

# American Legion Baseball Centennial Celebration Toolkit

2nd Edition: May-September 2025





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## How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is a resource for local, regional and department use to raise awareness and help celebrate the 100th anniversary of American Legion Baseball.

Included are basic facts about the program, a short history, information about the new commemorative bookazine available for purchase and a variety of media tools that can be shared.

To use or modify any of the media elements for local use, simply copy and paste them into a format or template of your choosing. Media advisories are helpful to let local television, radio and print media know about coming events, special games and other activities related to the centennial.

The sample public-address script is provided to be presented to announcers at games where American Legion Baseball players, alums, parents and others can be recognized before the fans.

A variety of social media scripts are offered as tools that can be used on any platform, and American Legion social media graphics like “Dugout Diamonds” can simply be shared from the national American Legion social media platforms.

Former American Legion Baseball players now in pro ball have offered their “shout-outs” to celebrate the 100th birthday and how the program helped them achieve success.

Videos on the program’s history can be found on The American Legion’s YouTube channel on the American Legion Baseball Centennial playlist. They can also be viewed directly from the national website at **[legion.org/baseball/centennial](https://legion.org/baseball/centennial)**.

Downloadable graphic elements – such as stand-up displays and banners for ballfield fence lines – are also available at **[legion.org/baseball/resources](https://legion.org/baseball/resources)**. Simply download them and share the files with a local printer.

Remind your local American Legion Family that their stories are part of the centennial journey, and they can post their words and images under BASEBALL at the [legiontown.org/baseball](https://legiontown.org/baseball).

Also included is information about how to order American Legion Baseball Centennial apparel and other merchandise.

Most of all, use this toolkit to share the story of “citizenship through sportsmanship” with your local community.

Visit **[legion.org/baseball/centennial](https://legion.org/baseball/centennial)** for more.



# American Legion Baseball Fact Sheet

## AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL CODE OF SPORTSMANSHIP

*I will keep the rules,  
Keep faith with my teammates,  
Keep my temper,  
Keep myself fit,  
Keep a stout heart in defeat,  
Keep pride under control in victory,  
Keep a sound soul, a clean mind,  
And a healthy body.*

- **American Legion Baseball originated on July 17, 1925**, in Milbank, S.D., when then-Big 10 Conference Commissioner John L. Griffith asked the American Legion Department of South Dakota to develop a youth program that would impart citizenship, discipline and good sportsmanship.
- The American Legion Junior Baseball program, as it was known then, was approved by a **national resolution in October 1925**, under The American Legion's Americanism Commission.
- **The first American Legion World Series** was played in Philadelphia Oct. 11-13, 1926, during the 8th American Legion National Convention. Yonkers, N.Y., defeated Pocatello, Idaho, for the title.
- Since its inception, the number of **American Legion Baseball participants has exceeded 10 million**.
- In 1928, The **American Legion Code of Sportsmanship** was formally adopted, and it has gone unchanged since then.
- Since Bob Feller was the first American Legion Baseball alum enshrined at the **National Baseball Hall of Fame** in 1962, 88 others who played Legion ball have been inducted.
- Today, **more than 50,000 athletes participate** in American Legion Baseball on more than 3,500 teams in all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico.
- American Legion Baseball works closely with **USA Baseball**, the national governing body of amateur baseball, which promotes the game and sets player-safety guidelines for boys and girls alike.
- Since 2011, **Shelby, N.C., has been the home site for the American Legion World Series**, which is televised nationally on ESPN.
- In its first year at Veterans Field in Keeter Stadium in Shelby, the American Legion World Series broke a tournament attendance record (86,162) that had stood since 1936. **The highest paid attendance came in 2022 with 132,804.**



## A Brief History of American Legion Baseball

It was a big vision from a Big 10 commissioner. On July 17, 1925, the collegiate athletic executive spoke to The American Legion Department of South Dakota convention.

“There is nothing in our national life which stresses certain qualities that are expressed in our athletics,” said John L. Griffith, a former World War I major and Legionnaire. “Intelligent courage, fighting instinct and cooperation are some things which I believe are visibly expressed in our athletic games ... American Legion posts, as a matter of citizenship training, could easily carry on such athletic activities throughout the United States.”

