



Centennial Celebration
WORKBOOK

A guide to sharing your post's Legacy and Vision



THE LOCAL LEGACY | YOUR POST'S HISTORY

The American Legion is first and foremost a local organization. Every post in every community across the country has a history worth sharing. In order for posts to raise awareness of their own unique places in their communities, this workbook is provided to offer suggestions and opportunities to research, share and celebrate the Legion's proud heritage.

The American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee recommends the establishment of centennial committees at the department and post levels. These committees may be separate from traditional post historian offices. Collaboration with the Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary is also encouraged.

Because the Legion has been a part of so many aspects of community life, committees may also choose to involve others in their planning, including:

- High schools and colleges, particularly history programs
- Local media outlets
- The business community
- Churches
- Local historical societies and museums
- Local government entities
- Alumni of local post youth programs

Whether your post was chartered in 1919 or 2009, every post has a story and legacy that has contributed to the overall identity of The American Legion.

National Headquarters is now developing a web page that will allow each participating post its own place online where photos, text and videos can be posted and shared.

Some posts, of course, have better historical records than others. The main purpose of this workbook is to help centennial committees start gathering information for presentation online, in the media, at the post and in the community.

GETTING STARTED | INVESTIGATING

The best way to convey your post's legacy is to collect its unique stories into a concise narrative for presentation online, in print and to share with others. Asking simple questions of your members and community can help you uncover some of the details that make your post unique.

- Who founded your post, and when?
- Whose names are on your original post charter?
- Who (if anyone) was your post named after, and why?
- Has your post always been at this location? If not, what are the other locations?
- Who are some notable members in your post's history?
- Who are notable alumni of your youth programs, such as Boys State, Oratoricals or American Legion Baseball?
- What makes your post special or unique?
- What are some important dates in the history of your post, and what happened to make them important?
- What community organizations have your post associated with over the years?
- What families have been involved with your post for multiple generations?
- What community service role does your post play now, or has it played in the past?
- What great things has your post done for your community, such as the construction of a war memorial or the provision of an after-school mentoring project?

The answers may be right at your fingertips. If careful records have been kept over the years, and an archive of documents, photographs and artifacts is available, it should be easy to answer most of these questions. For many posts, however, information may be more difficult to find.

Odd corners of the post home can hold hidden treasures. Check attics, basements, closets and storage areas. Ask around to see if historical records, documents, photos or artifacts may have gone home with members at some point for safekeeping.

Post members are living, breathing historical records. Oral histories let you gather the experiences and spirit of the past from those who were a part of it. Audio or video recordings can become priceless records of your post's history. The Veterans History Project (VHP), a product of the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, was established in 2000 as a way to collect stories of military service from veterans. The VHP website offers tips about how to conduct oral history interviews. www.loc.gov/vets/kit.html

Local post histories may be available at department headquarters or at National Headquarters in Indianapolis. www.legion.org/departments or www.legion.org/library/contacts

KEEP EXPLORING | EXPANDING YOUR SEARCH

Your local community has resources that can help you discover more about your post. When seeking information from outside sources, be sure to call ahead, and make appointments if necessary. This will give staff a chance to locate materials and have them ready for you.

Libraries

Front desk staff at your local library can direct you to many resources, such as:

- Local history and genealogy holdings
- Local and county histories
- Newspaper archives
- Holdings by families, churches, censuses, etc.
- Clubs, associations, organizations

Historical societies

Historical society resources vary widely, depending on whether they actively solicit items or work from donations. Your historical society may be able to help with scanning, preservation and other collection efforts. They will likely want to make another copy for themselves, which has the benefit of making the information accessible to others and demonstrating for future researchers the post's important place in the community.

Local media outlets (*newspapers, radio, TV, etc.*)

Before you contact media outlets, try to make a list of the events and stories that have received media coverage over the years. It's better if you know what (and when) you're looking for.

Partner with these organizations early to get the word out – for information now and publicity later. Libraries have public bulletin boards, historical societies often have newsletters, and media outlets can publish callouts to their consumers.

PRESERVATION | SAVING EARLY RECORDS

Considering that the Legion's history goes back to 1919, and materials may go back even further, some of what you find may be damaged – especially photographs. Special care when handling them is essential. The National Archives has an in-depth section of its website dedicated to the preservation of documents, articles, photographs and other materials.

www.archives.gov/preservation

As more and more information has migrated to the Internet, online search engines – such as Google, Bing and Yahoo! – may prove an unexpected treasure trove. Do two different types of searches – one general, with no quotation marks; and another more specific, with quotation marks around the search term.

SHARING YOUR STORY | CONTINUE THE LEGACY

Once you've collected the information, how do you present it? A number of different ways are available, including:

- The American Legion Centennial Celebration web page, which offers a convenient way to present your post history, in words and images, for all to see.
www.legion.org/centennial
- A centennial history book about your post
- A Facebook page dedicated to the history of your post, which is also a good way to seek out information from friends in the community
- A series of stories or columns about the post history by your local newspaper, television or radio station
- A centennial exhibit at the post, or one that can travel and be displayed at area museums and special events
- In the format set out by the Legion's National Post History Contest.
www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/publications/officers_guide.pdf

Since 1919, The American Legion has been serving veterans, their families, communities and the nation. From national initiatives like the GI Bill, to local efforts like the sponsorships of Boys State participants who later go on to careers of public service, the Legion's legacy is an anthology multiplied by millions of lives made better by the nation's largest and most influential wartime veterans organization.

