Legion. Each post with its unique personality and programs needs plenty of members to best serve its community.

While the objective is to obtain news coverage and place American Legion media materials as a public service, the cost of advertising locally, if necessary, is within reach of most posts.

The National Public Relations Commission stands ready to assist American Legion posts with recommendations, suggestions and pre-produced media products that can be used in both public service campaigns and local advertising efforts. Suggestions on the development of new and unique media tools promoting The American Legion are always welcome.

Message Points

Key to Telling the Legion Story

The fear of public speaking ranks near the top of human fears. It's natural to be cautious when a news reporter wants to interview you or a member of your post's leadership. Overcoming the cautious feelings, however, provides you a prime opportunity to tell The American Legion story at home. Understanding a few key principles and putting "message points" to work for you will take the process from one of uncertainty to one of meaningful direction.

The Interview

Before you do an interview, make certain you have a story to tell. If you do not have a message to tell readers, viewers or listeners, forego the interview. Why? Because simply answering the questions without having a story to tell, means The American Legion's message is relegated to whether the reporter asks the "right question."

Subordinating the message of The American Legion to the assumption that the reporter knows the history of the organization fails to serve the best interest of the reporter, who wants all the facts. Moreover, simply answering questions with one's own opinion fails to serve the best interest of the organization.

Take into account that nearly every conceivable interview topic gives a representative of The American Legion an occasion to point out the organization's position. The message of the organization is information that, frankly, a reporter might find integral to telling a story.

The American Legion's positions on issues are taken from resolutions passed by delegates to the annual National Convention or by action of the National Executive Committee. The American Legion has many positions on many topics that determine the legislative priorities of the organization. Getting them understood and reported is a challenge that local post officers can help meet. Once reported, the story also clarifies the organization's credibility on a given issue and answers the central question of a potential member of The American Legion: "What does The American Legion stand for?"

If a reporter asks about the viability of today's Montgomery GI Bill benefits, it is important to point out that The American Legion wrote the original GI Bill.

If a reporter asks about the qualities of American Legion Boys State delegates, it is not out of line to explain that the advancement of Americanism is the reason The American Legion conducts a Boys State program.

What if the interview topic is the war on terrorism? As one explains The American Legion's support for eradicating terrorism, it is remiss to dodge the organization's position on the use of U.S. forces. You do not have to wait to be asked directly about an American Legion position; this is relevant and important information.

How do you ensure that the important facts are included in the interview? Study message points prior to the interview. And, during the interview, "stay on message."

Message Points

Key to Telling the Legion Story

The National Public Relations office maintains a package of message points on all major issues of The American Legion. They are updated annually to accommodate resolutions passed by delegates to the National Convention.

Use these message points to prepare for interviews or reactions to related news stories. Message points are available free from the national Public Relations office or may be found on The American Legion Web site, http://www.legion.org/our_legion/ol_depts_posts.htm. (The messages points are not publicly highlighted on The American Legion Internet pages but are found on the “Our Legion” Department and Posts page.

Properly used, message points make it possible to handle interviews by reporters for newspapers, radio and television stations. They also save the day when it comes to appearing as a guest on local talk-radio programs or television public affairs programs.



Staying On Message

National Security Deputy Director Mike Duggan gives a 2002 interview with the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network in regard to American Legion support of military funeral honors for deceased veterans.

Most of us learned at a young age that when asked a question, answer it and don't wait for another to be asked. Just sit down. If we were asked another question we followed the same process: answer and sit down. A diagram of such a conversation would look like this:

Q, A. Q, A. Q, A. Q, A.

We call this a “Question-Answer – Question-Answer – Question-Answer” dialogue. In this situation the individual asking the question has complete control.

But when an individual is being interviewed, you must go beyond simply answering the question. The individual being interviewed seeks to take control of the interview with the use of information from message points. To take control you simply answer the question and then add the relevant position of the organization. This is not being deceptive. This is “staying on message,” making certain that facts we deem fundamentally important to the interview are not overlooked.

Message Points

Key to Telling the Legion Story

This technique serves the best interest of the media and The American Legion. A diagram of this type of interview would look like this:

Q, A.A.A. - Q, A.A.A. - Q, A.A.A.

We call this a “Question-Answer-Answer-Answer” dialogue. You take control. You answer the question and then bridge to your message points.

Here’s a transcript of a portion of an interview on CNN’s “Showdown: Iraq” program that aired 12:30 p.m., EST, Oct. 31, 2002. The American Legion assisted CNN in finding two Gulf War veterans, one opposed to a then-potential war in Iraq and the other in favor of it.

American Legion Legislative Director Steve Robertson was in CNN’s Washington studio. Eric Gustafson of Veterans for Common Sense was in a studio in Madison, Wis. The moderator was Wolf Blitzer.

Robertson took control of the interview by explaining the organization’s position on the use of U.S. troops, even though he was asked merely to react to Gustafson’s remarks. Robertson knew his message prior to the interview. He had stated The American Legion’s support for the war on terrorism prior to the excerpt. He answers Blitzer’s question. But Robertson does not stop there; he adds an essential American Legion message, which is highlighted in boldface. His message is not an opinion. His message comes directly from a National Security Commission resolution approved by delegates to The American Legion National Convention.

BLITZER: You were there, Eric, during the Gulf War. What did you see and what did you do that convinces you now is not the time to, quote, finish the job, supposedly?

GUSTAFSON: Well, I mean, it’s a very different situation. In 1991, I was involved in an operation with the U.S. military as part of an international coalition to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. I mean, this was a case when you had one U.N. member state invade another U.N. member state. The very U.N. charter had been violated, and it was the right thing to do.

In this case, we are the ones that could be violating the U.N. charter by deciding that we will overthrow a sovereign government.

BLITZER: Steve, what do you say about that?

ROBERTSON: First of all, when we got on the plane to leave [in 1991], I didn’t think there was a troop that got on the plane that didn’t think we’d be back. It was just a matter of time. But I think there are three very important things that have to be done. **Number one, we have to have clear objectives of what we’re trying to achieve; number two, we need the support of Congress and the American people; and number three, which is probably the most important, we have to have a withdrawal strategy: how are we going to back out?**

Message Points

Key to Telling the Legion Story

BLITZER: All right. We will have to, unfortunately, leave it there. Steve Robertson and Eric Gustafson, thanks to both of you for joining us.

ROBERTSON: Thanks.

GUSTAFSON: Thanks.

This Q-A-A-A approach will work for every media encounter post Public Relations officers and others are called upon to handle.

Remember: the only reason you or your representatives are consenting to the interview is because you have a message to tell. Before the interview begins, know your message points. Then work to get your message points in the interview by taking control.

Bridging

What would happen if you were involved in an interview about a major event at your post? You were prepared with message points in mind but were never asked the question to give you the opportunity to “get on message?” Taking control becomes natural when you understand a few tricks of the trade.

Seldom will a reporter ask you the “right” question. That is where the simple process of “bridging” comes into the picture.

Bridging is used to move from your quick answer to the question into the first of your message points. Bridging is as simple as moving from the answer to the question with a phrase. Some examples:

“The real issue here ...”