Seven years removed from a war in which young Americans were not physically fit, Griffith understood the need for fitness to answer their nation’s call if needed. After his address to the convention, state and then national resolutions were passed, and American Legion Baseball was born.

The program was a hit.

By 1926, more than 52,000 players participated. Legends and war heroes such as Yogi Berra, Ted Williams and Bob Feller would comprise some of the 89 Hall of Famers who played American Legion Baseball over its first century.

By 1947, none other than New York Yankees great Babe Ruth would serve as a national spokesman and consultant for the program. The program grew substantially in the 1950s, to historic highs of team numbers and players.

In 2010, the American Legion National Executive Committee selected Shelby, N.C., as the home of The American Legion World Series, starting with 2011. Series coverage by ESPN soon expanded. Attendance records soon have been shattered almost annually since the single location was established.

In May 2021, The American Legion National Executive Committee unanimously passed a resolution calling for Legionnaires to raise awareness about amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a terminal disease that took the life of baseball great Lou Gehrig. The resolution encourages a moment of silence on June 2, the date when Gehrig died in 1941. Lou Gehrig’s disease is a condition that has disproportionately impacted veterans.

Over its first century, more than 10 million young people have played American Legion Baseball. At various times, over half of Major League Baseball rosters were filled with former American Legion players. Many more were propelled into careers of service and success, thanks to lessons learned in veteran-run program.

