

# American Legion Auxiliary

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February 2023 \$3.75



The long road  
to bringing home  
our nation's heroes

# New ALA Recruiting Flyer for Units!

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Consider helping to grow your post's Auxiliary unit's membership by adding these flyers to the takeout boxes! They're convenient, fillable PDFs with an efficient 3-up design for easy printing on a home computer. You can also take them to your local print shop so you'll always have extras on hand.

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- 3) Click onto the fillable field at the bottom of the flyer to type in a unit contact person's name, phone, or email address.
- 4) Print on color paper (we suggest blue), and cut in thirds.
- 5) Tape a flyer to each takeout box.



# Auxiliary

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**ON THE COVER:** Back in June 2022, highly decorated retired Marines started out on a hike on U.S. Highway 20. This was no ordinary hike. The voyage would take these men from Boston, Mass. — through 12 states and 3,365 miles — to the final stop on our nation's west coast: Newport, Ore. *Auxiliary* magazine tagged along for part of the journey (photo: Jennifer Donovan, ALA National Headquarters). **ABOVE:** New logos for the ALA provide an opportunity for updated items from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales. Purchase your branded apparel and accessories at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or 1-888-453-4466.



**MISSION FOCUSED:** ALA National President Vickie Koutz at the Vietnam Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C. on Veterans Day with Chanin Nuntavong, American Legion D.C. office executive director of government affairs.

It's been quite the journey since taking office for the 2022-2023 American Legion Auxiliary administrative year.

I'm so very grateful for all the hospitality and warm welcomes I've experienced as I've traveled throughout the country to ALA units. Everyone has been so eager to share their mission-related projects with me.

I wish I could share about all the activities I've participated in and about all the people I've met so far, but here are just a few highlights:

I had a wonderful time visiting the Department of Wyoming for their fall workshop. Thank you, members of the ALA, The American Legion, and Sons of The American Legion for your kindness and hospitality.

While in Missouri, it was very humbling to tour the only other permanent Vietnam Wall besides the one in Washington, D.C. I took a picture of a man's name who sat beside me in home room all through our high school years. He was killed not long after he deployed to Vietnam. I also crowned Miss Sikeston at a local festival in Missouri. I have never met such polite young ladies. Several of them are Junior members who love helping veterans. Thank you for letting me

do something I'd never experienced previously. It was so much fun! I also attended a local Veterans Creative Arts Festival and presented the veterans with their gold medals.

In Colorado, I attended a dinner where a couple of Junior members were in attendance, and the youngest, an 8-year-old, helped serve our dinner and donated half of her tips to my special project. What a sweet gesture!

***We have some of the most unique and creative members in our organization.***

I had the opportunity to speak at a POW/MIA ceremony at the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center in New Jersey. This was such an honor for me while I bring awareness to POW/MIAs during my term as national president.

It was a moving experience to lay a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Wall and the Vietnam Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C. on Veterans Day with Chanin Nuntavong, American Legion D.C. office executive director of government affairs. This is very special to me since my husband is a Vietnam veteran.

Another favorite memory I have so far is attending a baby shower for active-duty moms and active-duty spouses in Maryland. Several ALA units and other organizations

sponsored the baby shower. All the new moms-to-be were so appreciative of their gifts.

While visiting Arkansas, I had the privilege of sharing in the celebration of a new charter presentation — another first for me.

Getting to see The Guardian House in New York was also a neat experience. It provides shelter for homeless female veterans. The home is sponsored by the Veterans & Community Housing Coalition, and it is beautiful.

Throughout my visits, I've also toured several U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals and state veteran homes, learning more about the different ways our veterans are cared for. I have also seen several Gold Star family memorials.

Everywhere I go, I learn something new. We have some of the most unique and creative members in our organization.

As we move to the second half of our 2022-2023 administrative year, please continue the national focus to assist every companion, who is medically needed by a National

Veterans Creative Arts Festival veteran, to be able to attend the event. This help could

come in the form of paying for a meal plan, paying for travel to the Festival, or paying for a separate hotel room (depending on the relationship of the companion and veteran), or all three needs.

Additionally, one of my goals as ALA national president is to increase awareness of the thousands of Americans who remain unaccounted for. My husband, Jim, returned to Vietnam years later after serving overseas to help dig for remains, and since then, wears a POW bracelet all the time. Listening to him talking about his experiences made me realize how important it still is today.

Vickie Koutz  
National President

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**AMERICAN  
LEGION  
AUXILIARY**

**A CHANGED LOOK:** The American Legion Auxiliary emblem next to a new branding logo.

Advertising tycoon David Ogilvy once said, “The secret of long life is double careers: one to about age 60, then another for the next 30 years.”

Metaphorically speaking, the American Legion Auxiliary’s emblem can relate (give or take a few of those years). Our blue star emblem has been part of us since our founding in 1919. The emblem saw us through some significant times: as a new organization



with just a few hundred members grow into one comprising hundreds of thousands; numerous U.S. presidents at the helm of our country; and sooooo much more.

Though we’ve had a good run with our emblem, it’s time to take advantage of fresher possibilities as we move further into our second century of service. One way organizations and companies do this is with updated branding. What does this mean for Auxiliary

members? It means we’ll now have options regarding our look and feel. New logos, provided to us courtesy of The American Legion (which owns our name and trademark), are those options.

The new logos give us a different look in our communities. People who previously may not have turned in your direction at a unit mission outreach event, for example, may be intrigued about “the veterans support organization they saw with the red and blue logo.” You’re the same Auxiliary, yes, but you’ve simply got a new look.

It’s important to note that the ALA isn’t experiencing a total rebrand. The blue star emblem still exists, and you’re still welcome to use it. Check out page 26 in this issue of *Auxiliary* for details on when to use which logo.

Let’s think of this new look as a career change vs. retirement. After 103 years of service, we can say with pride that we have solid brand presence with longevity and recognition. But now, we’re exploring new possibilities.

