



Let's Walk for Those Who Marched for Us

I need you. The American Legion needs you. More importantly, veterans and their families need you.

I am asking you to support and organize an event in your Department. But it really is more than an event, it's a solemn obligation. It is a fulfillment of our American Legion Preamble to "preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars," and to "inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation..."

Specifically, I am asking that you hold an awareness walk for veterans. As a candidate for National Commander for 2015-16, I hope to walk with you when I visit your Department if I am fortunate enough to be elected at our National Convention in Baltimore this September. These walks can be used to create an understanding of the many different issues facing America's veterans, servicemembers and families.

- Awareness walks can bring attention to the thousands of servicemembers who struggle to overcome hardships caused by traumatic brain injury or post traumatic stress disorder.
- We can remind the public that reforming the VA health care system is not a task, but a continuing process – one that will only improve if Americans hold their elected officials accountable and demand that veterans be treated with the dignity and respect that they have earned.
- Walks can remind employers that the best way to thank a veteran is to hire one. By providing jobs, employers will also help eliminate veterans homelessness.
- In addition to these essential veterans issues, our awareness walks can highlight the four pillars of The American Legion.
- Walks can remind the public that defense cuts over recent years have been dangerously irresponsible. The premise that we must accept either cuts to personnel benefits or weapons modernization is false. We must never send our military members into harm's way without the training and resources that they need to win.
- A walk for veterans will make a bold statement about Americanism, as the flag of our great country is displayed and waved by spectators and walk participants.



- Young people represent the future of our country and our walks will be a great venue to remind the public of the life-changing services offered by our programs, such as Temporary Financial Assistance, Child Welfare Foundation and The American Legion Legacy Scholarship.
- We can showcase great American Legion family youth activities such as Boys and Girls State, our High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, American Legion Baseball and Junior Shooting Sports.

The important thing to remember about organizing an awareness walk is that there is no one way to do it. Every department and each community has its own strengths and unique characteristics.

Engage with your community leaders and organize teams to handle various tasks. This packet includes a sample media advisory, news release, radio and television text and flyer. Social Media is an effective and usually free method of getting the word out efficiently to large groups. Letters to the editor and announcements in post newsletters and church bulletins can also generate interest.

Perhaps your governor or mayor can issue a proclamation of support. Necessary permits should be obtained and civic and public leaders should be invited. The local business community can be a source to solicit sponsorships.

Above all, make this an American Legion family affair. Encourage participation from the American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of the American Legion and The American Legion Riders. The talent and resources available among our nearly 14,000 posts is simply amazing.

If you cannot conduct a physical walk during my visit to your Department, use the walk as a metaphor for another activity or event to support veterans. Remember, we walk for veterans everyday when we advocate for a responsive health care system. We walk when we welcome home a returning hero or when we make an Operation Comfort Warriors presentation. We walk for our comrades when we hold a benefits fair or assist homeless veterans obtain food and shelter.

I strongly believe that we should walk not for ourselves but for those who have marched before us. In war or peace, America's veterans have repeatedly sacrificed for our freedom. These awareness walks are the least that we can do for them.

Can I count on your support? Please fill out the enclosed RSVP card and get started.

Dale Barnett, Ga.
Leading Candidate for
National Commander, 2015-16

WE CAN HELP YOU PLAN YOUR EVENT

National Headquarters staff is ready to assist you as you plan your event. Membership, Marketing, Media & Communication and Emblem Sales teams will help you promote your event and maximize exposure and awareness of The American Legion in your community.

SUPPORT KIT

When you schedule an event, national headquarters can supply the following items:

- A customizable media kit with sample advisories, radio spots and flyers.
- A on-site display kit including two 8-foot flag banners and a table throw/parade banner for temporary use during your event
- A Walk for Veterans logo t-shirt for each paid event participant.

OTHER MATERIALS

Emblem Sales will have the Walk for Veterans logo available for custom orders as well. Hats, beverage cozies, polos or custom signage are just a few options. We can also customize brochure kits to refill your Legion Family kiosk with event-specific materials.

GET STARTED Return the attached RSVP or contact Matt Herndon at National Headquarters
mherndon@legion.org | 317.630.1406

THE AMERICAN LEGION

**WALK
FOR
VETERANS**



RSVP

YES

You can count on our department to plan a walk during your visit. Please contact us to plan the details.