SHARING YOUR STORY | SETTING UP YOUR POST HISTORY PAGE

National Headquarters has built a web platform for posts to share their histories with the intent of collecting pieces to tell the larger story of The American Legion's first century.

Starting your post's page is a quick and easy process. Once your page is started, current and former post members, as well as those whose lives have been touched by your post, will be able to add events to your timeline, helping to enrich your story. These step-by-step instructions will help guide you through the process.

1. Go to the Centennial Celebration homepage. **www.legion.org/centennial**
2. Near the top of the left navigation column, click on the **Share Your Post History** link.
3. In the dialogue box that appears in the center column, **select your department (state) and type your post number.**
4. If a post page has not yet been created, you will be prompted to start one. **Simply click on the blue link.**

Clicking on this link will make you the administrator of the page. Other registered users will be able to submit events and imagery to your timeline, but you will be responsible for approving all submissions before they post live to the page. As administrator, you will also have the ability to edit all content on the page, delete unsuitable material and assign other registered users to be co-administrators.

If a page has already been started for your post, you may submit additional material to their timeline as long as you are a registered user. If you wish to be administrator of the page, you must contact the current administrator for an invitation.

5. **Log in if you haven't already done so.**

You must be a registered user of **legion.org** to be an administrator or contributor on the Centennial Celebration website. If you are already a registered user, you may log in using your existing username and password. If you are not a current registered user, follow the prompts to create an account.

6. **Complete your information.**

To start a post page, you must fill out the first three required fields: your department, your post number and post city. You must also submit an image. This image will be the cover, or lead, photo representing your post. It can be any sort of photo, but some good ideas are photos of your members, historically significant images such as a photo of your post namesake or an interior or exterior shot of your post home. *(See note on image specifications in the Technical Tips section.)*

If you have information about your post namesake, notable members or unique attributes, you can also complete these fields at this stage. If you don't, you or any other administrator you assign will be able to return to the page later and add or edit this information.

In the last section of the form you can add web addresses to create hot links from your history page back to your post's website or any existing social media your post may have.

7. **Click the Save button.**

Congratulations, you've just started your story!

SHARING YOUR STORY | ADDING TO YOUR POST HISTORY PAGE

Now that you have successfully started your page, you and other registered users can add timeline events, photo galleries or calendar events.

1. Timeline Events.

Timeline events are the significant moments that help build the chronology of your history. Administrators and other registered site users can add timeline events, but administrators must approve all submissions for their page before the event can be seen publicly. *(See more on administrators in the Technical Tips section)*

To add a timeline event to the post page, click on the **Add a Timeline Event** link on the post page where you would like to add an event. Timeline event submissions require an **event date**, a **headline** and a **story** about the event. The story need not be long. There is an option to add a **photo** to a timeline event, but it is not required. Once you have added the material, click on the **Save** button.

2. Photo Galleries.

Photos are another way to tell your story. Photo galleries can be collections of vintage images, companion pieces to timeline events or modern collections that show your post in action today.

To add a photo gallery to the post page, click on the **Add a Photo Gallery** link on the post page where you would like to add your gallery. Photo gallery submissions require a **title** and **description**. If your gallery is a companion piece to a timeline event, you should use similar titles and headlines. Click the **Browse** button to locate the photo you want to upload. Once you have located the file, click on the **Upload** button. As you upload each photo, a new box to upload the next image will appear. There is not a limit to the number of images you can place in an album, but 8-20 images per gallery is a good rule of thumb. Once you have finished uploading all your images, click the **Save** button.

3. Upcoming Events.

This entry is specific to 100th Anniversary events. As we near the Centennial, Legionnaires at the post, district, department and national levels will all begin planning 100th Anniversary events. These events can be anything from job fairs and networking events to time capsule ceremonies, community presentations or centennial galas.

If your post schedules events tied to the 100th Anniversary, you can post the details of your event on your post page. Your events will also appear on the national Centennial Celebration Calendar with all other participating posts, department and national events.

To add a calendar event to the post page, click on the **Add an Upcoming Event** link on the post page where you would like to add an event. Upcoming event submissions require an **event date**, **event title** and a **description** about the event. The description should add as many details as possible about time, location and agendas. Once you have added the material, click on the **Save** button.

SHARING YOUR STORY | TECHNICAL TIPS

A few notes about the technical side of managing your post history page.

1. Administration of Pages

Being the administrator of your post page allows you to monitor all content submitted to your page before it appears to the general viewing public. Once you begin your page, you should notice that the top group of links in the left-hand navigation column of the Centennial Celebration website will be the Administrator tools.

Notifications: This link will take you to the list of pending submissions for any page where you are an administrator. You will also receive an email each time a new submission has been posted. You can click the link in the email to take you to the pending-submission page.

