



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY SUPPORT TOOLS

A collection of resources from National Headquarters to assist and guide members and volunteers in serving veterans, servicemembers and their families.

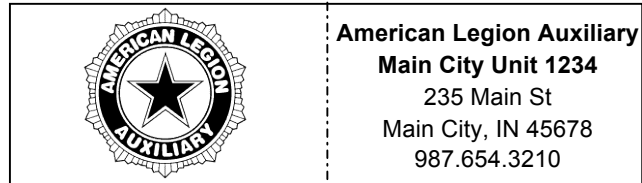
Volunteer: Engage
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How to Plan a Send Off or Welcome Home Event

A local servicemember or unit is deploying or returning...now what? Actively participating in a send off or welcome home event sends a message to the servicemember, their family and the community. What does your message say? Here are a few suggestions for you to show your appreciation and raise awareness that the American Legion Auxiliary is there for our troops and their families.

Items to Bring:

- A crowd of people wearing patriotic clothing; ask Legionnaires to wear caps
- Yellow ribbons
- Small American flags to pass out and wave with a label (example above, to be folded on dotted line and placed just below the flag on the pole)
- Banners (homemade or bought) with saying such as "Thank you from a grateful nation!"
- If a servicemember is deploying, bring Blue Star Banners for their family(ies) and place a label on it so the family remembers who it is from.



Things to Do:

- Designate a "rapid response team" to spread the word as soon as you know. Connect with other veterans' organizations and The Legion Family in district, county, etc. You never know who will show up, and opening that form of communication encourages them to call upon you when they know of someone being deployed or returning.
- Remember that target dates are not certain.
- Use media contacts to connect with local TV and/or radio stations. If publicized beforehand, this serves a dual purpose; members of the community can come show their support, and the community will be more aware of the involvement of the Auxiliary by receiving the label flags, for instance.
 - If the arrival window is stretched over several hours, ask your media source for a number to call when the plane lands or is in proximity.
- Contact local motorcycle groups for escorts to/from the airport or base, such as American Legion Riders, Patriot Guard, Leathernecks MC, Nam Knights of America MC, Rolling Thunder and Warriors' Watch Riders.
- Speak with the local police and fire departments. Many times these departments will help, for instance, the police motorcycle team or police cruisers can assist in the escort and the fire department might put on some pageantry with the trucks (this may require driving past the firehouse).
- Invite the local mayor, political representatives and dignitaries.
 - Encourage them to express thanks on behalf of the citizens.
- Do not treat this as a recruitment opportunity. It is a solemn occasion for us to show our dedication to service.
- Be sure to smile.
- Use this as an opportunity to make a positive impact on the family members. Doing so could result in them calling when they need assistance or want to become involved.