

# Veterans in the Classroom

The American Legion believes that our military veterans are living textbooks of American History. Their accounts of experiences while in the uniform of this country should be preserved and shared with others, especially with students in America's schools.

With that objective in mind, The American Legion has embarked on an initiative connecting the local American Legion Post and the schools in its community. Veterans in the Classrooms encourages veterans to volunteer their time to share their life experiences with a generation that many feel is not receiving a proper and accurate historical account of this country's involvement in armed conflicts. Veterans of service in the United States Armed Forces have participated in many monumental events or have been eyewitnesses to them, thus putting them in a unique position to help students learn and appreciate the sacrifices and achievements of America's service men and women.

Firsthand accounts add the perspective of being there, of learning from those who actually fought the battles with their lives on the line. The interaction of veterans and students is an interaction of two generations of Americans, without the slant of media moguls and textbook academicians. Veterans who fought in the battlefields of Europe, in Vietnam, Korea and the Persian Gulf will give students a better understanding of the sacrifices our armed forces are making today by reflecting on their lives in past wars.

1. To organize a program, representatives of the local American Legion Post should visit with school officials, specifically those educators who teach American History. Discuss how local veterans can contribute to students' understanding of military service and its historical implications. This meeting is important in that both parties can use the occasion to voice their concerns, their objectives and set guidelines for meeting their goals.
2. Establish the right time frame for the veterans to visit the school. Veterans Day, Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day are prime opportunities to come and speak to the kids. When you speak to the school find out if you can come around one of these holidays.

3. It is also important to determine what age group you will be visiting. Often times it is easier to speak to elementary children or junior high students. For High Schoolers you may want to create a mentorship program.
4. You need to also plan this in advance as some schools may require you to have a background check completed. This could require additional paperwork and time. Plan accordingly!!!
5. Plan to have props that you can take with you that you can share a story from. Kids want to hear about the weapons, medals and missions but please keep it PG. You don't want to go into experiences that are not appropriate. Remember Emblem Sales offer patriotic comic books that make great items you can give away to the kids to take home.
6. Resources to support a Veterans in the Classroom program are available from the Americanism and Children & Youth Division ([acy@legion.org](mailto:acy@legion.org)) and American Legion Emblem Sales ([emblem@legion.org](mailto:emblem@legion.org)), American Legion National Headquarters, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206. Brochures: Veterans in the Classroom – History in the First Person (23-015) Veterans in the Classroom – Resource Materials (23-016)

Remember the kids will enjoy listening to you and will enjoy the change from their normal activities.