“Yet, it’s really a case of ...”

“What is important ...”

“That is just the first step ...”

With practice you will soon learn how to take control without regard to the question asked.

A common misconception is that you only need to make your point once. In fact, the more you make the same point the better chance your message point will be aired on radio or television or printed in the newspaper. Interviews that last 15 minutes or more demand that you make your point over and over again because only a brief part of what you say will make it to the story.

Message Points

Key to Telling the Legion Story

Flagging

The technique to make it easy for a reporter to remember your key point is known as “flagging”. Think of flagging as a way of telling your best friend the most important point of an issue. When you’ve covered a lot of information over 15 or 20 minutes of interview, flagging will help the reporter sort out the key point – quickly.

Many times an interview will end with the reporter asking if you’d like to say something that hasn’t been covered. That’s the perfect time to “flag” by reemphasizing the most important point. The simple phrase: “Yes, if you only remember one thing in looking at this issue ... remember ...”

An opportunity to “flag” will often arise earlier in the interview, and you can do it by using strong phrases such as:

“There are many facets to the problem – but what you must remember is ...”

“The most important fact to remember is ...”

“It all boils down to ...”

Flagging always leads to your most important message point. By returning to that point several times in the interview you help the reporter understand what is important.

In every interview situation you will find *you* know the central issue better than the reporter. That is why the media has come to you or a post member. You are the experts. You understand the “human” impact of the issue. Take advantage of this position by helping the reporter grasp the complexity of the issue – make it obvious to them what is most important. They get an understanding of the issues and then report the “message points” that you make certain they absorb.

Message points, as explained earlier in this handbook, may be obtained from the National Public Relations Commission or from The American Legion Web site.

Interviews

Bountiful Variety – Unlimited Opportunity

Taking advantage of a media interview is perhaps the best way to tell The American Legion family story. It's important to recognize that interviews come in different varieties to meet the needs of various media. The one common denominator of all the interviews is the use of message points (Section 9).

When you look at specific interview opportunities they can include:

- Newspaper
- Talk radio
- Radio news
- Radio public affairs
- Television news
- Television public/community affairs

Newspaper

Newspaper reporters present the largest interview spectrum of all media. They can call you for a quick comment on a breaking news story. They can call and visit you for a feature story on a program or activity. They can even rewrite your news release or media advisory. No matter the angle, your objective remains unchanged: tell your story by using message points.

When a newspaper reporter calls for the reaction of local members of The American Legion to something current and relevant you must learn the facts and check to see if National Headquarters has issued a statement and posted it on the Web. If so, this information becomes the basis of your message points. If not, use your best judgment. If you don't feel comfortable answering questions, politely decline the interview.

On the other hand, if the issue is about veterans health care or illness among groups of veterans, The American Legion has a history of pressing the government to do the right thing. As a strong veterans advocate in your community, you enhance the organization image by helping the reporters with the local aspect. Here your message points become the history of the organization and your post and, if applicable, how your post service officer can help others.

Talk Radio

Talk radio is a news resource that shouldn't be overlooked. Talk radio is a powerful advertising medium that attracts listeners who pay attention. It serves the basic need for connection with the community and develops tremendous awareness. Talk radio is a great opportunity to get ideas across with a minimum of effort.

Talk radio has many advantages. You are not misquoted. You can do radio interviews from any phone, anytime, anywhere. You'll have captive audiences of thousands – even millions of listeners depending on the show.

SECTION **TEN**

Interviews

Bountiful Variety – Unlimited Opportunity

The growth of talk radio over the past 23 years has been phenomenal. In 1980, the United States had 75 talk radio stations. Today, more than 1,400 are broadcasting. Talk radio is still booming. Local talk radio will always be open to program ideas about veterans issues. The American Legion cannot overlook local talk radio as a way to reach the general public with its message. When the opportunity arises, talk radio also welcomes callers to express diverse views. Again, just calling the show in progress to comment on a guest or an issue puts you in position to communicate an important 'message point.

Often talk radio can be contentious. That is the way talk hosts like to work because it brings out both sides of issues. Mix in telephone callers and you can end up with people who disagree with you and challenge you. There is a way to deal with this aspect and it makes it less stressful for you. Do not get drawn into a argument with another guest or callers. Talk with the show host only, address your answers to that person and never refer to the other guest or caller by name. This simple technique keeps your appearance on a professional level and you stay on point.

- If the caller or other guest says something you know is wrong, say so in a straight forward manner and then bridge to your message point: "That is simply an incorrect statement. The most important fact to remember is ..."
- Remember the bridging technique when someone gets off in left field, simply return to your message point: "The real issue here ..."

You won't often encounter these controversial talk show events. The bottom line in doing talk radio shows: if you don't think you'll be able to get your message points across in a professional manner, decline the offer.

Radio News

Radio news interviews are generally the easiest to handle. They are most often done via telephone. They take only a few minutes. Because of the repetitive nature of radio news, this interview may be included in newscasts for more than 24 hours. If your interview sticks to the key message points, the story will be told. Preparation for a radio news interview is easy: spread your message point notes on the table for quick and easy reference and take control from the beginning.

Radio Public Affairs Program

Besides talk radio nearly every station airs one or more public affairs programs. These are generally recorded in advance and deal with an upcoming community event or ongoing issue. When you look to communicate your message, these programs are an open door to the community.

Contacting the station's public affairs director to learn how you can suggested a topic and a guest is the first step. Once the recording session is set you just take your message points with you. When you sit around the table for the interview, spread your message point pages out so you can quickly find the right notes. Then put the techniques of Section 9 into action.

Interviews

Bountiful Variety - Unlimited Opportunity

Television News

When television crews are involved there is a tendency to forget that the Post Public Relations officer and others still retain control. They come to your post home as your guests. Take them to your finest room for the interview. The social center of your post is no place for these crews. Again, rely on your message points to provide the foundation for telling your story.

With television news you will know the topic of the interview before the crew shows up. This provides time to study your message points, clean up a location for the interview and put your best organizational foot forward. If the interview is conducted with the subject seated at a table, spread those message points out in plain view. Don't be shy about referring to them before you start to answer the question. The interview tape will be edited – pauses will not hurt.

Television Public Affairs

Again, this is a program recorded in advance. As a guest, The American Legion representative will be seated in a chair or on a couch on the set designed to look comfortable and welcoming. Doing one of these programs is an excellent opportunity to add credibility and community acceptance to your efforts. If the set will handle the discreet placement of your 'message point' notes where you can see them easily, then have them available. However, for this type of program you are there to talk about your message and you should not require access to them to answer every question and bridge to your message points.

Let Media Know of The Local American Legion Source

You and other key members of your post are ready to be interviewed. You have a story to tell. The next step is to let those in the media know about you. Let's consider an effort to become a guest on a local talk show for a specific example. Just keep in mind the idea will work for every other interview opportunity as well.

Fax a media advisory (sample at end of section) to the producer of the show. Make a follow-up call to the radio station. Ask to talk with the producer of the show. Express your interest in being a guest, either in the studio or over the phone. It may be live or pre-recorded. Emphasize the useful and interesting information that you can provide their listeners. Set a date and time and be certain to be early and fully prepared.