To review a pending submission, click the **Review** link to the left side of an item. Once you have reviewed the material, click on **Approve** to allow the submission to post to your page. If the post is inappropriate, you can click **Deny** to delete the submission. If the post is acceptable but has mistakes or inaccuracies, you may **Approve** the submission to allow it to post to your page, and then **Edit** the submission once it is live on your page.

Manage Post Admins: Sometimes it will be necessary for more than one person to be responsible for monitoring submissions for a post. If you, as the primary administrator, wish to add other administrators to your page, click on the **Manage Post Admins** link, select the post page, then submit the email address of your co-administrators. Remember, it is not necessary to submit material to post history pages, just to approve and edit material once it is submitted.

Changing Administrators: If for some reason the person who started the post page wants to relinquish duties as primary administrator of the Post History page, click on the **Change Primary Administrator** link on the Manage Post Admins page and follow the instructions. Only a current primary administrator can assign a new primary administrator with this link.

2. Images

All images uploaded to your page should adhere to the following technical specifications. Files that do not meet these requirements will fail to upload to the site.

File type: PNG, GIF, JPG or JPEG.

Maximum file size: 500 MB

Maximum dimensions:

Main cover image: 1920 w x 1920 h

Timeline event image: 800 w x 600 h

Photo gallery image: 800 w x 800 h

SHARING YOUR STORY | THE PAPER TRAIL

The national 100th Anniversary Observance Committee recognizes that while many posts may want to participate in the Centennial Celebration post history platform, not every post has access to the technical tools and expertise needed to manage a digital history.

For posts that want to participate, but do not do so online, the remainder of this guide is dedicated to creating organized paper copies of the timeline events, photo galleries and upcoming events that can be passed along to a third party who is willing to act as administrator on behalf of your post.

1. Find an administrator.

Start local. Perhaps there is someone connected to a member of your post who is willing to help manage your page. Look for local Boy Scouts or church youth groups that need opportunities for volunteer service hours.

Take it up the chain: Check with your district or department headquarters. If they have started a centennial committee, they may have someone who can help or can refer you to someone locally.

Go to the top: If you have exhausted every effort to find someone to manage your page, contact national staff members who are part of the 100th Anniversary Committee. We will make every effort to find you the assistance you need to get your page online.

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2. Prepare your files

In the appendix, you will find four different forms. These forms will help you prepare the information necessary for a third party to enter your information in a quick and organized manner. The **Create Your Page** form will only need to be filled out once. The remaining forms represent each of the different types of submissions: **Timeline Event**, **Photo Gallery** and **Upcoming Event**. These pages can be copied (*or downloaded and printed from the Centennial Celebration Tools area*) as many times as needed as time goes on. A new form should be filled out for each submission to your page.

APPENDIX | CREATE YOUR PAGE

1. POST DEPARTMENT

2. POST NUMBER

3. POST CITY

4. CHARTER DATE **MONTH:** **DAY:** **YEAR:**

5. POST NAMESAKE

NAME:

TELL THE STORY OF YOUR NAMESAKE:

6. FIRST POST COMMANDER

NAME:

7. WHAT MAKES YOUR POST UNIQUE?

8. PHOTO ID:

9. POST WEBSITE URL:

10 POST FACEBOOK URL:

11. POST TWITTER URL:

12. POST FLICKR URL:

13. POST YOUTUBE URL:

APPENDIX | TIMELINE EVENT

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. EVENT HEADLINE

4. EVENT STORY

5. PHOTO ID:

APPENDIX | TIMELINE EVENT

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. EVENT HEADLINE

4. EVENT STORY

5. PHOTO ID:

APPENDIX | TIMELINE EVENT

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. EVENT HEADLINE

4. EVENT STORY

5. PHOTO ID:

APPENDIX | PHOTO GALLERY

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. PHOTO GALLERY TITLE

4. PHOTO GALLERY DESCRIPTION

5. NUMBER OF PHOTOS IN GALLERY:

PHOTO ID

APPENDIX | PHOTO GALLERY

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. PHOTO GALLERY TITLE

4. PHOTO GALLERY DESCRIPTION

5. NUMBER OF PHOTOS IN GALLERY:

PHOTO ID

APPENDIX | PHOTO GALLERY

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. PHOTO GALLERY TITLE

4. PHOTO GALLERY DESCRIPTION

5. NUMBER OF PHOTOS IN GALLERY:

PHOTO ID

APPENDIX | UPCOMING EVENT

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. EVENT TITLE

4. ABOUT THE EVENT

LOCATION:

START TIME

AGENDA:

SPECIAL GUESTS:

DESCRIPTION:

APPENDIX | UPCOMING EVENT

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. EVENT TITLE

4. ABOUT THE EVENT

LOCATION:

START TIME

AGENDA:

SPECIAL GUESTS:

DESCRIPTION:

APPENDIX | UPCOMING EVENT

1. POST ID:

NUMBER:

CITY:

DEPARTMENT:

2. EVENT DATE

MONTH:

DAY:

YEAR:

3. EVENT TITLE

4. ABOUT THE EVENT

LOCATION:

START TIME

AGENDA:

SPECIAL GUESTS:

DESCRIPTION: