“A Powerful Force for Our Nation” Marketing Campaign

The videos contained on this DVD have been digitally mastered and are of exceptional quality with the design elements, music and message told in a way which targets the younger generation and offers a powerful new tool to promote the Four Pillars of The American Legion, showing the diversity of programs and services, and the depth of service provided by The American Legion in communities across the country. The goal is to place them where the largest audience will see them – again and again.

While most media are in the business of making money, they also have an obligation to serve their respective communities by providing information to their audiences about the services, events and opportunities available locally. There is space at the bottom of the screen at the end of the videos for a local post, district or department phone number/Web site. The specific media that will broadcast the spots should be willing to add your contact information prior to broadcast.

Print ad and flyer selections include both legion.org and a version with editable fields for customized contact information. The radio spots include two versions, one with a music bed at the end to add contact information with a local announcer. The Web ads included would be linked with code to respective Web sites of posts, districts or departments.

Marketing the “Pledge to Service” DVD and the “Powerful Force for Our Nation” Television and Radio PSAs

There are two basic strategies to market these products: as Public Service Announcements aired at no cost to you, or as paid advertisement. Both have one common denominator as you approach your local outlet to get them aired – personal, eye-to-eye contact with the manager, program director, public service director or advertising sales person. Available opportunities will vary depending on geographic location. Large metropolitan areas abound with a variety of media while a remote rural area may only be served by one cable television system. Even when you purchase advertising, personal relationships can be important in determining rates and placement.

The Media

Any medium that offers an audience is a potential marketing opportunity. They include:

Local cable television systems – Today’s best choice because they broadcast a vast array of programming including sports, news, history, science fiction and movies. Many have the need to fill unsold time blocks and accept public service announcements.

Broadcast television stations – While also carried on satellite and cable, they have fewer PSA opportunities as a rule.

Local radio stations

Movie Theaters – Frequently run short advertisements and PSAs prior to showing movies at each sitting.

Community access channels & corporate closed-circuit networks – These include civic information channels and some larger corporations with full time closed-circuit video programming. Local hosts where these shows appear are always looking for good spots to break up their segments. If your church or local college or university has a station or plays video during events, ask them to run a spot during “dead” time or before services or classes.

Sporting events – If your local stadium has a big screen setup, see if they will run the spot during an event, or for the entire season.

The PSA vs. the Paid Spot

All Legionnaires certainly want these spots to run free as a public service and many media may do so when they understand the following:

• The American Legion is a non-profit, 501c 19 veterans service organization.
• Since 1919 The American Legion has been serving veterans and youth through an array of programs.
• Our Four Pillars include care of veterans, promoting a strong national defense, youth development programs and fostering patriotism.
• Membership dues go to support these programs and activities.
• Legionnaires are volunteers at more than 14,000 posts across America.
• Your post helps the community through specific programs.
The best method to help media understand these Legion services is through direct contact. Find out who is in charge of scheduling PSAs at your local media. Then call and schedule an appointment to make the pitch for airing the spots.

**Paid Advertising**

Media outlets may reject your request to run a PSA since The American Legion charges for membership. Be prepared for the possibility and consider the advantages:

- You have a choice of what time and on which programs the spot will air.
- Buy as many or as few as affordable.
- Many will provide a number of free spots for every one purchased.
- Measurable results can be ascribed to the airing of each spot package.
- The production staff should add your contact information at no cost.

Opportunities for introductions to the news staff and other program hosts for interviews are possible as a paid-advertiser.

Paid or unpaid, the common denominator is personal contact. One note of caution: If one station or cable system in your market area will run the spots free as a PSA, do not also buy time for airing them on another medium in the same market at the same time.

**Utilizing Online Media**

Along with the traditional methods and strategies for placing the radio spots, videos and ads included, explore and utilize the “non-traditional” opportunities.

All of the video PSAs along with the full length “Pledge to Service” are available online at The American Legion's YouTube channel. This enables you to download the specific embed code to place on your Web site very easily.