YES

Our department will walk, but not during your visit. Please contact us for more information.

YES

Our department won't walk, but we will plan another event that illustrates how we walk with veterans every day. Please contact us for more information.

NO

Our department will not be able to conduct an event during the 2015-16 program year.

The 2015-16 National Commander's visit to the Department of _____
has been scheduled on _____

Please return this card or contact Matt Herndon at National Headquarters
mherndon@legion.org | 317.630.1406 | 700 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN 46204

DEADLINE: SEPT. 30, 2015



Sample Media Advisory
The American Legion Walk for Veterans
Coming to (City or Town)

WHO	(NAME), National Commander of the 2.3 million member American Legion
WHAT	National Commander (NAME) of (NATIONAL COMMANDER'S HOMETOWN), and Department Commander (NAME) will lead American Legion family members and friends in an Awareness Walk for Veterans. In addition to raising public attention on the important issues facing veterans and their families, some of the proceeds raised for The American Legion Walk For Veterans will be used for the National Emergency Fund, which has provided more than \$8 million of assistance to Legion Family members and American Legion posts that have been impacted by natural disasters. The American Legion Walk for Veterans will be (DISTANCE OF WALK) and registered participants will receive (SHIRT, WATER BOTTLES, OR OTHER PROVIDED ITEMS).
WHEN	(DAY /DATE /LOCAL START TIME.)
WHERE	(ADDRESS FOR MEETING POINT)
WHY	The American Legion is the nation's leading advocate for veterans, a strong national defense, patriotic youth programs and Americanism. For more about The American Legion, visit www.legion.org .
HOW	Register online at (WEBSITE ADDRESS) Call (NAME AND PHONE NUMBER). Register in person at American Legion Post ___ at (ADDRESS).



The American Legion Walk for Veterans *Sample 60-Second Radio Spot*

Do you believe 'SUPPORT THE TROOPS' is more than just a phrase?

Do you want to RAISE AWARENESS about important issues facing America's veterans and their families?

Do you want to TELL (STATE) that the (CITY) community loves its veterans and REMIND THEM that America must always be **GRATEFUL FOR THEIR SACRIFICE?**

THEN STEP UP and be a part of THE AMERICAN LEGION WALK FOR VETERANS, as it goes through (CITY) on (DAY, MONTH, DATE).

Join American Legion National Commander (NAME) , State Commander (NAME) , Congressman (NAME) , Mayor (NAME) , and friends and supporters of our military veterans as they remind all of us that **FREEDOM ISN'T FREE.**

Proceeds will benefit **THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND**, which has provided more than EIGHT MILLION DOLLARS of assistance to Legion Family members and posts that have been impacted by natural disasters like hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes.

To register for the (XX) -mile walk, call (PHONE NUMBER) or visit (WWW.WEBSITE.COM)

That's (PHONE NUMBER) or (WWW.WEBSITE.COM)

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The American Legion Walk for Veterans *Community Proclamation*

WHEREAS, The American Legion has been a staunch advocate for veterans and their families since 1919; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has been alarmed about the difficulties many veterans face receiving the health care and benefits that they have earned; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has operated a National Emergency Fund to assist Legion Family Members and posts that have been impacted by natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion was founded on the four pillars of veterans rehabilitation, a strong national defense, children and youth and Americanism; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion will conduct The American Legion Walk for Veterans on (DATE) to raise awareness in conjunction with the National Commander's visit to (CITY OR STATE), and

WHEREAS, proceeds raised will benefit The American Legion National Emergency Fund, and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, (NAME), (POSITION OR TITLE) of the (CITY OR STATE) of (CITY OR STATE) do hereby proclaim our support for The American Legion Walk for Veterans on (DATE)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this (WRITTEN DAY OF MONTH), in the year of our Lord two thousand (YEAR).

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THE AMERICAN LEGION

WALK
FOR
VETERANS



Join The American Legion National Commander and The American Legion family, as we walk through your community in support of America's veterans, servicemembers and their families.

Your registration fee will help support The American Legion National Emergency Fund, which has provided over \$8 million in disaster relief to members of the Legion Family.

REGISTER TODAY!

PLACE LOCAL
CONTACT INFO
HERE

WE
WALK
FOR
THOSE
WHO
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FOR US