SECTION **TEN**

Interviews

Bountiful Variety – Unlimited Opportunity

Appearance

Regardless of the interview situation, always wear The American Legion cap for a photograph or television interview. If the interview takes place at your American Legion post, an ideal location would have The American Legion Emblem or the U.S. Flag as a backdrop, most likely in the meeting room of the post home.

When appearing on a television public affairs program you should dress professionally. With modern digital equipment, few colors cause problems. The two major colors to avoid: red and white. Without getting into technical jargon, red will change the color temperature of your skin as it appears to a television camera. White will tend to make your face look darker. A light blue shirt or blouse will look better, and the technical crew at a television station will appreciate your thoughtfulness.

As for patterns or texture in clothing, problems develop with herringbone or similar weaves. The television camera will often create a distortion: tightly placed pattern lines may appear on the screen as a wavy effect. Solid colors work best.

The best way to summarize the idea of your appearance for television: think of it as presenting the image of yourself and our organization in a way that others will sense your professionalism. Someone who sees the story or show might make a decision to join based on what the organization stands for and the professional appearance of those who represent your local post.

The Interview Advisory

What follows is a sample media advisory seeking to put someone from your post on radio, television or even in a newspaper feature story. These can never be a fill-in-the-blank effort because each media “pitch” is different. Look it over. Adapt it to your needs. Send it to the appropriate media contact and stay at it until you ‘tell your story.’

Interviews

Sample Talk Radio Advisory

Place on post letterhead with all fields completed.

MEDIA ADVISORY

(Month) (Date), 200X

Legionnaires Fight for Service-Disabled Military Retirees

WHO: Wartime veterans at American Legion Post *(Number)*

WHAT: Available to discuss the organization's fight for "concurrent receipt" legislation to invalidate Uncle Sam's unjust, 100-year-old practice: Most military retirees, with disabilities related to military service, receive a cut in their retired pay from the Defense Department equal to their disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Service-disabled veterans who retire from civilian federal agencies receive full retired pay and disability compensation.

WHEN: Today through the balance of this Congress. Available live between *(Time)* a.m. and *(Time)* p.m. for taped or live phone interviews.

WHERE: *(Post Address), (Post Phone Number)*

BACKGROUND

Congress established a special pay from the Defense Department for service-disabled military retirees either awarded the Purple Heart or who have sustained service-connected "disability ratings" of at least 60 percent during combat, combat training or otherwise hazardous duty. This special pay makes up for disability compensation stripped from the retired pay of some 30,000 military retirees. Meanwhile, in the 108th Congress, the Legion continues to fight for legislation to correct the injustice faced by hundreds of thousands of additional military retirees who have service-connected conditions.

Founded in Paris in 1919 by a group of World War I veterans, the 2.8-million-member American Legion, author of the original GI Bill, is the nation's largest veterans organization. For information on American Legion programs and advocacy, visit us on the Web: *(post Web site)* / **www.legion.org**.

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

Planning Special Community Events

The success of any Public Relations project requires an effort to increase the awareness of The American Legion family in the local community. Throughout this handbook, tools to handle the challenge have been provided in step-by-step fashion. Now it is time to take the individual pieces and blend them together to create a Public Relations campaign of which you can be proud.

In recent years, posts, units and squadrons have joined together to create special local events supported by a cohesive Public Relations effort. Using planning materials provided by the National Public Relations Commission staff, volunteers led communities in “A Day to Remember” on Sept. 11, rekindled the Blue Star Service Banner program and successfully located thousands of veterans needing VA health care during the “I Am Not A Number” campaign.

Using the basics drawn from these specific efforts successful local events can be conducted using available volunteer resources. Let’s look at the various elements of organizing a special community event.

- Step 1: Recognize the potential for an event and gather key planners for a meeting.
- Step 2: Write a mission statement. This will keep everyone focused on the mission throughout.
- Step 3: Develop an outline for the actual event. Answer 5 W’s and the H. Put it in writing.
- Step 4: Contact other organizations, civic leaders, etc., to invite their participation and support.
- Step 5: Seek sponsorship (Section 12).
- Step 6: Seek student participation (if appropriate).
- Step 7: Begin Public Relations efforts:
 - a) Write a proclamation (if appropriate) for mayor or other civic leader.
 - b) Contact television public affairs director seeking promotional support (Section 3).
 - c) Contact radio public affairs director seeking promotional support (Section 3).
 - d) Advertise (Section 8).
 - e) Develop event script. (Step by step, by time, approach to the event. Provides words for the master of ceremonies and timing estimations to keep event flowing. This event script is prepared by the Public Relations volunteer working with the entire organizing committee.
 - f) Issue news release(s) (Section 5).
 - g) Issue potential guest editorial by your Commander/President (Section 6).
 - h) Issue media advisory (Section 5).
 - i) Make final phone calls to media news desks (Section 3).
- Step 8: Conduct event.
- Step 9: Conduct post-event meeting of key planners. Discuss good and bad aspects. Prepare for future.

Planning Special Community Events

Certainly this is a simplification of the process. Yet, following these nine steps over a period of several months, you will be successful. Never forget this is a post-coordinated event for your community. The entire event management is not the responsibility of the post Public Relations volunteer. Other members of the post and your community *must* be involved. In modern management terms it is called getting “buy-in.” You want to have others “own” this event. With a team that “owns” the event, your potential for success is greatly multiplied.

How far in advance should you begin the event planning process? That depends on your individual situation. It is generally best to allow some five months of preparation for an event. Sometimes permits are needed from the community. These take time. The sooner you begin the overall planning, the more success the Public Relations effort will have and the more members of the community you will attract.

Remember: the success of any Public Relations officer requires an effort to increase the awareness of The American Legion family in the local community. A major community event, influenced heavily by The American Legion family, is an important part of creating an image that, in turn, makes membership recruitment easier.

Partnerships & Sponsorship

Challenge: Your post does not have unlimited funds to conduct special events.

Solution: Strike a partnership or sponsorship arrangement.

Concept: Share the overall event program with your partner or sponsor. They help with big-ticket items and members of The American Legion family provide volunteers to make it work.

You can not watch or listen to a major sporting event today without hearing the name of the “sponsored stadium.” We have 3Com Park, the RCA Dome and Qualcomm Stadium. Then you have the Busch Series and Winston Cup auto racing. Don’t forget the Bank of the West Tennis Tournament and the Buick Open Golf Tournament.

Clearly, building partnerships and sponsorships is what it takes for a successful event in this day and age. True, you are not working on the scale of these events. But the idea is the same. You look to create a mutually beneficial arrangement with a local company.

For an event that will not take large cash outlays, seek a partnership with a local newspaper, radio station or television station. Letting them have their name associated with the event gives you a partner in promotion. It’s a trade-off that benefits both the media outlet and The American Legion family.

If the event will need several thousand dollars in underwriting support, seek a sponsorship with a local business. The possibilities are endless. Use your imagination and then go after the sponsor just as you would a new member: ask.

In making a sponsorship work, you need to consider the budget needed for the event and the amount of exposure you and the sponsor will obtain. Then together work out the details. How you name the event will take discussion. Consider all possibilities.