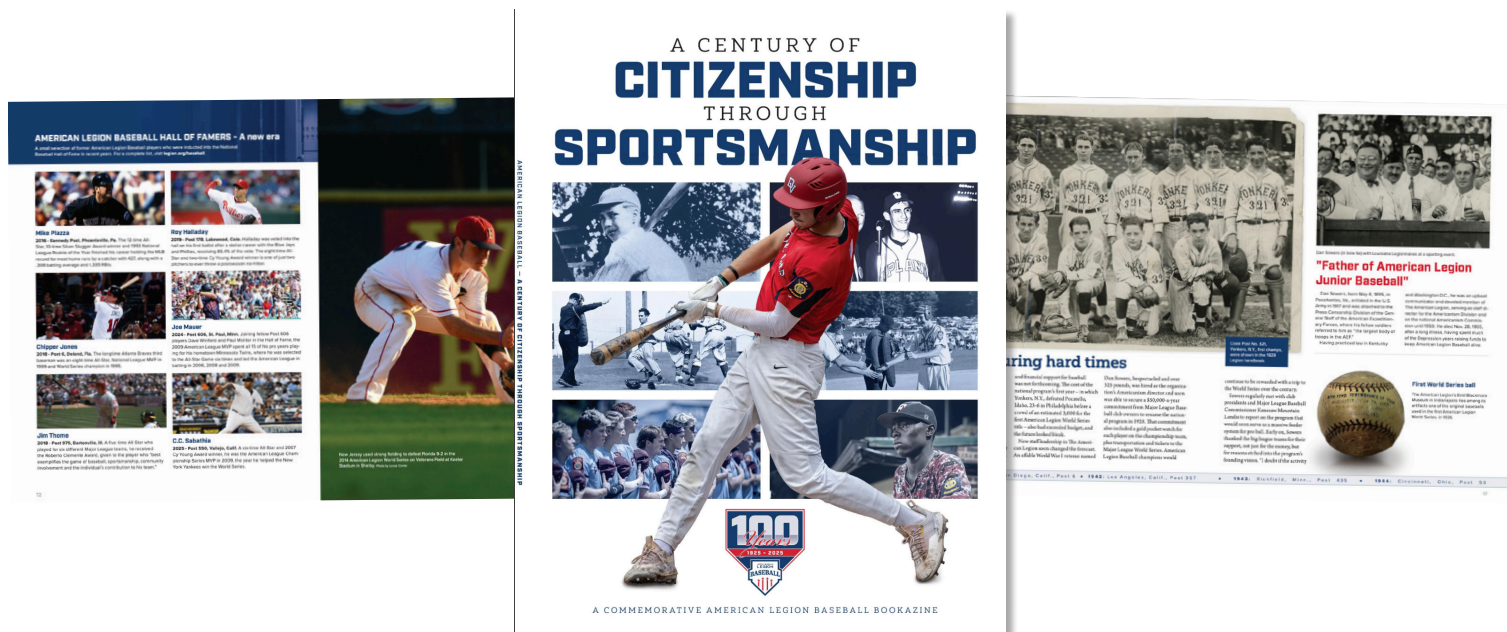




# “A Century of Citizenship Through Sportsmanship”

A new 88-page American Legion Baseball centennial bookazine has been published, telling the story of the program, sharing images and insights rarely before seen. “A Century of Citizenship Through Sportsmanship” explores the roots of the program and its early popularity in the late 1920s, its survival through the Great Depression, Babe Ruth’s role as an ambassador of American Legion Baseball, how players took a Latin America tour of goodwill in the 1950s and much more. Listed are all of the American Legion World Series championship teams, Hall of Famers, words of wisdom from pitching great Bob Feller, who left pro baseball in 1941 to fight in World War II, and the ways in which Shelby, N.C., has transformed since becoming the home of the American Legion World Series.

“A Century of Citizenship Through Sportsmanship” is available through The American Legion Baseball Office and at selected events. E-mail [baseball@legion.org](mailto:baseball@legion.org) to place an order today.





Sample Press Release

## **American Legion Post \_\_\_\_ Celebrates Centennial of Baseball Program**

(CITY, Date) – American Legion Post \_\_\_\_ in (city or town) announced that it will observe the 100th anniversary of the founding of the national youth baseball program prior to (date, day) game between the Post \_\_ team and (opponent).

Former major leaguer and American Legion Baseball alumni (name of ball player or other notable alumni) will speak prior to the national anthem and throw out the first pitch. (Town) Mayor (name) will also read a proclamation in honor of American Legion Baseball. An information booth will be open during the game for any veterans and family members interested in the programs and services provided by Post \_\_\_\_.

“Millions of young men and women have played American Legion Baseball since its founding in 1925,” said Post Commander \_\_\_\_\_. “Greats such as Yogi Berra, Ted Williams and Albert Pujols have played American Legion Baseball. Players in our program are taught good citizenship and a code of sportsmanship that includes keeping the rules, keeping faith in teammates, keeping tempers, physical fitness, a stout heart in defeat, keeping pride under in victory, a sound soul, clean mind and healthy body. Post \_\_\_\_ is proud of its American Legion Baseball team. We hope the community can join us in cheering for the players and celebrating this remarkable program.”

### **About The American Legion**

The American Legion, the nation’s largest veterans organization, is dedicated to the motto of “Veterans Strengthening America.” Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is committed to mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome community programs, patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security and continued devotion to servicemembers and veterans. It has made veteran suicide prevention its top priority through its Be the One mission. Approximately 1.5 million American Legion members in nearly 12,000 posts across the nation and regions overseas serve their communities with a devotion to mutual helpfulness.

Media contact: Name, email address, cell phone number



## Sample Media Advisory

### MEDIA ADVISORY

# American Legion to Remember Lou Gehrig in Upcoming Baseball Game, Raise awareness for ALS

<b>WHO</b>	American Legion (NAME) Post (POST NUMBER) Chaplain (CHAPLAIN'S NAME)
<b>WHAT</b>	<p>Chaplain (CHAPLAIN'S NAME) will lead American Legion Baseball fans in a moment of silence to remember Yankees legend Lou Gehrig, who tragically died on June 2, 1941, from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) at age 37. ALS is a terminal disease that takes the lives of approximately 25,000 Americans each year, many of them military veterans.</p> <p>The moment of silence will occur immediately prior to The American Legion Baseball game between (TEAM) and (TEAM).</p> <p>During the baseball game, American Legion Post (POST NUMBER) will have an information booth with materials about programs and services offered by the nation's largest veterans organization. American Legion Baseball is celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2025. More than 10 million young people have played American Legion Baseball since the program's founding. Alumni include Hall of Fame Major League players such as Yogi Berra, Ted Williams and Joe Morgan. Current Major League stars Bryce Harper, Corey Seager and Justin Verlander also played American Legion Baseball.</p>
<b>WHEN</b>	(DAY /DATE /LOCAL START TIME)
<b>WHERE</b>	(ADDRESS FOR EACH EVENT)
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<p>The American Legion , the nation's largest veterans organization, is dedicated to the motto of "Veterans Strengthening America." Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is committed to mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security and continued devotion to servicemembers and veterans. It has made veteran suicide prevention a top priority through its Be the One mission. Approximately 1.5 million members in nearly 12,000 posts across the nation and regions overseas serve their communities with a devotion to mutual helpfulness.</p>