- Visit The American Legion's YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/user/americanlegionHQ](http://www.youtube.com/user/americanlegionHQ)
• Navigate to the desired piece by either scrolling through the videos on the channel or using the search box.
• Click on the link of the video.
• On the next screen you will see beneath the video, a button called, “Embed,” which when you mouse-over it the message displayed is, “Get the video embed code.”
• What appears is highlighted text along with some other options. The prime option to consider will be the size which is found at the bottom of the option box. The default size is the largest and probably not the choice you would want for your Web page. Once you determine the size you need to copy the highlighted text by choosing >Edit from your browser’s toolbar and then >copy from the dropdown list. This code is all you need to place on the Web page where you want the PSA to be displayed.
• The code must be placed on your Web page in “code view” positioned in the desired area within the <body> tag.
You can place all of the video PSAs and “Pledge to Service” on your Web site or you can change them out on a rotating basis. Each is explicit in its message, however, you should write copy on the page explaining what the video entails, piquing interest for visitors to click on and view them.
To encourage the “sharing” by your visitors of these videos from your Web site you can include a simple tool created to do just that. It is a button that will appear on your page giving the visitor the opportunity to “share” or “add” it to their blogs or a variety of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to name just two. The creation and installation of the button is easy and quick. The following Web sites offer this tool:

www.addthis.com
www.sharethis.com

Adding buttons that easily allow your visitors to share content is key for providing them with the simple means to carry the message forward.

Send information and your link(s) to the videos to your core email address list to help ensure they are aware that these are available. Include content describing the videos along with encouraging recipients to forward and share them with their core groups.

Social Media/Networks

Utilize the avenues social media affords in getting the PSA’s out into the mainstream of the Web. By posting them on your Facebook, Twitter or any other social media outlet it increases the reach of those likely to view them.

By using The American Legion’s YouTube channel to access the various videos you will have an easy tool to use to post these to the social networks.

• At the YouTube channel as described above, click on the link of the video.
• At the next screen you will see beneath the video a button called, “share.” This will allow you to share the video as a post on your Facebook or Twitter account by just a click on the button. There are also other social media choices on this screen that you may be utilizing. Keep in mind as different companies are formed to create social network environments and technology advances, choices of where to share will change and increase over time.
Using Video Portal for Distribution

You may also want to upload the files on the DVD to your own YouTube channel.

If you do not presently have a YouTube channel or are interested in uploading these videos to other video sites consider using the free services of Tube Mogul (www.tubemogul.com). Tube Mogul provides a single point for deploying uploads to the top video and social networking sites, along with analytics on who, what and how the videos are being viewed.

Radio PSAs online

Audio specific products can be marketed to Internet radio Web sites. These audio PSAs are also known as podcasts and there are a number of online directories where these podcasts can be submitted.

Podcasts can be uploaded to accounts created at iTunes (www.itunes.com) which makes them available to the large iTunes audience.

Other Electronic opportunities

• Use at membership booths loaded on a laptop and running in a looped configuration. This would be an especially strong message if the “Pledge to Service” video is used for this.
• Display on laptops or DVD players for individual membership recruiting presentations.
• Use during any public speaking opportunities you might have to community or civic groups. These can work well as a refresher for town councils and city governments reminding them of what The American Legion stands for.
• Use during any sales pitch to potential sponsors or supporters.

Print Ads

There are a variety of possibilities to explore when it comes to successful print ad placement. Think beyond your local newspaper, as there are other avenues in your community which exist. Always ask if there is a discounted pricing for non-profits. There may not be, but it never hurts to ask.

Approach your area high school(s) to see about placing an ad in their year book or school newsletter. Individual groups within the school may prove to be another opportunity. Programs for sporting events,
performing arts productions, booster clubs, will seek advertising and you will find this is a relatively inexpensive way to reach into the community with the Legion’s message.

If you happen to live near a military installation, you may find installation publications in which you can place ads. Community newsletters, church, civic group publications or show programs for community theaters are other possible ad placement opportunities.

Additionally included on this DVD is a selection of flyers which can be placed in a number of locations such as area businesses, doctor offices, libraries, along with having them available at any community fairs or booths. Flyers contain editable fields which allow you to customize them with your department/post contact information.

Web Ads
The Web-ready ads included on this DVD can be displayed on your Web site, included in your newsletter or use them as leverage tools. Your local paper, area military installation publication or other community publication may be interested in running Web ads on their sites for reduced or no cost to you if you also place a paid ad. Being present on as many channels as possible will increase reach and exposure.

Additional Notes:
Additional DVD’s can be obtained by contacting the Public Relations office at 317-630-1253 or via email at pr@legion.org.

Many broadcast stations will want a higher-quality BetacamSP videotape copy of the spot to run on their station. Contact the public relations office at 317-630-1253 or via email at pr@legion.org to request a BetacamSP copy at no charge. Provide the contact information at your media outlet and we will send the copy directly to them for you.

For detailed information about public service spots and advertising, refer to sections 7 and 8 of The American Legion Public Relations Handbook. If you don’t have a copy of the handbook, it can be downloaded from The American Legion Web site at www.legion.org or you can send a request to pr@legion.org.