With a partnership or sponsorship you might end up with an event that has a title with the name of the sponsor. Or you might have an event brought to you by a partner and The American Legion family. Just be sure to keep your partner or sponsor family-friendly.

If you want to pursue funding support from national companies with local outlets (Wal-Mart, Pep Boys, Circuit City, Best Buy, Lowe’s, The Home Depot), you will most likely need to obtain a form from the local store manager. Then submit the form with all the details of the event, etc., and then see if you get a piece of the pie. These are not impossible sponsors, but you will probably have a higher success rate if you focus on local and regional businesses.

If the first, second, third and fourth potential sponsor or partner declines, simply keep on looking. With persistence and perhaps an inside contact through members of the post, unit or squadron, you will make a connection.

In all your years of volunteer work, you realize that you feel good when someone offers a word of thanks for your effort. The same holds true for your sponsors and partners. You could not organize an event that impacts hundreds or thousands of your fellow citizens and veterans without the support of your sponsors and partners. Publicly make that support known before, during and after the event.

Partnerships & Sponsorship

Finally, never lose sight of the mission statement from Section 11, Planning Special Events. That is the purpose of the event: fulfillment of a mission for The American Legion family. The sponsor or partner will “buy in” to the event much quicker and help meet the needs if they feel connected to the mission.

If much of this discussion on partnerships and sponsorships seems vague, that’s for a good reason. There is no right way to find a partner or a sponsor. There is no right company for a given event. The right solution can only be found through local contacts and hard work.

The result will be a well-organized event with a suitable budget and a media partner to help bring out the citizens. It’s a winning combination.

National American Legion Press Association (NALPA)

The National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) is an association of editors, writers, business managers, historians, Public Relations officers and staff personnel who are members of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and other subsidiary organizations.

Founded in 1923 as an adjunct to the Legion's early publications committee, NALPA was established to facilitate communications, from the national organization to the post level, within The American Legion. Through a network of active members, NALPA fulfills the mission by encouraging idea exchanges among members; promoting the development of local communications; advancing training through information dissemination; enhancing professional development; promoting the Legion's goals; and acting as a voice of the association's membership.

We like to think of NALPA as the image-makers of The American Legion, and we strive to let people know what The American Legion is – especially on the post level.

NALPA is a professional association of Legion Public Relations officers, editors and staff members of publications who come together to enhance their trades. Through local publications, NALPA encourages posts and departments to promote The American Legion objectives to the membership. All members hear about the national agenda from National Headquarters' publications and mailings, but many don't always know what is happening in their own back yards. A well-done post newsletter bridges that gap.

We have found that posts with newsletters have a more active membership that is greater in numbers. When people get that post information in their hands, they know what is going on in their area and can share it with potential members, as well as take action to make a difference for veterans and their families.

Post newsletters also assist older veterans who can't get out much. This might be the only communication they have with the post. They, like everyone else, deserve to be informed about what is going on.

NALPA's association with the National Public Relations Division and *The American Legion Magazine*, has made it easier for the average NALPA Legionnaire to keep up-to-date on the happenings of The American Legion if he or she is a NALPA member. In recent years, belonging to NALPA has created extra perks through the national organization. *The Dispatch* publication is offered to NALPA members at a cost of only \$6. That's a saving of \$9 off the annual subscription rate. This is especially beneficial to members of the Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion who belong to NALPA.

NALPA conducts an annual "Best Papers" contest with categories for the best competing publications in The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and other affiliated organizations.

National American Legion Press Association (NALPA)

The annual “Best Papers” competition provides NALPA with an avenue to recognize local publications that go the extra mile to inform their members. The competition is open to publications of all sizes. Awards are given in various categories, including editorial, typeset and tabloid. Competition categories are:

1. **TABLOID**
Typeset, printed tabloid-sized newspaper of four or more pages. Winners in each subcategory will receive the Mary B. Howard Plaque.
A. Department Publications B. All Other Publications
2. **TYPESET**
Typeset, letterpress or offset publication (other than tabloid) of one or more sheets/pages. Winners in each subcategory will receive the Emerson O. Mann Plaque.
A. Department Publications B. All Other Publications
3. **SINGLE SHEET**
Photocopy publication from typewriter or word processor copy of one sheet, or both sides. May include preprinted “shells” for masthead or cover. Winner in each subcategory will receive the Al Weinburg Plaque.
A. Department Publications B. All Other Publications
4. **MULTIPLE SHEET**
Photocopy publication from typewritten or word processor copy of two or more sheets/pages. May include preprinted “shells” for masthead or cover. Winners in each subcategory will receive the Jack R. C. Cann Plaque.
A. Department Publications B. All Other Publications
5. **COMPUTER GENERATED**
Offset or photocopy publication of one or more pages from computer generated copy. May include preprinted “shells” for masthead or cover. Winner in each subcategory will receive the George W. Hooten Plaque.
A. Department Publications B. All Other Publications
6. **EDITORIAL**
Must have appeared originally in an American Legion or member publication within the contest year. Winner in each subcategory will receive the William E. Rominger Plaque.
A. Department Publications B. All Other Publications

Papers and editorials submitted must have been published between May 1 and April 30 of the contest year.

Editorials are judged on headline and lead arousal of interest; clear, concise and imaginative writing; research and grasp of subject; and timely and appropriate objectives suitable to publication.

Awards are presented at the annual NALPA Banquet in the National Convention city just prior to the formal convention sessions.

SECTION **THIRTEEN**

National American Legion Press Association (NALPA)

Department Press Associations

A department press association is just as vital and necessary as the department itself in the set-up of The American Legion organization.

A department press association can tie all its papers together for the purpose of mutual helpfulness. It can encourage its editors to exchange papers. It can supervise existing publications to help improve effectiveness. It can carry on an active campaign, post by post, to create new publications. It can publish its own monthly newsletter, designed to help post publications through suggested material, suggested editorials, and by calling attention to various programs and events that posts should publish. It should spearhead the yearly Legion membership drive by seeing that all its post publications use all printed methods to stimulate these drives.

A department press association is a subsidiary of the National American Legion Public Association (NALPA), and wherever possible, collects national dues at the same time it collects department dues. NALPA dues are sent to: The American Legion Public Relations Division, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Include with your check a transmittal list of names and addresses of those covered by the payment. NALPA membership cards will be mailed at the close of the National Convention.

It is suggested that a department press association meet at least twice a year: the department convention and Mid-Winter Conference are considered the best times. A Public Relations and Publicity Workshop should be conducted at each meeting.

A department press association can make yearly awards to the best publications as an incentive to increase effectiveness, as well as an award for a job well done. The suggested time to make these awards is at the annual meeting in conjunction with the department convention.

It is suggested that the close of the fiscal year for a department press association be at the time of the annual department convention. Yearly reports should be made at this time, and officers should be elected for the coming year. The president should appoint a nominating committee and an auditing committee at least two months prior to the annual meeting.

A department press association can be organized even though only two or three post publications are in the department. The prime purpose of a department press association is the creation of new post publications.