**AMERICAN  
LEGION**

**AUXILIARY**

*A Community of Volunteers  
Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*

February 2023

**Published by**

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*American Legion Auxiliary Magazine is published quarterly by the American Legion Auxiliary. Letters, unsolicited articles and photographs are not guaranteed to be published or returned and may be edited. See [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Media/Magazine-Submissions](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Media/Magazine-Submissions) for further details. Opinions expressed in this publication may not necessarily represent policy or positions of the organization. Advertisements do not reflect endorsement by the organization.*

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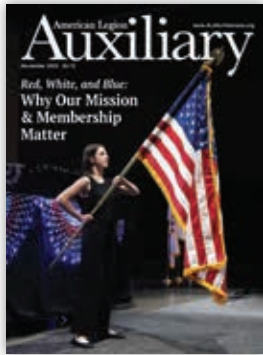
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The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. Our members also support the mission of The American Legion in improving the quality of life for our nation’s veterans. Proud sponsor of ALA Girls Nation, National Poppy Day® and recognized for advocating for veterans on Capitol Hill, the nearly 550,000 ALA members across the country volunteer millions of hours annually and raise millions of dollars in service to veterans, military, and their families. Founded in 1919, the ALA is one of the oldest patriotic membership organizations in the U.S.A. To learn more and to volunteer, join, and donate, visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).



**Why does the American flag look that way?**

I was in the color guard in Toms River several years ago and was honored to carry our national colors. We were directed by a Marine sergeant major retired, and actually won first place at our department convention. I was taught that the national flag was never to be dipped but always straight. It bothered me to see the cover and the flag dipped. Am I mistaken? Thank you for your attention in this matter. God bless.

— Debra Basquez, New Jersey

*Editor's response: Thank you for writing us! Auxiliary magazine received other letters from members who asked about the flag on our November cover. The photo was taken during a patriotic performance at National Convention. The flag was gently being waved by this member when the snapshot was taken. It was not lowered or "dipped" intentionally, and it was never meant as a sign of disrespect, but rather honor and reverence to our country.*

**Making quilts in Minnesota for a good cause**

Our unit in Round Lake, Minn., would like to share a picture of some of the quilts given to the veterans home in Luverne, Minn. We also have done other items, like bags for

wheelchairs and bibs for the dining room.

I try to do one quilt a year, but for the last few years have done two each year. They are 70-by-90 inches, using scraps and fabric others give me. It is a pleasure to serve in this manner.

We are proud to help. Though



small in size, we know the importance of our work with the American Legion Auxiliary.

— Nancy Edwards, Minnesota

**Love and appreciation for these Wisconsin sisters**

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 469 of Marathon City, Wisc., is honored to share a story of two very remarkable and amazing women. The photo here is of Margaret Shidell, age 102 (right) born Oct. 23, 1920, and her younger sister, Norma Socha, age 100, born Nov. 28, 1922. It is 1 in



every 5,000 who live to be 100 years old!

Needless to say, these two beautiful ladies have a long

history of goodwill. Both have been matriarchs to the Auxiliary and to our community. They are compassionate, faithful, ambitious, and loving women who put others first. Our Auxiliary members know them best as our Poppy chairpersons. For years, they delightfully organized volunteers and prepared the poppy

basket. Upon completion of the shift or shifts, they would graciously invite the volunteers into their home to tally the collections. Their hospitality included coffee and homemade baked goods. The best part was the conversations. They had/have so much history to share. The love they have for others, the community, and country radiated through. They gave you a feeling of importance, appreciation, and pride.

Margaret and Norma volunteered and worked to make our community and Auxiliary unit strong and vibrant. Margaret has been a member of the Auxiliary for 32 years and Norma for 59 years.

These two sisters were born and raised in Marathon City. Their parents were part owners of the Marathon general store. They graduated from Marathon High School and are members of the local Catholic church. They lived through the wars and the Great Depression. Margaret's husband Joseph, and Norma's husband Leo both served during World War II. They are proud Americans who understand the sacrifice of freedom and the building of camaraderie.

The members of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 469 have been blessed with having known Margaret and Norma and we are grateful for their inspiration.

— Betty Blume, Wisconsin

**Correction/Clarification**

In the August 2022 issue of *Auxiliary*, an Alabama artist was not credited for her designs of a ceramic poppy used at an event in Ohio. Julianne Hansen of Hansen Fine Art & Pottery in Prattville, Ala., is the original designer of this specialty poppy.

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM you**

Email: [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org) or send letters to: **ALA National Headquarters 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268**

Story and Photo Submissions: **Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Magazine](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Magazine) for more details.**



## NEW JERSEY JUNIORS COLLECT UNIQUE ITEMS FOR BENCH AND PICNIC TABLE PROJECT

Imagine collecting 1,500 pounds of plastic lids and new and used sneakers for an ALA project. That’s what the New Jersey Atlantic County American Legion Auxiliary Juniors did.

ALA Unit 158 member Barbara Mortillite is all about saving the environment. When trying to think of a project for Junior members, she came across a company, Eco Plastic Products of Delaware, which constructs benches out of recycled lids. The benches are UV protected, weather resistant, and maintenance free. She ran it by co-chair Jamie Morgan and the two agreed to begin the project.

“I thought it was a good way to get the Juniors involved with the planet and give back to our veterans,” Mortillite said. “It’s a win-win.”

If you collect the weight of the

product you want to purchase, the company will give you a discount on the item, she added. For example, if the product is 200 pounds, you need to collect 200 pounds of plastic to get the discounted price on a bench or table.

The Juniors started collecting plastic lids, which ranged from soda bottle lids to those from sour cream containers, laundry detergent, and more.

Junior members gathered monthly to wash and sort caps by color. That was one difficulty about the project — they weren’t expecting the donated lids to be unwashed, so it took some time to clean all of them.

As they collected lids, Mortillite found the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation’s Veteran Projects Fund grant application.