**Media Contact:** (NAME, PHONE NUMBER, E-MAIL)





Sample Public Address for Game Announcers

## American Legion Baseball Centennial Public Address

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, and fans of all ages —

We pause now to honor a true American tradition.

This weekend, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of American Legion Baseball — a program that has helped shape the lives of millions of young athletes across our nation.

Since 1925, American Legion Baseball has instilled the values of “Citizenship Through Sportsmanship” — teaching integrity, respect, and teamwork through the great game of baseball.

From hometown fields to major league stadiums, this program has been a stepping stone for countless players — on the diamond and in life.

Please join us in saluting the coaches, volunteers, and especially the players — past and present — who have made American Legion Baseball a century-strong legacy.

*(Optional) If you're a current player, coach, or staff member who played American Legion Baseball, we invite you now to step out of the dugout and be recognized.*

*(Optional) For those of you in the stands, if you are a former player, coach or parent, please rise and also be recognized.*

Thank you to American Legion Baseball for a century of excellence and building leaders, one inning at a time. Here's to the next 100 years!



## Sample Proclamation

# American Legion Baseball Centennial Proclamation

**Whereas,** On July 17, 1925, The South Dakota American Legion held its annual convention and passed a resolution proposing American Legion Baseball; and

**Whereas,** American Legion Baseball was organized in 1925 to teach practical lessons in sportsmanship and citizenship by emphasizing such qualities as loyalty, respect for the rules, fair play, courage and physical fitness; and

**Whereas,** More than 10 million young people have played American Legion Baseball; and

**Whereas,** 89 members of Baseball's Hall of Fame have played American Legion Baseball, including war heroes such as Yogi Berra, Ted Williams and Bob Feller; and

**Whereas,** Many national security experts have expressed alarm that an increasing proportion of American young people lack the physical fitness required to be eligible for military service; and

**Whereas,** More than 50,000 young men and women continue to play American Legion Baseball across the country each year; and

**Whereas,** Participants in American Legion Baseball are expected to adhere to a high code of sportsmanship; and now therefore be it

**Resolved,** that I, (NAME of OFFICIAL), Governor of the State of (STATE), do hereby declare July 17, 2025, as American Legion Baseball Day.

**Editor's Note:** *The governor is used as an example of who might sign such a proclamation. This example can be revised and other signature options might include mayors, town managers or post commanders.*



## Sample Social Media Posts

### Sample Social Media Post or Radio Announcement

We invite our entire community to attend this week's baseball game between Post (POST NUMBER or NAME) and (TEAM). American Legion Baseball is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2025. Throwing out the first pitch at the game will be (NAME OF FORMER MAJOR LEAGUER or OTHER DISTINGUISHED LEGION BASEBALL ALUM). The game will be (ADDRESS/DATE/TIME). Post (POST NUMBER or NAME) will also have an information booth available with information about American Legion Baseball and other services offered by the nation's largest veterans organization.