Increased membership is needed to carry on programs and ensure the future of The American Legion. The lion's load of work is often left to a loyal few. We need a rebirth of ideals and ideas. Department press associations, with initiative and determination, can lead the way to a greater American Legion that will more effectively represent the majority of America's veterans.

Twenty-one departments now enjoy the presence and assistance of NALPA. Each of these associations takes on a local name to reflect the department's overall image. For example, the New York department has the name, "New York State Legion Press Association (NYSLPA)".

SECTION **FOURTEEN**

The Speech

The invitation has been acknowledged. You have agreed to address a civic group about The American Legion. Now you are unsure what to say or how to pull everything together.

Everyone is nervous before getting up in front of an audience to make a speech, even a professional. Just remember that you are the only one who knows what you are going to say. That's why the audience came to hear you. If you forget a part or you say something that doesn't come out exactly as you planned, only you know it.

So relax. Serving The American Legion as a speaker should not be the most difficult challenge of your life. Instead, it is the opportunity to tell others the Legion story from your perspective – what The American Legion does and why it does it right here in your hometown.

This section of the Public Relations Handbook gives the basics. Couple this information with your knowledge and experience and The American Legion story will unfold.

Speaking before a group of interested citizens is the most effective way to tell The American Legion story. You can more effectively interact with each of the audience members because they can see and hear you. You are able to observe the audience and can react to their feedback and modify your comments accordingly.

Your speeches, audience and subject matter may require the use of a verbatim manuscript or may just require notes to jog your memory on main points. In any case the goal remains the same: tell your story.

Remember to talk to the group as though it is a living-room conversation. Pick out several people around the room and concentrate on them as you speak. Verbatim speeches tend to make the speaker distant, formal, authoritarian, and not real or likeable.

It's best to use "message points" (Section 9) and your own short notes to help you be received as warm, friendly and, most of all, human.

Successful speechmaking depends upon two things: preparing the speech and delivering the speech. Both are equally important. Failure to perform either properly will result in a less than effective speech.

You wouldn't think of driving a high-power race car or take part in a ski-jump competition unless you knew something about it, trained and properly prepared. That's why you just can't expect to stand up before a group of people and "wing it."

- You must prepare and research your subject.
- You must organize your material.
- You must rehearse.

The first step in preparing your speech is to define your purpose. Why are you speaking? To inform? To entertain? To inspire? Write down your purpose in a clear, simple, declarative sentence. Make certain you understand your purpose completely.

The Speech

Next, define your audience. Know as much as possible about who will hear and see you. Is it an all-male or all-female audience? Are both men and women present? Who are they? Do they represent a particular group or segment of the community? Does a current issue bring them together? What do they have in common? What do they already know about The American Legion family?

Usually the person who invited you to speak can answer those questions.

Once you have defined your purpose and assessed your audience, you can select your subject or topic. Sometimes the person who requested you to speak will suggest the topic. Normally, the choice of a specific topic will be left up to you.

In selecting your subject, a good place to start is to review your own qualifications. What is it that makes you an appropriate choice as speaker? Regardless of your subject, you can and should draw your speech from your own life and experiences – experiences as a leader of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion.

Do not expect your entire speech to be based on what you already know. Research your topic using the resources of your local library, American Legion post or American Legion Auxiliary unit, as well as the national organization. Talk to those who may be more experienced in the subject than you. Use their input along with your research and your own experiences.

Your subject should fit the audience and appeal to its interests and experiences. The choice of language, vocabulary and structure should be appropriate to the audience and the occasion. Carefully selected examples the audience will readily understand. The result will be a speech that appeals to the wider audience on many levels and will be more enjoyable for everyone.

Tailor the length of your speech for the occasion. Lengthy after-dinner speeches are inappropriate. A keynote address for an event is often expected to be a bit longer, since it is considered to be the “major address” among several others. Always include enough information to make your audience understand and appreciate the knowledge you have given to them. But avoid providing so much information that they cannot react to it or are worn down or bored by the sheer volume of the material.

As a general rule, most speeches should be no more than 15 to 20 minutes in length.

The best approach is to avoid attempting to cover an entire subject in detail. Instead, select a specific aspect of the central subject. Try to address that central subject by making three main points.

With your purpose and topic clearly in mind, it’s usually a good idea to set down the two or three main points you plan to make in rough outline form. The idea of the outline is simply to help you organize all your thoughts into their proper place. Write one- or two-word phrases or “bullets” to describe the main points. For each of those main points, do the same for information to support them.

Don’t worry about the opening or closing right now; just build a framework of the main body of information you want to present. Only with this research and outline can you move on to actually writing your speech.

SECTION **FOURTEEN**

The Speech

When you begin to write your speech, remember to use the statement of purpose and outline as your guide. Then prepare your speech by starting at the end. That's right: decide how you want to end the speech. Do you want them to take action, to do something? Do you want them to know something they didn't know before? Do you want them to feel inspired or uplifted? Or do you just want them to feel good and have a smile on their face?

Now say the words you want to say at the end of your speech aloud. Make your final pitch, your major appeal, your big finish. You could end with a story, a quote or a challenge. But say the words aloud.

Then stop. Before you go any further, take a 3x5 card and write down exactly what you said, just the way you said it. Then toss the card on your desk or in the middle of the floor.

Next, refer to your outline. Look at one of the "bulleted" points you want to make. Let it remind you of what you know about that part. Then talk about that particular point aloud, as if you were telling someone else what you know in a casual, over-the-back-fence conversation.

Stop again. Using another 3x5 card, write down exactly what you said, just the way you said it, about that part. Toss that card down too.

Keep doing that. It's called talking your speech. Do it in segments instead of sitting down and writing it all at once. Illustrate the main points by use of examples, similes, metaphors, personal stories, anecdotes and startling statistics. Avoid too many facts and figures. Make what you are saying come alive for each member of the audience.

When you've covered your three main points, gather up all the 3x5 cards you tossed around the room or desk and arrange them in a logical order of presentation, with your ending as the last card.

Now, think of a good way to open your speech. It could be as simple as one succinct sentence that states your theme and why it is important. You want to get the attention of the audience right away and make them want to hear more. Your opening should be a one- or two-minute introduction that heightens interest in you and your subject.



Giving a Speech
Past National Commander Robert S. Turner uses a visual aid during his speech.

The Speech

A good way to begin a speech is to tell a story, perhaps about someone or some event that leads into the what or why of your subject. A good, personal anecdote is often effective. This technique helps the audience identify in a personal way with you and what you are about to say. A quote from a famous person or document is another effective way to set the stage for your subject.

Some people use humor to begin. Be cautious. Most people can not tell jokes very effectively. And you can never be sure your joke will not offend someone. Unless you are a master storyteller, it's best to leave the humor to the comedy clubs.

Your opening is usually the most difficult part of preparing your speech. But when you have decided how to start you will have written your speech from end to beginning by talking it.

Before the day of your speech, rehearse it. Practice it again and again until you are familiar with its content and with the most effective pace for delivery. Rehearse on your feet in a relatively large room in front of another person, if possible. You may also use both a tape recorder and a mirror to properly gauge your total presentation. Remember when you are comfortable with you, the audience will be comfortable as well.