“Seeing that this could be a great

opportunity, we applied for the grant as members of Unit 158 and were thrilled when awarded a grant to pay for a large portion of the project,” she said. “This grant allowed us to expand our project from one park bench.”

That expansion from just one park bench included two wheelchair-accessible picnic benches for Vineland Veterans Home, two park benches for Veterans Haven South, and one wheelchair-accessible picnic bench for Meadowview Nursing Home’s veterans’ wing.

The unit covered the balance of the expenses by collecting sneakers. A company, [gotsneakers.com](http://gotsneakers.com), takes donated sneakers and repurposes them or strips them down for materials. Members also held yard sales and accepted monetary donations to help cover the cost.

Also assisting with this project through donations was New Jersey ALA Unit 28.

Mortillite said the project has been very rewarding “seeing the appreciation and knowing the [benches and tables] are getting used and they have a purpose.”

For other ALA Junior groups considering a similar project, Mortillite said go for it.

“It has no downsides to it,” she said. “I do recommend having people clean caps ahead of time. If not, clean as you go — don’t try to do all in one time.”

Once the project was completed, the unit delivered the plastic lids to Eco Plastic Products of Delaware where they were shredded, melted, and formed into parts used to make the recycled picnic tables and benches.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to dedicate something to our veterans and say ‘Thank you for your service and dedication to our great country,’” Mortillite said.

## DEADLINE FOR YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS APPROACHING

Scholarship applications are due March 1.

The Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund is an umbrella that supports three separate scholarship

opportunities for participants in American Legion Auxiliary programs — one is for ALA Junior members, another is for the Honorary National Junior

Division Vice Presidents, and one is for participants in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program. Learn more at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships).



National Junior meetings continue to bring our organization's youngest members together. Between icebreaker activities, flag folding, and inspirational cardmaking, there is something at these meetings for everyone. Follow the ALA Junior Activities program on Facebook @ALAJuniors for updates on these events.



## NEW DIGITAL MEDIA PATCH, LIMITED EDITION VCAF PATCH AVAILABLE

Changes are coming to the ALA Junior Patch Program! The changes to the popular program among Junior members and school-aged Sons of The American Legion are reflective of the world today for young children.

For kindergarten through third grade, the Technology patch is being replaced with the Digital Media patch.

In looking at the number of patches given out over the last couple of years, the Technology patch was the least requested. A subsequent decision was made: Rather than revamping the Technology patch, it would be discontinued for the older levels and reworked for Level 1 only. Tech is so ingrained in our younger members' lives that the older kids already have a better grasp of it than anything we could have them do for a patch.

To earn the Digital Media patch, there are eight activities to choose from — one is required, and three are your choice.

The required activity: with the help of an adult, research and discuss internet safety. Write an internet safety pledge and give a copy to your parents/guardians. Other options:

- Determine two tools of internet usage that you use daily and explain those benefits to an adult.
- Research ALA or SAL membership eligibility online. Print a membership application and try to recruit new members.
- Create your own email account

with adult supervision. Always practice internet safety.

- Visit [Legion.org](http://Legion.org) or [ALAforVeterans.org](http://ALAforVeterans.org) and make a list of five things you learn about.

- Shop American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales online at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) for ALA or SAL items. Create a wish list and share it with your parents.

- Email the ALA national president or national commanders of The American Legion or SAL and let them know how excited you are to be a member of this great organization and why.

- With an adult, submit a "letter to the editor" or "community thank you" letter to your local newspaper via email, expressing your gratitude to our veterans.

In addition to replacing the Technology patch, there is a special Veterans Creative Arts Festival limited-edition patch to raise money for ALA National President Vickie Koutz's 2022-2023 area of focus. The weeklong national Festival showcases the creative achievements of veterans receiving treatment at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities. Veterans participate in many categories, including visual

arts such as painting, sculpting, and drawing, as well as creative writing, dance, drama, and music.

When planning for the 2022-2023 administrative year, Koutz intended to raise funds for VCAF. Since VCAF is already covered in the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation patch, it was decided to tie a patch into her national president focus and help raise funds.

Any Junior or SAL youth can earn this patch if they raise at least \$5 for each year old. For example, a 17-year-old would raise a minimum of \$85 (17x\$5=\$85).

Donations can be raised in a variety of ways — solicited from family, friends, Legion Family members, or contribute themselves.

Fundraising activities such as bake sales can be coordinated. Funds can be raised individually or as a group, but each Junior or SAL youth receiving this patch needs to have raised the required minimum funds for their age.

Participating in the Patch Program is a great way to be involved in learning about the Auxiliary and our Legion Family, volunteering in the community, and serving our country's veterans.

To learn more or download the patch order forms, visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).



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Become a monthly donor today by scanning the QR code below or by visiting [www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate).



*“As ALA members, it’s the absolute least we can do to always try to support military servicemembers who are protecting our country, some of whom have come back home and others who have died for our country.”*

## JACKIE BRAUSER



For as long as she can remember, American Legion Auxiliary member Jackie Brauser has had a sense of deep

respect for military servicemembers, including her father, John Regester, who enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1967 and served in the Vietnam War.

“We come from a family of servicemembers who have a lot of pride in our country,” said Brauser, noting that her uncle and grandfather also served in the military. “It was something my dad and mom instilled in us. My dad served as a model of how to respect veterans. He would expect us to shake their hand, look them in the eye, and thank them for their service.”

When her father passed away in 2018, Brauser, along with her mother, Linda Regester, and four sisters, became more active in the Auxiliary to honor his legacy, including his dedication as a member of the Frank Kresen American Legion Post 24 in Lake Geneva, Wisc., and military service that led to him earning a 2,000-hour flight pin, and protecting airspace along with his military unit during the descent of the Apollo 13 mission.