### Sample Social Media Post 2

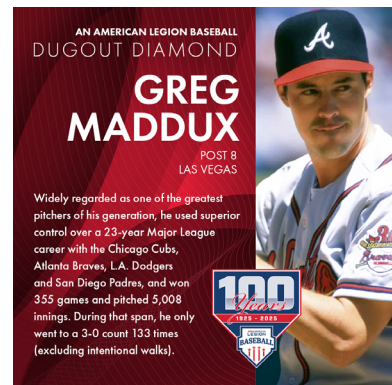
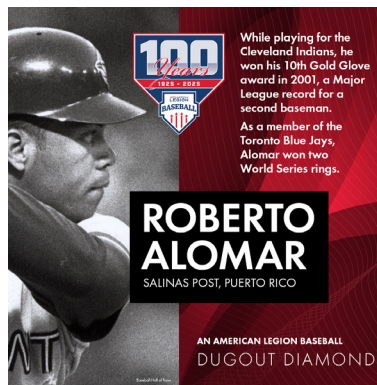
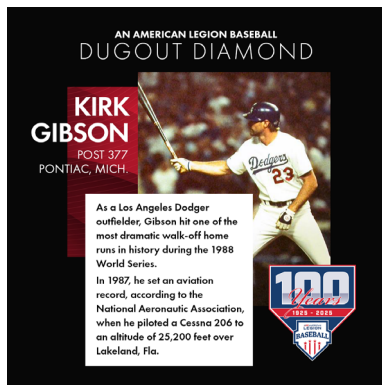
Join us for tonight's game between Post (POST NUMBER or NAME) and (TEAM) at (TIME & ADDRESS). (NAME OF FORMER MAJOR LEAGUER or OTHER DISTINGUISHED LEGION BASEBALL ALUM) will throw out the first pitch and Mayor (MAYOR'S NAME) will proclaim today "American Legion Baseball Day." American Legion Baseball is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year!  
**#AmericanLegionBaseball #LegionBaseball100**

### Sample Social Media Post 3

The American Legion is celebrating 100 years of great AL Baseball! (NAME OF FORMER MAJOR LEAGUER or OTHER DISTINGUISHED LEGION BASEBALL ALUM) will be throwing Thursday's first pitch and Post (POST NUMBER or NAME) will operate an information booth for all who are interested in the Legion and its services. Join us at (TIME & ADDRESS) as Post (POST NUMBER or NAME) plays (TEAM). You'll discover Legion Ball is a hit! **#AmericanLegionBaseball #LegionBaseball100**



## Social Media Graphics



### DUGOUT DIAMONDS

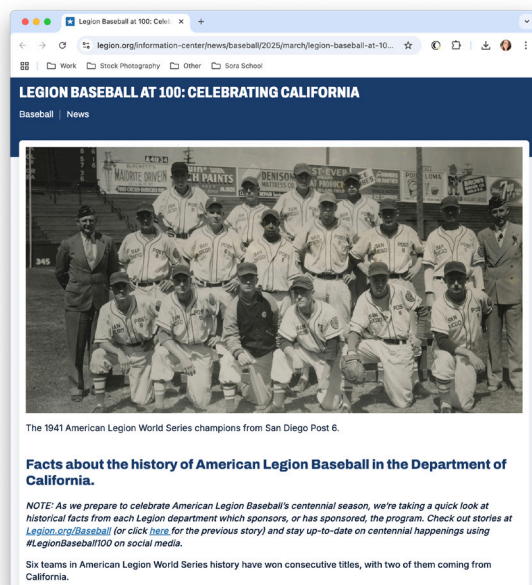
A portfolio of American Legion Baseball “Dugout Diamonds” that tell the stories of interesting figures in the program’s history can be shared from all American Legion National social media platforms.

**Facebook:** @officialamericanlegionbaseball

**X:** @LegionBaseball

**Instagram:** theamericanlegion

**LinkedIn:** The American Legion



### DEPARTMENT HISTORIES

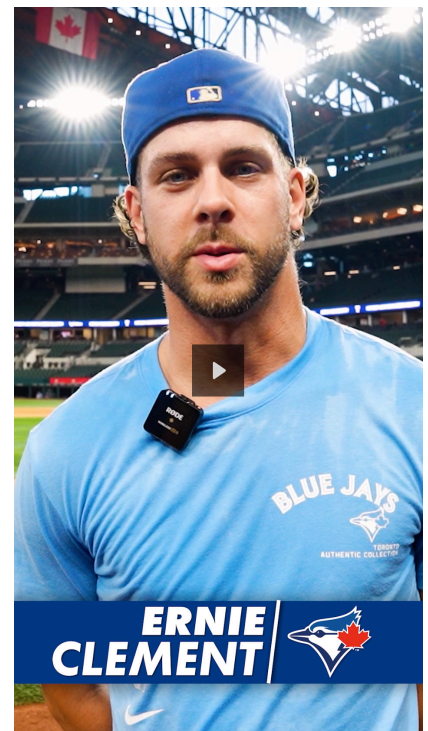
A collection of American Legion Baseball centennial stories from departments throughout the nation and beyond is available for downloading and sharing.  
**legion.org/baseball/centennial**