Once you reach the program site, check over the facilities: room size, your position relative to the audience, the acoustics, the microphone, etc. Do this long before you actually give your speech. Then, when you are introduced you will be ready to knock 'em dead.

As you speak, look directly at your audience. Establish eye contact at the outset, and constantly re-establish it by looking up from your notes. Eye contact with the audience is especially important at the beginning and conclusion of your speech, so know the opening well. Don't memorize it, but know what you plan to say and say it. The same holds true for your big ending.

In fact, reading a prepared text or reciting a memorized speech usually leads to a dull presentation. Talking to your audience, using notes or "message points" on cards, makes for an effective one-to-one delivery.

During the body of your speech, keep your movement at the podium to a minimum. Too much movement distracts audiences. If you move away from the podium and microphone, you will need to adjust your voice level to accommodate the increased distance, unless you have been outfitted with a wireless microphone.

While excessive movement can be distracting, gestures can enhance your presentation. By using your face and eyes, you can express the finest shades of meaning that your words alone can not convey. The nod, the frown, the smile and the raising of an eyebrow can impart additional information of use to the audience. Practice controlling your movements and facial expressions until you are in complete control and can use them to your advantage.

Remember: gesture to your audience, not to yourself, just as you speak to your audience and not to yourself. Be definite. An effective gesture is firm and direct, not a flinch. Effective gestures are forms of communication. They are purposeful and should be directed at the audience.

SECTION **FOURTEEN**

The Speech

Just as you wouldn't surprise your audience with inappropriate gestures, don't surprise yourself with elements of your speech. Know the proper pronunciation of difficult names and words. Use proper pronunciation, but be sensitive to colloquialism and local places, names and customs.

When you take this structured approach to your speech from concept to your final closing at the event you are maintaining control. Just as with "message points" for an interview, control is what you have and what you want to keep.

It takes some time, but you can handle the challenge.

- Prepare in advance.
- Keep a positive attitude.
- Show enthusiasm.
- Tell The American Legion story in a way only your experiences can express.

Points on your written words:

- Use 18-point type.
- Double space.
- Underline your key points.
- Don't carry sentences from one page to another.
- Don't staple pages together.
- Don't keep your pages in a binder.
- Number your pages.
- Leave a decent margin on the left side for your last minute notes or directions, i.e. smile, emphasize this point, etc.
- Avoid organizational jargon and acronyms. Keep it simple, concise and conversational.

Many people use on-line resources to find quotes and other information for a speech. A word of caution: check the source. Many stories and quotes can not be validated, yet they gather lives of their own via the Internet. If you're not confident of the source and validity, don't use it.

For those who use the Internet, learn to use the "Urban Legend" site. Many of the stories that circulate on the Web are validated or debunked on this site. The URL is: <http://www.snopes.com/index.html>.

For those who are interested in some validated quotes for a speech, consider any of the following. In all cases of using a quote, you must be sure to credit its source.

The Speech

“Depend upon it, the lovers of freedom will be free.” – Edmund Burke

“Freedom suppressed and again regained bites with keener fangs than freedom never endangered.”
– Cicero

“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it.”
– Thomas Paine

“The ground of liberty must be gained by inches.” – Thomas Jefferson

“We are not to expect to be transplanted from despotism to liberty in a featherbed.”
– Thomas Jefferson

“They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserved neither liberty nor safety.” – Benjamin Franklin

“Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end, and prefer the interest of mankind to any narrow interest of their own.”
– Woodrow Wilson in war address to Congress on April 2, 1917

“All we have of freedom, all we use or know – this our fathers bought for us, long and long ago.”
– Rudyard Kipling

“The world has never had a good definition for the word liberty.” – Abraham Lincoln

“All that makes existence valuable to anyone depends on the enforcement of restraints upon the actions of other people.” – J.S. Mill

“Liberty exists in proportion to wholesome restraint; the more restraint on others to keep off from us, the more liberty we have.” – Daniel Webster

“Communism is the corruption of a dream of justice.”
– Adlai Stevenson in a speech at Urbana, Ill., 1951

“You can see things, and you say, ‘Why?’, but I see things that never were and I say, ‘Why not?’”
– George Bernard Shaw

“It is an unfortunate fact that we can secure peace only by preparing for war.” – John F. Kennedy

SECTION **FOURTEEN**

The Speech

“The real democratic American idea is, not that every man shall be on a level with every other, but that every one shall have liberty, without hindrance, to be what God made him.”

– Henry Ward Beecher, “Proverbs from Plymouth Pulpit,” 1887

“Freedom – no word was ever spoken, that has held out greater hope, demanded greater sacrifice, needed to be nurtured, blessed more the giver, damned more its destroyer or come closer to being God’s will on earth. And I think that’s worth fighting for, if necessary.” – Gen. Omar N. Bradley

“I believe that if we think clearly enough, plan carefully enough, and work tirelessly enough, we can both save freedom and secure peace.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

“We view our nation’s strength and security as a trust, upon which rest the hope of free men everywhere.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty.”

– John F. Kennedy

“The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it.” – John Stuart Mill

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; ‘tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.”

– Thomas Paine

“For those who fight for it, life has a special flavor the protected will never know.”

– Unknown defender of Khe Sanh in Vietnam

“Democracy is not a static thing. It is an everlasting march.” – Franklin D. Roosevelt

“Patriotism is not a short frenzied outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.” – Adlai Stevenson

The Speech

“Democracy can not lose in open competition with rival doctrines. It can lose only by default. It can lose through the fears of its people, through their failure to trust in it. The power of democracy is the power of uncensored knowledge, or unregimented minds, or resolute action based on a realistic understanding of a realistic world.” – Gen. Omar N. Bradley

“A thoughtful mind, when it sees a nation’s flag, sees not the flag only, but the nation itself; and whatever may be its symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag, the Government, the principles, the truths, (and) the history which belong to the nation that sets it forth.”

– Henry Ward Beecher, “The American Flag”

“The noblest motive is the public good.” – Virgil

“Things that the flag stands for were created by the experiences of a great people. Everything that it stands for was written by their lives. The flag is the embodiment, not of sentiment, but of history. It represents the experiences made by men and women, the experiences of those who do and live under the flag.” – Woodrow Wilson

“And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.” – John F. Kennedy

“... the soldier above all other people prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war.” – Gen. Douglas MacArthur

“We seek peace, knowing – as all ages of man have known – that peace is the climate of freedom. And now, as in no other age, we seek it because we have been warned by the power of modern weapons that peace may be the only climate possible for human life itself.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

“There never was a good war or a bad peace.” – Benjamin Franklin

“If we desire peace, one of the most powerful institutions of our rising prosperity, it must be known that we are at all times ready for war.” – George Washington

“Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” – Thomas Jefferson

Copyright and Trademark Information

Trademarks and service marks are valuable assets of any organization. They are very valuable to The American Legion family. The marks of The American Legion identify the programs and services of The American Legion and distinguish them from those of other service organizations. The marks of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion also assure our members and the public that the programs and services sponsored in conjunction with the marks meet the high standards and values for which The American Legion family is known.

Following the guidelines in this section will help protect the marks and prevent public confusion as to whether a service or program is actually sponsored by The American Legion family. These guidelines are excerpted from the publication: “Name and Emblem Identification System Manual and Style Guide.”

On Sept. 16, 1919, U.S. Congress incorporated our organization and named it “The American Legion.” A formal “corporate name” is the official legal designation of a company or organization. Corporate names should always be spelled out in full. Standard typeface should be used and the same type style and letter case, all capital letters or initial capital letters followed by lowercase letters, must be used throughout the name.

Examples:

Correct

THE AMERICAN LEGION

American Legion Auxiliary

Sons of The American Legion

Incorrect

the American Legion

The AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Sons of the American Legion

A “trade name” is the name under which an organization promotes itself to its members and the public and under which it conducts business. In some cases, the trade name may be the same as the corporate name. In other cases, it may be a shortened version. Use initial capital letters or all capital letters for all of our trade names.

Examples:

Correct

The American Legion

THE AMERICAN LEGION

American Legion Auxiliary

Sons of The American Legion

Incorrect

the Legion

the AL

the Auxiliary

the Sons

Copyright and Trademark Information

A “trademark” or “service mark” is a word, name, symbol or device, or any combination of these, adopted and used by a person, company or organization to identify its products or services and distinguish them from the products or services of others. If the mark is used to identify a product, then it is a trademark. If the mark is used to identify a service, then it is a service mark.

The following are service marks of The American Legion:

The American Legion

American Legion Auxiliary

Sons of The American Legion

The American Legion Magazine

The American Legion Citizens Flag Honor Guard

Boys Nation

Girls Nation

The following are trademarks of The American Legion:

The American Legion Emblem

American Legion Auxiliary Emblem

Sons of The American Legion Emblem

The American Legion Magazine Masthead

The American Legion Baseball Emblem



THE AMERICAN
Legion
The magazine for a strong America



Copyright and Trademark Information

Our trademark and service mark rights have been acquired through many years of use in connection with our programs and services. Our marks have become well and favorably known throughout the United States and in many foreign countries through long and continuous use and through extensive national and local media coverage. They represent substantial goodwill, which is an extremely valuable asset.

Service mark and trademark rights may be jeopardized by internal misuse and by unauthorized use by outside sources. Every member of The American Legion plays a vital role in preserving, protecting and enhancing our marks.

Because The American Legion was established by an act of Congress, Congress gave The American Legion the sole and exclusive right to have and use that name in carrying out its purposes.

The National Executive Committee has issued guidance as to use of the Emblem in Resolution 71 as amended. If a local post or department wishes to use the Emblem on an item to be manufactured locally, a letter of request must be sent to the National Adjutant of The American Legion. The letter must state who will perform the duplicating (the name of the salesman is insufficient), the name of the product and the exact amount being ordered. Authority to duplicate is granted for the specific number. Additional quantities require new authority. Products must be of U.S. manufacture.

Similar guidance has been issued for all other trademarks and service marks of The American Legion.

As a volunteer Public Relations officer, you fill an important role in preserving the protection of our name, our emblem and our public image. If in doubt, write the National Adjutant, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

Community Relations

Community Relations is the force multiplier for all that we do in The American Legion. Its dominant feature is personal contact which complements and reinforces all of our internal and external communication efforts as we tell the Legion story.

Some communication experts refer to this personal contact approach as networking. However, since The American Legion is well imbedded in the infrastructure of nearly 15,000 communities across America, networking is actually a tool of community relations. Other PR tools include internal communications and media relations. Personal contact is the method that amplifies our internal and external communications messages and programs of support regarding our veterans and America's core values.

Through personal contact with community entities, American Legion posts develop and carry out programs that earn understanding, acceptance and support of the Legion's role in providing service to veterans, their families and their communities. Likewise, we will garner respect and support of Legionnaires in communities wherever there is a Legion presence. A well-planned COMREL program can reap tremendous dividends for your post as others in your area actually help you achieve your goals.

Community Relations Objectives

The objectives of The American Legion's community relations are:

- a. Increase public awareness and understanding of the missions, policies and programs of the Legion.
- b. Inspire patriotism and encourage young men and women to serve in the military.
- c. Foster good relations on mutually acceptable terms with the public that the Legion comes into contact with.
- d. Attract eligible veterans to join The American Legion as we continue to serve America and our fellow veterans.
- e. Maintain a reputation as a good neighbor, as well as, a respected professional organization charged with part of the responsibility for enhancing service to veterans and maintaining American core values.

Understanding the Needs of Your Community

Community relations vary from place to place. Each community or geographic area has its own character: structure, personalities, problems and organizations differ. Community relations is a local activity that must be tailored to fit local needs. No matter what the message is from the National Headquarters, Department or District levels, you have an opportunity to craft that message for understanding and acceptance at the local level. Whether it is holding a Reconnect event at the local Guard or Reserve unit, hosting a Blue Star Salute event on Armed Forces Day, or holding a town hall meeting about legal abuse by groups like the ACLU, you have an opportunity to infuse local character into the communication process.

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Fact Finding: One of the great things about community relations is that it is a cost effective form of communication. You don't have to hire a marketing firm or a PR company to do an assessment of your post community relation efforts with the community. It is something you can do yourself.

You can visit the library or conduct research on the Internet to learn about your community's power structure, "movers and shakers," programs and needs. Here are some questions that you can review with your fellow post officers to determine what Legion programs need more emphasis in the community.

1. What are the needs of veterans in the community? Are their needs being met? Does the community know what the needs of the veterans are?
2. What is, and who are in, the power structure of the community?
3. What is the community's attitudes towards, and knowledge of, The American Legion?
4. What are the community clubs and organizations, and what do they do?
5. What are the mutual needs and interests of the community and The American Legion?
6. What is the past history of post-community relations?

Once you have answered these questions, you will have a better idea of how to tailor your programs for the community.

Who's Who in the Community

The different social groups in any given community are referred to as publics. There are both internal and external publics. Internal groups can include the members of your American Legion post, the Legion family and similar veteran service organizations. External groups can include: community organizations such as civic, trade, industrial, youth, ethnic, women, religious and educational; government entities at the local, state and federal level; professional organizations; civic leaders and others.

Here is a list of suggested publics that your post should be in touch with on a regular basis:

Chamber of Commerce: The purpose of the Chamber of Commerce is to provide assistance in promoting, starting, managing, growing and advocating your business. Members of any given Chamber of Commerce may have employees working for them who are veterans or they may be veterans themselves.



Certainly, with today's war on terror and the increase demand for National Guard and Reserve forces, business owners and their employees may know of a co-worker or someone in their family who are serving.

Chamber of Commerce briefing..

Community Relations in action! Legion briefings to members of the local chamber of commerce on Legion messages and programs can garner community support and partnership.

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The local Chamber of Commerce can be a great source of help in promoting Legion programs and an excellent resource to use in seeking partnerships with area businesses. Many might want to advertise your post newsletter; others might want to pay for refreshments at a Veterans Service Day. A local radio station may wish to partner with your post in holding a Blue Star Salute on Armed Forces Day. The opportunities are endless but can start with your establishing a relationship with your Chamber of Commerce. Other opportunities might include speaking engagements at Chamber luncheons and articles in Chamber newsletters about the services your post offers to veterans throughout the community.