Although she lives in Medina, Ohio, Brauser continues to be active with ALA Unit 24 in her hometown of Lake Geneva. Brauser, a Girl Scout leader for her daughter’s troop, often leads Auxiliary-related activities, including wreath laying at the veteran’s cemetery, marching in the Memorial Day parade, and visiting veterans at nursing homes.

Brauser realizes that not all youth grow up with an appreciation of military service. In her role



as director of admissions and development for St. Francis Xavier School, a private Catholic school, Brauser regularly encourages patriotism.

Using insights she gained as an ALA member, Brauser took that commitment even further by organizing an assembly on American flag etiquette for more than 150 students.

**Why did you host a flag etiquette assembly?** Our school principal, Danene Beal, knows how important respecting our military, our country, and our flag is to me, so she asked me to teach our 5th to 8th graders how to properly fold an American flag. I was excited about organizing an event because I would see students not respecting the flag as they should. It’s not their fault. No one had ever taught them.

**How did you plan the flag etiquette assembly?** While working on the logistics, I wondered how a middle school student would respond to me. To make sure students were fully engaged, I decided to bring in active-duty military members to teach flag etiquette. I contacted our local U.S.

Army recruiting station for volunteers to demonstrate how to raise and fold the flag, how to hold and store it, and why we show it the respect we do. I also reached out to Col. David W. Taylor, an Army veteran and member of American Legion Post 202 in Medina, and Father Curtis Kondik, our school’s parochial vicar who had served as an Army veteran chaplain. They all did a phenomenal job.

**Do you have any tips for a successful event?** Reach out to your local recruiting office because they already work with younger people. You also can contact veterans connected to your school, such as a parent who is active duty or retired. Having extra flags on hand also was important. American Legion Post 202 donated four American flags that allowed students to break up into small groups to practice flag folding.

**How did the students respond?** They loved it! They were smiling, listening, and interacting with our guests. Although students are always respectful when a speaker comes in, they sat up a little straighter when they saw the servicemembers in their uniforms.

## “A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal.”

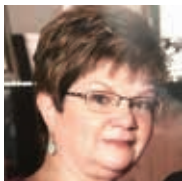
— Steve Maraboli, speaker, author, and veteran



On Sept. 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian, one of the strongest hurricanes to ever hit the U.S., left a path of destruction in Florida. Ian's top maximum sustained winds of 155 mph had been recorded hours before landfall, when the Category 4 hurricane was 2 mph shy of reaching a Category 5 classification, the strongest on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale.

John F. Murphy American Legion Post 303 in Bonita Springs had 6 feet of water inside and was classified as a total loss. In the days to follow, volunteers came together to empty out the building, take down walls, and strip it to bare bones. Everything was thrown in huge piles in the front parking lot and covered in muck, mold, and water damage. Post 303 Commander Adam Prentki was standing in the lot when he thought he saw what looked like a bell in the debris. He dug through the mess and realized he had found ALA Unit 303's Auxiliary bell. The brass piece held special meaning to the unit — it was present at every meeting, along with the Bible, flag, and podium with the Auxiliary seal. Prentki recovered the bell and took it home with him, where, for hours, he scoured the grime, slime, and tarnish by using Brasso polish to restore it to its full beauty. “With so much destruction from Hurricane Ian, it was amazing to have a part of our history restored,” said Jan Farrington, District 13 president and Unit 303 parliamentarian. “It gave us all hope.”

## What is your favorite ALA program and why?



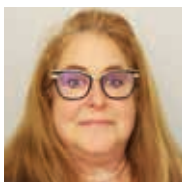
“Legislative. We get to support our veterans, active-duty military, and their families through advocacy and working closely with our other Legion Family members.”

— Nancy Smith Gilbert, Pennsylvania



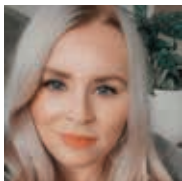
“Junior Activities. It is very inspiring to work with our young members and provide them with a solid understanding and application of most of our programs. They dream big and take action!”

— Colleen Ann McDaniels, New York



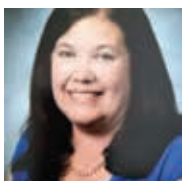
“Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation. Serving those who served me is so close to my heart. Building relationships with our veterans and our VA&R partner organizations has been the most rewarding part of my ALA journey.”

— Amy Loudermilk, Georgia



“ALA Girls State. I attended in 2009 in Idaho and have been on staff since 2011. The program not only allowed me to learn the functions of government and the importance of civic responsibility, but it allowed me to grow as a person and a leader.”

— Kristin Sears, Idaho



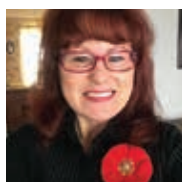
“Poppy. It is a symbol of courage, strength, sacrifice, the future, and my why! It reminds me of why I joined, to honor my grandfather who always wore a poppy.”

— Kelly Moyer, Pennsylvania



“National Security. So many areas to support families of deployed servicemembers — something I wish I had when my husband was out in the field. The POW/MIA program is perfect for all year.”

— Rita Calloway, Indiana



“Americanism. There are so many parts of the program you can work, from flag etiquette to the essay contest, from pocket flags to the Pledge of Allegiance. If you are in a small unit, you can pick and choose your project without being overwhelmed.”

— Jane M. McKnight, Kentucky

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### **SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS AND TRICKS MAKE THE MOST OF THESE FREE SERVICES TO PROMOTE YOUR UNIT'S ACTIVITIES**

Social media came into the world quickly and is always evolving. It has become part of our culture, and an entire generation doesn't know life without it. Social media is a great way to stay connected with families and friends, learn from others with similar interests, stay up to date with your favorite brands, and more. It's a valuable marketing tool, not only for companies to market their products, but for organizations like the ALA to spread awareness of our mission and attract new members, volunteers, and donors.

#### **Which social media platforms should we use?**

This is not a one-size-fits-all answer. It depends on where you will find your target audience. The Communications and Marketing Division at ALA National

Headquarters finds Facebook to be the most used among ALA members, which makes sense because Facebook is still the most used social media platform in the world. However, for ALA Girls Nation, Instagram outperforms Facebook.

