

## The American Legion Media & Communications Commission

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Chairman

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Director

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The American Legion Media & Communications Commission oversees the vast majority of print and digital media products and channels delivered from National Headquarters. The commission also supervises the organization's media outreach program, including press conferences, appearances in national news and media alerts.

In addition to fulfilling obligations for dozens of print and digital media products as well as media queries, Media & Communications staff members promote initiatives by the national commander and other headquarters divisions. The Media & Communications Division also supports and coordinates key marketing initiatives and corporate relationships.

The flagship of the media program is *The American Legion Magazine*, the nation's best-read and most widely circulated veterans magazine, according to an independent audit. With a circulation of nearly 2 million households and a readership exceeding 3 million, *The American Legion Magazine* ranks No. 1 in readership frequency, according to a survey by researcher GfK MRI. That means subscribers have read four out of the last four or three out of the last four issues more often than readers of the other nearly 200 U.S. magazines surveyed. Its content is general interest, driven by the organization's main areas of engagement – patriotism, defense, veterans, children and youth, national and international affairs.

The Media & Communications Division draws most of its revenue from advertising sales into the magazine. In 2018, the year-end sales figure was \$8,138,693, or 91.9 percent of total advertising revenue, the remainder representing advertising placed in digital media products. The bulk of the rest of the division's operating revenue comes from a \$3 per member allocation.

In August 2018, The American Legion officially kicked off its centennial celebration anniversary, which will conclude in November 2019. The American Legion Media & Communications Division is the driving force behind the organization's centennial program, including organizational structure, merchandising, promotion, media products and general support. The division is producing media in traditional and non-traditional forms related to the centennial that inform, educate and inspire members and the general public about the Legion's legacy and future. Among those: a 13-episode documentary and wall exhibit chronicling the Legion's history, a traveling museum exhibit to honor the GI Bill's place in history, a

“Legacy and Vision” website dedicated to the first-century history and the second-century future of the organization, two-sided placemats featuring well-known Legionnaires from different departments, a chronology of American Legion accomplishments. and multiple promotional materials.

The division’s media channels and assets include:

- **Print.** This category includes *The American Legion Magazine*; *The American Legion Dispatch* (monthly leadership newsletter); the American Legion Annual Report; the American Legion National Convention Guide; the National Commander’s Testimony to Congress; brochures and internal documents, and additional print media as assigned from national leadership, including event programs; and other specialty products such as *Our Pillars, Your Platforms*, which is published during each presidential election year. Additionally, the division fulfills editing and designing needs of 200 brochures and documents associated with other National Headquarters divisions.
- **Media outreach.** The division is responsible for promoting the organization’s programs, messages and priorities to outside media and key stakeholders. This includes the writing and distribution of press releases; regular engagement with national broadcast, print and web media producers; twice-annual radio show tours by the national commander; the development and delivery of media events and press conferences; timely alerts and audience quantification.
- **Web.** The American Legion national website at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) is the nation’s most-visited veterans web platform and serves as a gateway to virtually all American Legion media products and channels. Since a redesign in April 2016, the website’s monthly traffic has more than doubled – now receiving more than 1 million page views per month. The website offers news, videos and photography; transactional engagement through donations, membership and merchandising; entrance to special-interest microsites on such topics as the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The American Legion and Legiontown, where veterans and family members are invited to fulfill their own content and share it; the revamped American Legion Basic Training module; and the Burn Pit blog site, among others. Legion.org is also the entry point to the organization’s interactive and transactional platform supporting American Legion Baseball. The American Legion’s video vault, called LegionTV, houses all of the organization’s current video content in one microsite. Additionally, an American Legion collection of downloadable videos is available on [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com).
- **Email.** The division produces a portfolio of popular e-newsletters, led by the weekly American Legion Online Update, which reaches about 930,000 subscribers every Thursday with links to the top stories of the week on the Legion.org platform. Another e-newsletter with nearly as many subscribers (860,000) is the National Commander’s Message, which goes out twice monthly, typically to promote a particular subject or program. The Online Update and the National Commander’s Message receive open rates around 25-30 percent on a frequent basis — a rate far above the industry standard. Other e-newsletters include Dispatch, Flag Alerts, The American Legion Riders, The American Legion Baseball Dugout, The American Legion Career Center, Ham Radio Club and The American Legion Centennial. Each newsletter has an open rate equal to or above the industry standard.

- **Social.** The American Legion has a fast-growing network of social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest. The Legion's Facebook community is approaching 150,000 followers, and the national Twitter following surpassed 100,000 in the past year.
- **Mobile.** The American Legion's mobile audience has grown rapidly over the past 24 months, now representing just over 50 percent of page views, as compared to 12 percent four years ago. Division staff redesigned the mobile site in 2016 to make it more user-friendly for our growing audience.
- **Smartphone apps:** The American Legion Media & Communications Division has produced and developed a collection of smartphone mobile apps, including a general American Legion app introduced in 2014 that has generated more than 41,000 downloads; an American Legion World Series app, which has been downloaded 12,000 download times; along with an annual National Convention app and a Sons of The American Legion app.
- **Supporting posts, departments:** Division staff members work with American Legion department and staff members to promote various events. For example, the division sends out a media kit to departments that are used as a guideline with resources to promote System Worth Saving visits conducted at the post level. Other media kits, resource information, videos, posters, flyers, press releases and other material has been designed and distributed for departments, districts and posts to use in order to generate awareness of programs like the American Legion Legacy Scholarship.
- **Training:** Division staff members provide media training to volunteer leadership as well as post members. Each year, the national volunteer leadership team is briefed on media engagement. Additionally, the Media & Communications Division provides National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) members with effective communication strategies to members in the quarterly newsletter and via digital media throughout the year. The media team also conducts a training workshop at the national convention each summer.
- **Internal communication groups.** The division has been actively engaged with two communication groups that help promote Legion activities and programs. The National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) is made up of Legion Family members who are responsible for public relations at the department or post level. Division staff members provide training and resources to these members so they can efficiently and effectively promote the Legion in their communities. Staff also support The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC). These amateur ham radio operators interact with others inside and outside the Legion, and provide critical communication support in times of emergencies or natural disasters.
- **Physical.** The American Legion Media & Communications Division produces a variety of physical displays, including parade floats, plaques, convention booths, banners, posters and other forms of physical media for the organization.

The goal of this integrated approach to American Legion media is to maximize efficiencies, resources and talents to deliver the organization's message in a well-branded, effective strategy that aims to improve internal and external awareness, generate membership, inform visitors, stimulate interactions

and ease transactions. These tools are used for veterans outreach, which includes promoting the many values, programs and interests of The American Legion.

Overall, the media and communications program is built to replicate and represent the values and interests of The American Legion, from the individual member to the local post to the state department to the national headquarters, internal and external, and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walter W. Ivie". The script is fluid and cursive.

Walter W. Ivie (TX)  
Media & Communications Commission Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald Jeffrey Stoffer". The signature is highly stylized and somewhat illegible.

Ronald Jeffrey Stoffer, Director  
Media & Communications Division

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry Howard". The signature is written in a simple, clear cursive style.

Henry Howard, Deputy Director  
Media & Communications Division