## MLB Shoutouts

Former American Legion Baseball players now in the Major League lift their voices in celebration of the program and its first 100 years. Among them are Bruce Bocce, manager of the Texas Rangers; Don Mattingly, former New York Yankee great, now a coach for the Toronto Blue Jays; Ernie Clement, an infielder for the Blue Jays; Cory Ragsdale, a coach for the Rangers; Kevin Cash, manager of the Tampa Bay Rays; Cal Raleigh, catcher for the Seattle Mariners; J.P. Crawford, shortstop for the Mariners; Brian Snitker, manager for the Atlanta Braves; A.J. Hinch, manager of the Detroit Tigers; J.T. Realmuto, catcher for the Philadelphia Phillies; and others.

When sharing the MLB Shoutouts in social media, remember to tag the team and the former American Legion player. Simply share them from American Legion national social media channels.







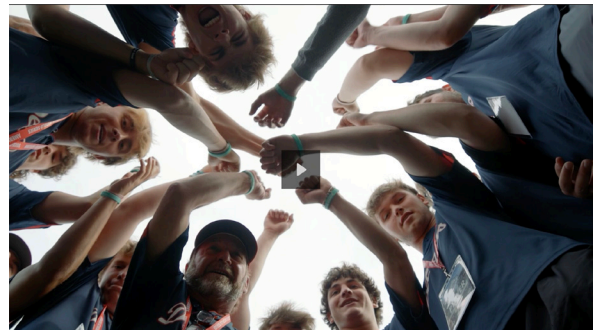
## American Legion Baseball Videos

Find these videos and more at [legion.org/baseball/centennial](https://legion.org/baseball/centennial) or visit [youtube.com/@americanlegionHQ](https://youtube.com/@americanlegionHQ) and look for [The American Legion Baseball Centennial Playlist](#).



### AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL: A CENTURY OF CITIZENSHIP THROUGH SPORTSMANSHIP

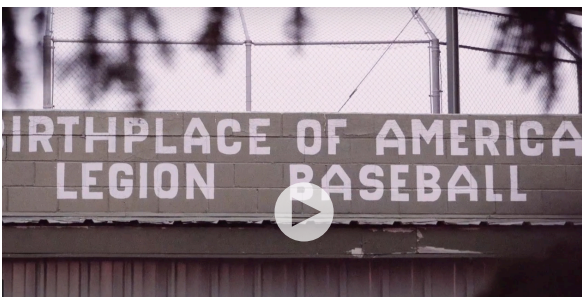
A 7-minute journey through 100 years of American Legion Baseball guided by American Legion Baseball Committee Chairman Gary Stone of Missouri.



### AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL SIZZLE REEL

A fast-paced and lively 30-second video featuring current participants to promote the value of American Legion Baseball.

This video is available for download at [legion.org/baseball/resources](https://legion.org/baseball/resources)



### TO STRENGTHEN A NATION: AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Originally produced as part of The American Legion Centennial documentary series, this film tells the American Legion Baseball story from its South Dakota birthplace.