At National Headquarters, to make sure we are reaching as many people as possible, we don't stop at Facebook — we also use Instagram and Twitter. That way, we reach different audiences.

Because we know that a high percentage of our membership uses Facebook, we encourage all units and departments to have an account. Another reason — it's easy to maintain and you can provide a lot of information to your members and potential members. Don't forget the media: A reporter may look up

your page when researching a story.

Don't feel limited to Facebook; branch out to other platforms. Go where your audience is. However, don't create a page on a platform just because it's the new hot thing. Before starting an account on a new platform, ask yourself: Are your members using it? If not, is it worth your time?

It's also good practice to avoid niche political sites that have been popping up in the last couple of years. The ALA is nonpartisan, so being on these sites could appear as an endorsement.

#### **Choose the right name**

Imagine: Someone learns about the ALA and wants to know if there is a unit in their community. They search social media but can't find a unit in the city they were searching for. Was this because your unit's account didn't mention where it was located?

For example, is your social media account name something like, "American Legion Auxiliary Unit 123"? This name doesn't mean anything to someone outside of the organization. Also, there can be several units across the country with the name 123.

Make it easy for people to find you. When creating or updating your name, be sure to include the unit number, city, and state. For example, "American Legion Auxiliary Unit 123, town, state." Also make sure your name is not "American Legion Ladies Auxiliary" or "Women's Auxiliary." Remember: Male spouses of veterans and current military who are currently Legionnaires are eligible for ALA membership, so be inclusive.



## **EXCITING NEWS!**

The new ALA word mark is available for you to use on your social media accounts. Learn more about our new branding opportunities on page 26 in this issue of *Auxiliary*.



## TAKE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA TO ANOTHER LEVEL

If you want to learn more about using social media, check out our recorded webinar in the ALA Academy: *Using Social Media to Your Unit's Advantage*. You can find the course in the MyAuxiliary portion of [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

### Have multiple administrators

It's a good idea to have at least two people with admin rights to your social media accounts. For example, if your unit's page is hacked, or a follower posts a hateful or spammy comment, you don't have to rely on one person to take care of it. What if that one person was in the hospital, on vacation somewhere, or just didn't notice? The other admin is a backup and can respond to problems immediately.

Additionally, if a member decides they no longer want to be an admin, and someone takes that person's place, you can easily switch the rights to the new person. Also, think of the worst-case scenario. Someone leaves the organization and doesn't turn the page over to anyone. Then you will have to start over with a new page.

The other advantage of having more than one admin for your social accounts: tag-teaming. We know lots of people in ALA units are pulling double shifts in terms of serving as chairs for multiple committees, etc. When you're really busy with an upcoming Juniors event, for example, and have no time to concentrate on your Auxiliary's social, the other person can take over, keeping your posts current and engaging.

### Keep your social accounts active

It's important when deciding which platforms to use that you keep your accounts active. You don't need to post every day, but don't go months without posting. It can look worse to have an inactive or poor-quality page than no page at all.

To make sure your social account is active, create a content calendar. This will allow you to plan posts ahead of time, when it's most convenient for you. You can create your posts and schedule them. Think about putting upcoming events, important deadlines, holidays, etc., on your content calendar.

### Get noticed: Include a visual

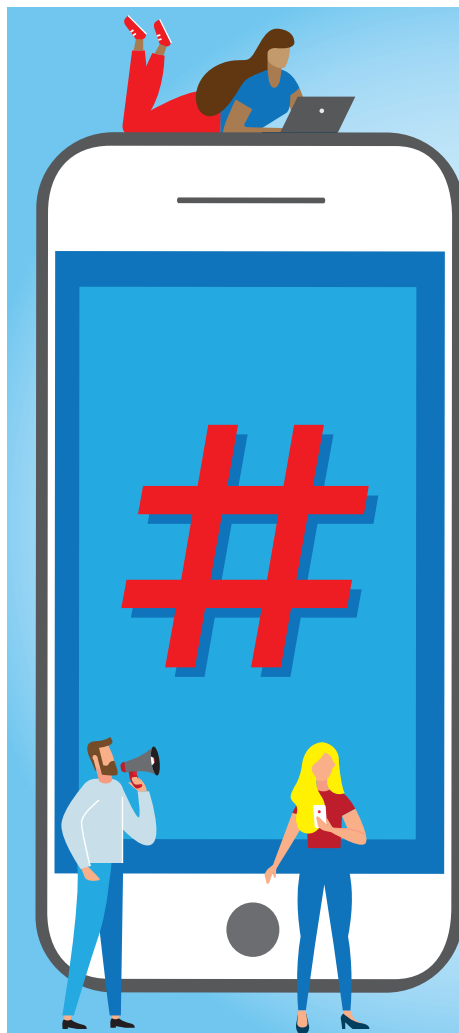
You want your posts to stand out and draw attention. Always use a photo, graphic, or video

with your content. A favorite tool of ALA National Headquarters is Canva.com, a free user-friendly website that allows you to make fun graphics.

Be on the lookout for your members serving the mission. If your unit is assembling care packages, for example, take a picture of them packing items versus posting a posed shot of people standing next to boxes. Showing your members in action will draw more attention than a bunch of statues in a posed picture.

### Remember to have fun

Social media was designed to be a way to engage with others. So try not to stress, and be creative. The more you enjoy it, the more others will too.



## QUICK TIPS TO MANAGING SOCIAL

- Use a descriptive name
- Have multiple administrators
- Create a content calendar

## DOS AND DON'TS

### DO:

- Use proper branding
- Keep things positive
- Post regularly
- Respond promptly to messages and comments

### DON'T:

- Post political content
- Post gossip or air dirty laundry
- Post items unrelated to the ALA or our mission
- Respond negatively to messages and comments

## BEFORE YOU POST, THINK: WILL IT...

- Draw interest?
- Motivate a person to take action?
- Teach something new?
- Reflect the ALA and our mission in a positive way?