It is highly recommended that Legion Posts become members of their local chambers. Often this membership is waived or set at a very minimal cost. However, the benefits are worth the investment. Many chambers will do a one-time mailing promoting the Legion to all chamber business members. You will receive opportunities to be part of the Chambers many functions and committees. Through such activities, the Legion is seen as a team player and a resourceful asset to the chamber itself.

Military Organizations: Active duty, National Guard and Reserve units provide a variety of opportunities for promoting the Legion through personal contact. The TS2 program (Reconnect, Family Support, American Legacy Scholarship program) is already in place and provides numerous suggested activities where the Legion and military units can interface. Don't forget about the local recruiters.



Legionnaires handing out Blue Star Banners to soldiers.

Legionnaires from the Department of Wisconsin are seen here presenting Blue Star Service Banners to members of the National Guard. Since The American Legion rekindled the tradition following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11 2001, banner presentations have brought communities and the military together to recognize our men and women in uniform who are serving proudly in the war against terrorism.

Public Service Organizations: Law enforcement agencies, firefighters, public sector work and utility companies tend to have a higher than average number of employees who are veterans or know someone who is a veteran. Putting them on your list of speaking engagements and mailing them your post newsletter are but a few ways to an ongoing relationship and to place the Legion name in their vocabulary.

Churches/Synagogues: Religious institutions perpetuate our belief in God and family core values. Seeking opportunities to involve churches and synagogues in Legion activities (in particular advocacy and children's' programs) are worth the time and effort. The church or synagogue bulletin is a great way to get announcements published about Legion programs and other messages. Fellowship sessions after service are also helpful in promoting Legion programs to include new post development, Family Support and children and youth programs.

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Centers of Learning: All educational institutions, from pre-school to college, offer many opportunities for your post to convey our messages of support to our veterans and our commitment to a 100 percent Americanism. Many members who comprise the staff and faculty of any given school system are veterans. Add in parents, counselors and the vendors who do business with the schools and colleges, and you have a new audience to approach for support and participation in Legion programs.

Suggested American Legion Community Relations Activities

Although community relations programs and activities will vary from one community to another, the approach is usually the same. Legionnaires can incorporate the programs of The American Legion into three main activities: special events, community partnerships and information venues.

Special Events: A special event is characterized by its multi-lateral communications and coordination between the Legion and a variety of community agencies. The goal of a special event is of common interest of the community. In fact, community endorsement of the special event is manifested through active Legion and community participation. National holidays, troop support venues and recognition activities are just a few of the types of special events that warrant Legion and community common interest.

Some special event activities that Legion posts find very successful include the Blue Star Salute on Armed Forces Day, Veterans Service Days and 'Support Our Troops' rallies in support of Resolution 169. One post was revitalized when they combined a troop support rally with the presentation of Blue Star Service Banners. Key publics from the community were invited along with soldiers and their families. Local citizens brought photos of their loved ones in the armed forces that were displayed on a large poster for the entire town to see and to admire.

State legislators, local officials, police officers, business leaders and clergy joined the post in greeting these brave warriors and their families. As a direct result of this event, the seed was planted to start a local support group for the families of area soldiers deployed to the war on terror.

"Our efforts to bring the community together with our troops not only resulted in a local veteran support group being formed, but we also gained 28 new members for our post," James Brebio, Department Commander (MA) and member of Post 373 said.

Partnerships: By approaching various community entities (such as the Chamber, public service groups, etc.), you can find opportunities for mutual programs of support. These may range from participating in local parades to garnering support to start or revitalize a new post.

In 2004, the Department of the District of Columbia approached the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) regarding a program to provide mutual support to one another. The AFRH was looking for an opportunity to expand its community relations program to an on-site charter school and to provide increased activities for the residents – over 1,000 retired veterans. The Department membership team made an offer that the AFRH accepted.

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The programs of veteran support and Americanism – children and youth became the schematic that would bring a much-needed service to local veterans and to the local school children.

Through the new American Legion post, Legionnaires with teaching experience provided a small cadre of tutors and instructors for the school. The charter school was able to move towards its accreditation much earlier than anticipated. And Legion services were provided to the residents of the largest veterans retirement community in America.

From parents to the Urban League, both the AFRH and The American Legion are viewed as good neighbors in downtown Washington D.C.

Conclusion: Through community relations, the American Legion become more than a news release, a canned speech or a letter to the editor. Community relation programs can breathe life into our image as Legionnaires and our commitment to veterans, their families and their communities. Be seen in your community; be known in your community. Reap the dividends of community relations as your post's force multiplier.

Public Relation Products

Description	Stock #
“RECONNECT” – “Who 's Wearing My Uniform?” (14:16 minute video)	58-021
Our Best And Brightest; The National High School Oratorical Contest	
American Legion Baseball (18:57 minute video)	58 019
American Legion Mobilizes Nationwide Military Support Network	
Blue Star Service Banner Campaign (4 PSA'S - 97 Tracks)	
Blue Star Service Banner Television PSA's – Legion Family Version (3-30 second video)	
CARES Briefing To The National Executive Committee, May 8, 2002 (27 minute video)	
Fact Sheet – The American Legion September 11 Memorial Scholarship	
Fact Sheet: Gulf War Veterans	
Flag Retirement Ceremony	
Good PR Equals Membership Success 15:54 minute video))	58-026
How To Conduct The National High School Oratorical Contest (30:20 minute video)	
Key Message Points Of The American Legion	
National High School Oratorical Contest - Judges Briefing, (18:30 minute video)	58-027
POW / MIA op-ed (12 pages)	
Presidential Task Force On Improving VA Health Care Presentation To The NEC (29:22 minute video)	
Sales Techniques (15:20 minute video)	58-025
Suggested Address - The American Legion Birthday	
Suggested Address - Americanism	
Suggested Address – Our Preamble	
Suggested Address On Law And Order	
Suggested Remarks To Community & Civic Groups Regarding TAL Policies And Programs	
Suggested Speech - Flag Day	

Suggested Speech - Memorial Day	
Suggested Speech - Veterans Day	
Still Serving America 1919 - "We Call Ourselves Legionnaires"	
TAL Family Support Network – Support for our Troops	
The American Legion – Patriotic Holiday Announcements	
POW / MIA Remembrance Ceremony (3:41 minute video)	58 006
The American Legion Family - Blue Star Service Banner - Public Relations Campaign	
The American Legion Programs & Issues PSA Campaign (61 PSA'S)	
The American Legion Programs & Issues PSA Campaign	
The American Legion Today - This Is The American Legion (29 minute video)	
The American Legion's Key Message Points On National Security	
The American Legion Patriotic Holiday PSA / Booklet	
The American Legion Family Support / Legacy Scholarship PSAs	
The Speech - A Basic Guide To Public Speaking	
This Is The American Legion / The American Legion Today	58 014
What If There Was No American Legion? (4:33 video)	58 004

The public relations tools listed here are provided free. Order them online at pr@legion.org or call (317) 630-1253. Print materials can be downloaded from The American Legion Public Relations Division website at www.legion.org.