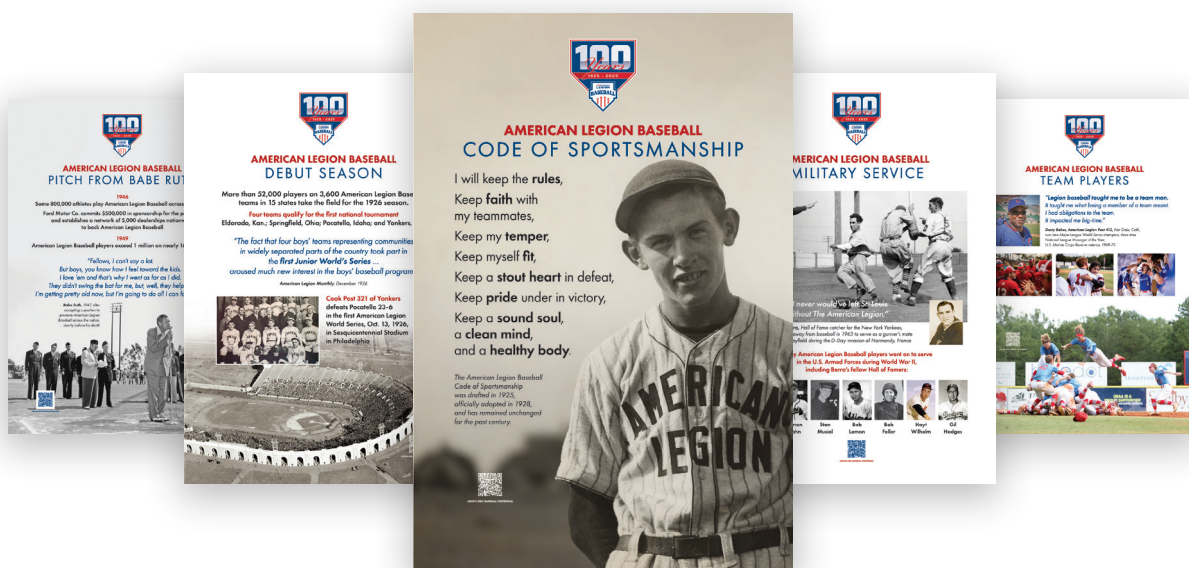


### AMBASSADORS AT BAT

From The American Legion Archives, a 1956 documentary that follows The American Legion Ambassadors Baseball team on a goodwill tour of Latin America.



## Display Panels and Graphics



American Legion Baseball's centennial history is captured in a series of 24 x 36 posters. Print the entire 12-panel series as mounted posters for an exhibit display or choose a few favorites to hang in your post.



Ballpark banners can help celebrate a Century of Citizenship through Sportsmanship at your local field or at team events. Designed as 4 x 8, these files can be cropped to 4x6 banners or can be modified to add localized information.

PDF files for the posters and banner - as well as other downloadable resources can be found at [legion.org/baseball/resources](https://legion.org/baseball/resources)



## Digital/Social Media

**The Dugout:** The American Legion's seasonal e-newsletter keeps subscribers updated on all things American Legion Baseball, from registration information to tournament schedules and scores, as well as interesting features on the program.

**Facebook:** The American Legion Baseball program has a dedicated Facebook platform at **Facebook.com/officialamericanlegionbaseball**

**X:** The program also has a dedicated feed on X (formerly Twitter) **@legionbaseball**

**American Legion World Series website:** Stay up to date on the world series before, during and after the competition from Shelby, N.C. **alws.us**

**Legiontown:** The American Legion's Legiontown platform offers an opportunity for former players, coaches, parents and others who have been influenced by American Legion Baseball to post their stories and images, which can be shared easily on social media, and may be used in national American Legion media, as well. **www.legiontown.org**



Billy Capps is presented with the 1954 American Legion Player of the Year Award at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. by American Legion National Commissioner Lou Brissie.

I was selected as the 1954 American Legion Player of the Year, the fifth guy to be selected for this honor

**San Diego, CA**

September 24, 2020

My American Legion experience was extremely rewarding. Our San Diego Post 492 baseball team made it to the finals at Yakima, Wash. We lost our first game, but made a comeback and won four straight to become national champs. I was fortunate to be named the 1954 American Legion Player of the Year. The following year in July 18, 1955, in Cooperstown, N.Y., I was presented with my scroll attesting me to be the Player of the Year in 1954. Even today I'm involved with the American Legion Baseball program here in San Diego County. In fact, tomorrow I drive to San Marcos, 40 miles north of San Diego, to attend an American Legion golf charity tournament. I'm also a member of the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion. I served two years in the Marine Corps. So my American Legion experience has been very positive.