**BENEFITTING THE COMMUNITY:** The American Legion Family of California Post 197 cut the ribbon during the veterans assistance mobile unit's grand opening.

## VETERANS ASSISTANCE MOBILE UNIT HELPS EVACUEES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

After being evacuated from her home due to a wildfire, Pam Woolbert, a member of Redding California Auxiliary Unit 197, thought of the idea to invest in a mobile unit to better help evacuees in the northern California area.

"I had a matter of minutes — I threw my dog crates in my car, and my son hooked up the toy hauler. We had to leave; the fire was on us," said Woolbert. "And luckily, I was fortunate enough to have a toy hauler that we evacuated in."

Although she was experiencing heartache and fear, evacuating in a safe and spacious mobile unit helped ease her troubles. She saw that a toy hauler could be used to easily access evacuation centers to help those in need, while carrying supplies. In the past, American Legion Family members of Post 197 made emergency runs to evacuation centers with materials and supplies. The toy hauler makes assisting those in need more efficiently.

"We have tons of supplies in this toy hauler, converted into a helping unit — a mobile unit that's going to

go out in the community and have the basic essentials that you might forget like shampoo, conditioner, and stuff like that," said Unit 197 member Christine Smith.

The veterans assistant mobile unit is an American Legion Family project. After splitting the cost of the toy hauler, the Family reached out to the community for donations. They spread the word on social media, radio stations, and a local news station. They asked for personal hygiene items, hand sanitizer, lotion, puzzle books, reading glasses, and other items you think would make evacuation time a little bit easier. They have the materials in protective rubber bins, allowing for easy distribution at evacuation sites.

"The project would benefit the whole community and our delivery system. It just made sense to me to have the whole package, and to haul everything together in one place to one place," said Woolbert.

A team assembles to help if there is any type of natural disaster, such as a fire, flood, or earthquake.

They also help an individual's emergency; it doesn't have to be an entire community's disaster — they are there to help everyone.

"The main purpose is going to be getting out into the community when that disaster strikes and getting somewhere that we can be seen," said Smith. "Part of the community service is that we are able to help anyone — anyone at all."

Another great bonus to the mobile unit is that there is space for crewmembers to take breaks and relax after working long, hard hours. The toy hauler has a full kitchen and bathroom in the front, and it has multiple cots that drop down from the ceiling.

"Before, our people would load things in the back of their pickups and haul them into disaster areas and sleep in their trucks after helping," said Woolbert. "Now, when the crew unloads the supplies and they take care of the people, they can actually go in the unit and lie down on a cot and take a nap; they can actually cook themselves a meal."



**HONORING LANNON'S LOYALTY:** Vermont Unit 36 member John Tester presents a 75-year continuous member certificate to ALA Unit 36 member Emma Lannon.

## RECOGNIZING AN AUXILIARY MEMBER'S LOYALTY

Year after year, American Legion Auxiliary members are dedicated to the mission of serving veterans, military, and their families. Seeing the need to appreciate a member's loyalty a little extra, John Tester, a Vermont Ballard Hobart Auxiliary Unit 36



## 45 YEARS OF HELPING TO SAVE LIVES

The first time Kathy Iske attended a blood drive was in 1977. It was the first blood drive hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary 216 in Gretna, Neb., and Iske was selected to be the drive's blood program leader, responsible for securing the location, recruiting donors, and assisting with setting up for the blood drive.

Last November, Unit 216 celebrated 45 years of hosting blood drives, and Iske, now 87 years old, has been there the whole time.

"I didn't know much about what took place," Iske said, referring to that first drive in 1977. "I had to learn it all. The volunteers were great, and we all worked together to get it done."

Iske, Gretna's 2012 Citizen of the Year, has a passion for blood donation. She and other volunteers from Unit 216 work the room at the blood drives, signing in donors, presenting donors who reach milestones in their giving with certificates, and encouraging everyone to make their next appointment before they leave.

Through 45 years, more than 7,000 units have been donated through Unit 216's blood drives.

Iske joined the ALA in 1970 and is currently vice president, having previously served as president multiple times.

For 45 years, she has called donors to fill up the appointment slots, publicize the opportunities to donate, and helped on the day of the blood drives.

"We have a lot of regulars who make an appointment and come donate each time, but with Gretna growing so quickly, we are seeing new people coming to give," said Iske, who has lived in Gretna nearly her entire life, with the exception of a short time in Omaha.

Mike Laughlin and his wife, Sharon, routinely donate at the



**DEDICATION:** Nebraska member Kathy Iske and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 216 celebrated 45 years of hosting blood drives.

blood drive in Gretna. "We had given before, but when our daughter was hospitalized a few years ago and needed blood, we knew we wanted to become regular donors. We've been coming here ever since," Laughlin said.

When asked why she is so dedicated to these blood drives, she answered with a question of her own: "What other humanitarian project can help so many people?"

*This story was reprinted from the American Red Cross Nebraska and Iowa Region.*

member, gifted a 75-year continuous membership certificate to fellow member Emma Lannon.

"I think we need to recognize our members who have been continuous members for many years — to acknowledge their participation in the American Legion Auxiliary," said Tester.

Lannon joined the Auxiliary in 1947 and was a very active member for many years. Within the last few years, Lannon has been residing at the local nursing home, which is where the 75-year recognition event was held. A group of Unit 36 members gathered at the home to show their support and appreciation. Lannon sat in a big chair in the center of the room while Tester presented her with the certificate and a poppy pin that he pinned on her scarf.

"Emma was absolutely ecstatic! All she wanted to do was talk about her husband and his service and how much she enjoyed being at the post home while she was active," said Tester. "I think by doing a public recognition of 75 years, I think that shows other members who haven't joined or people who are eligible to join, that it's a

***"I think we need to recognize our members who have been continuous members for many years."***

worthwhile organization to join if someone is going to be a member for 75 years."