Sincerely,  
Billy Capps  
Semper Fi

**Submitted by:**  
Billy Capps

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## How to Help



### Order for centennial apparel and swag.

American Legion Baseball depends on more than registration resources. Merchandise and charitable donations are necessary to keep the program successful. The American Legion Baseball centennial pop-up shop celebrates and supports the program's historic milestone with a variety of high-value apparel for men, women and youth, plus hats, drinkware, bags and other memorabilia that help the program. Orders can be placed by visiting **[legion.org/baseball/centennial](https://legion.org/baseball/centennial)**

### Tax-deductible donations.

Provide vital assistance for American Legion Baseball. Supporters can help by visiting **[legion.org/donate](https://legion.org/donate)** and making an investment in our youth through a gift to **American Legion Charities**, designated specifically for American Legion Baseball.



## Quotables

“I’ll never forget getting to win the American Legion World Series and getting that excitement of being able to go to the World Series in 2008. That’s where I fell in love with playing every single day. It got me into this mode of wanting baseball to be my career. It’s worked out pretty well for me so far.”

**Paul Sewald**, *Cleveland Guardians pitcher, American Legion Post 76, Las Vegas*

“The American Legion helped me advance because it was better than Babe Ruth league and every step I went to a higher league and I was playing against better players. And it helped me progress.”

**Joe Morgan**, *Baseball Hall of Fame, National League MVP (1975-1976)*

“When I was 14 or maybe 15 years old, I played American Legion ball, which was really big back during my teenage years. The post I played for was (the) Cudworth post (449, Wisconsin). American Legion ball led to a lot of careers for guys who turned out to be pretty good ball players. It’s still going now. As a matter of fact, we still have tournament play at American Family Field.”

**Bob Uecker**, *former MLB player and Hall of Fame broadcaster, Milwaukee Brewers*

“I appreciate the stand that The American Legion (Baseball) has taken. They have each of the boys go out before every ballgame and repeat the rules. Not just rules for baseball but rules for life. ‘Keep the rules. Keep faith in your teammate. Keep a stout heart in defeat. Keep your pride under in victory. Keep a sound soul. A clean mind and a healthy body.’ These Legionnaires have been my friends. They not only love baseball, but they have meant so much for our country.”

**Bobby Richardson**, *New York Yankees (1955-1966), World Series MVP (1960)*





## Quotables

“I played in Evansville (Ind.) Funkhouser American Legion Post 8. It was a great experience for me. I love Legion. It really kind of got me ready for pro ball ... because you played a lot of games during the summer break, and there were no true practices because you played so many games. Legion was great (and) for my boys, it was good.”

**Don Mattingly**, 6-time All-Star, N.Y. Yankees (1982-1995)

“On Legion diamonds across the country, these young men are learning not only the skills of baseball but the valuable lessons of sportsmanship, self-discipline, teamwork, courage and integrity.”

**Bowie Kuhn**, Commissioner of Major League Baseball (1969-1984)

“If you wanted to play good baseball, it’s American Legion. It was a great experience. I loved my time in American Legion. It was good baseball. It was nice uniforms. It was real grass. The competition was real good. Everything was an upgrade in American Legion.”

**Brian Snitker**, Atlanta Braves manager

“I enjoyed American Legion Baseball as much as I did my high school seasons because of the level of competition... There’s a rich baseball history in Tampa as we all know and certainly American Legion had a lot to do with that back in the day.”

**Kevin Cash**, Tampa Bay Rays manager

“We loved winning for Post 170 (Midwest City, Okla.). It was a big deal to make that team. It was a big deal to play on that team and once you did, you wanted to pay it forward by playing well and representing the region the best you could.”

**A.J. Hinch**, Detroit Tigers manager

“American Legion Baseball is such a good program for teaching kids the right way to play and learning valuable lessons through the veteran’s program. I was really excited to know that I was a part of the list.”

**Former major league second baseman Neil Walker**, the 2019 American Legion Baseball Graduate of the Year