Tester created the 75-year continuous membership certificate on his computer. He included signature lines for ALA National President Vickie Koutz and Vermont Department President

Kelly Donaldson to sign as an extra token of appreciation. Tester also added his signature as the Unit 36 president. As a final touch, they had the certificate framed.

"I really thought it was important to get the recognition that was due from the national president and department president, so I created a certificate that had their signature lines on it and then had them sign it," said Tester.

As one of the first male American Legion Auxiliary members in the country, Tester is eligible for membership through his wife Catherine who is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps.

"If somebody is going to be a member of an organization for 75 years, that is an organization I want to join — I want to be a part of that," said Tester.

 AMERICAN  
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**AUXILIARY**

*Membership retention by using your voice*

**When was the last time  
you reached  
a fellow member by phone?**



When we call members who regularly renew their dues, as well as those who lapsed in their membership, it shows we care. A simple thank-you or “How are you doing?” goes a long way. A quick phone check-in with unit members

makes them feel they are a dynamic part of our organization.

Rally around our veterans, community, and members. Take the time to personally reach out to those who have dedicated their time to the Auxiliary.

Learn how you can connect even further:  
Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)



## VALENTINES FOR VETERANS

Show your love and appreciation for our nation's veterans and servicemembers by making handmade cards this Valentine's Day — or any day of the year! Homemade personal Valentines are easy to create and leave a lasting impact on the hearts of those who receive them.

You can create these wonderful works of art in the comfort of your own home, or make it a fun group project for your Auxiliary members to do during your next ALA unit meeting. Ask your Junior members to join in on the fun and help make a card for the special veteran in their life.

### Handmade personal Valentine cards

Giving your veteran a card made from scratch shows a caring touch that a store-bought card can't provide. This is an easy and meaningful way to show appreciation and love to the veterans in your life. Gather your ALA unit and make Valentines for the Legionnaires at your post home or veterans at your local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical center.

Things you'll need:

- paper or cardboard stock
- craft supplies
- pens, crayons, markers, colored pencils

- addresses of local VA medical center, special veteran(s), and/or loved one currently serving in the military

*Write or draw something:*

Start with a blank piece of paper and fold it in half like a card, horizontally or vertically. Use markers, colored pencils, pens, or crayons, to write a heartfelt message. Make sure to show your appreciation in your words and drawings. Doodle away!

*Get creative:*

After your message is written, express yourself with added embellishments. Incorporate glitter, ribbon, stickers, stamps, sparkles, hearts, cutouts, whatever you want. This is your chance to be creative!

*Sending special cards:*

Choose a location to spread the love, such as your local VAMC. You may want to check with the volunteer coordinator there to find out how many cards you'll need to create for the veterans.

## LAVENDER COOKIES

*Adapted from a recipe by JoAnn Shafer, Red, White & Blueberry, American Legion Auxiliary 19th District, Department of Illinois (2007)*

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- Pinch salt
- 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- ½ cup shortening
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons culinary lavender

flowers (available in the loose spices section at health food stores)

In a mixing bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, and a pinch of salt. Set aside. In a larger bowl, beat butter and shortening for 60 seconds. Add sugar and beat until fluffy. Add egg, milk, and vanilla. Gradually add to this the flour mixture and beat until well combined. Fold in lavender flowers. Roll dough into 2 balls, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line baking sheets with parchment paper or a baking mat (do not use oil or spray). On a floured cutting board, roll out one ball of chilled dough to ¼-inch thickness.



Use cookie cutters to cut out dough. Place cookies onto baking sheets. Bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool slightly before removing to a wire rack. Repeat with the other ball of dough. Serve these light shortbread-style cookies with coffee or tea. Shown above with an almond cream dipping sauce. Makes 4 dozen cookies.

This recipe and more can be found in *Serve: Revisiting a Century of American Legion Auxiliary Cookbooks*, available at [www.ALAServeCookbook.com](http://www.ALAServeCookbook.com).





## SEA CADETS: BUILDING SAILORS AND CITIZENS

Ali DeLeeuw grew up in a small town in New Hampshire with just 10 students in her class. Painfully shy and a self-described book nerd, she preferred quiet times at home to exploring new opportunities. With her parents' encouragement, Ali joined Sea Cadets in 2002 and participated in an indoctrination "boot camp" in Cape Cod, Mass. It was a defining moment.

"I recognized I had been exposed to something so few of my peers would ever experience. A whole new world opened up for me," she recalled.

Today, Lt. DeLeeuw is a successful surface warfare officer. Her experiences as a Sea Cadet led her to NROTC at Boston University, where she studied biomedical engineering while working as an EMT. Her achievements while serving on board the USS Benfold (DDG-65) with Forward Deployed Naval Forces in Japan led to selection for a five-month intensive weapons training course. Lt. DeLeeuw has traveled the world teaching sailors weapon systems and protocols as a warfare tactics instructor.

"I still use the lessons I learned as a Sea Cadet about communication and leadership," she explained. "When I reflect on how timid I was at a young age, I have no doubt that Sea Cadets gave me the confidence and competence to succeed."

The Navy League created the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps in 1962. For six decades, Sea Cadets has been a training ground for young men and women ages 10 to 18, helping them develop the skills, knowledge, and

***While not required to serve, more than half of cadets who complete the program enlist or commission.***

confidence to become productive, responsible citizens.

Today, there are 5,600 Sea Cadets enrolled in 380 units across the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Mariana Islands. Nearly 2,600 volunteers lead these units, organize training, and mentor the cadets. In addition to cadet parents, volunteers include former Sea Cadets and retired, reserve, or active-duty military personnel who spend weekends and summer holidays building the next generation of maritime leaders.

The brilliance of Sea Cadets is that it offers young people the opportunity

to try new things, fail in a safe environment, try again, and succeed. This builds well-earned confidence.

One confident and successful young man is Cadet Chief Petty Officer Kailil O'Brien, who graduated from the Sea Cadet Corps in May 2022 and is now a student at the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport. O'Brien joined a Sea Cadet unit in Ontario, California, in eighth grade and believes that without it, he might not have finished high school.

"I get emotional when I think about my first day visiting the unit," he said. "Every single person stopped to welcome me and teach me about the program. I felt total acceptance and knew from that moment Sea Cadets was a place I belonged."

With biweekly drills, academic requirements, a strict code of conduct, and myriad training experiences, O'Brien flourished. He learned time management, professionalism, and responsibility. He consistently met his targets, ranked up, and became a leader among his peers. He was a member of the inaugural Cadet Chief Petty Officer training class and was selected to serve

Choose your adventure: [www.seacadets.org](http://www.seacadets.org).

on the national Sea Cadets diversity and inclusion board.

“My generation has gotten away from knowing how to connect with others ‘in real life,’” he shared. “The first rule of the military is to check on your shipmates. I learned how important it is to respect, support, and connect with my peers and leaders. Sea Cadets gave me the tools I need to succeed and the discipline and confidence to apply them.”

Sea Cadets train in a highly structured environment that stresses personal accountability and teamwork. Cadets wear uniforms, adhere to fitness and grooming requirements, and are held to the highest standards of behavior. At young ages, they are given leadership opportunities — staffing summer training events, planning unit drill sessions, and teaching others. In this environment, they thrive.

Because of its rigor and emphasis on discipline, Sea Cadets prepares the next generation for military service. While not required to serve, more than half of cadets who complete the program enlist or commission.

The variety of Sea Cadets training is impressive. For nearly every maritime job and Navy task, there is an analogous Sea Cadets training. Last summer, at 350 training events, 4,500 cadets had a chance to sail, rappel, shoot, cook, run obstacle courses, scuba dive, and, of course, march. They learned medical techniques, robotics, naval history, and photojournalism. Training covered aviation, submarines, and special forces (SEAL and Marine Corps). Thanks to strong partnerships, this training often is conducted on Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and National Guard bases.

There are countless stories of individuals who learned valuable skills in the Sea Cadets and went on to successful military careers. Lt. Cmdr. Jessica Wittner was a Cadet

Chief Petty Officer in the Fresno, Calif., unit. From Sea Cadets, she enlisted, was commissioned via the Seaman to Admiral program, and flew F/A-18 Super Hornets. Recently, she was selected by NASA to become an astronaut. Cadets also have gone on to thrive in the private sector as attorneys, firefighters, television producers, and business owners.

Equally compelling are the examples of young people who find a safe haven, healthy adult guidance, and hope for a brighter future in the Sea Cadets program. One former cadet was labeled a troublemaker and was about to be expelled from high school. Sea Cadets gave him structure and discipline, and he is excelling in his civilian career. Another cadet said he had not wanted to leave training because of a troubled home

### ***The United States needs fit, disciplined, patriotic young men and women to serve in its armed forces.***

environment. Sea Cadets provided a safe and nurturing space that was lacking at home.

Marine Corps Maj. Miguel Becerril joined the San Juan, Puerto Rico, Sea Cadets unit in 1969, just a few years after the organization was formed. As a young boy, Becerril was fascinated with aviation. He and his brother spent hours making model planes from balsa wood and watching jets take off at the Army base where his father was stationed. One day, he

spotted some young boys wearing Sea Cadets uniforms, and he peppered them with questions. He soon joined the unit, where he pursued his passion for aviation by learning from active-duty jet mechanics stationed at the nearby naval base.

Becerril worked hard and took advantage of every opportunity to learn.

“I will never forget serving on board the USS McConnell (DE-163) on an overnight tour when I was just 16. I was overcome with pride as we circled back into the harbor and all eyes were on our ship,” he noted. “I knew in that moment what it truly means to be a sailor.”

The United States needs fit, disciplined, patriotic young men and women to serve in its armed forces. Entering its seventh decade,

Sea Cadets is as dedicated as ever to instilling values and an appreciation for the Sea Services, and it will continue to build leaders of character in the coming decades.

— *By Rear Admiral Andrew Lennon, U.S. Navy (Retired), executive director of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps. Before retirement, he served as Commander, Submarines NATO, and Vice Director, Navy Staff. This article originally appeared in the U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, November 2022. Copyright U.S. Naval Institute. Reprinted with permission.*



# New ALA Coloring Book: *America The Beautiful*

Purchase at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or by calling (888) 453-4466, or download free at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/coloring-books](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/coloring-books)



Halloween and poppy coloring books are also available.

# The 2022 Annual Report is Here



Download today at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/About/Annual-Reports](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/About/Annual-Reports)

## BASIC BUT VITAL TIPS FOR YOUR C&B

It's a new year, and if you have not already done so, take time to review your constitution and bylaws! Your C&B are the rules an organization considers so important that they cannot be changed without prior notice to the members and the vote of a large majority. More than that, they are a corporate record that must be kept permanently.

### Get your timeline together.

Start now so that you can have a final draft ready to distribute in advance to members. How much notice do you have to give members of proposed amendments? This should be in your C&B in an article entitled "Amendment."

**The basics.** An example of unit bylaws is available in the ALA Unit Guide at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). However, it is just a GUIDE. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, provides guidance on the items to include in a typical organization's bylaws.

Article I: NAME of the organization

Article II: OBJECT — the purpose of the organization

Article III: MEMBERS — Membership; classes of membership and eligibility. (This is one area you *can* copy directly from the national C&B, using the footnote pattern.)

Article IV: OFFICERS — Officers and duties, nomination and election process, term of office, removal from office, filling a vacancy, limitations on holding office.

Article V: MEETINGS — Regular, special, electronic, and quorum needed.

Article VI: EXECUTIVE

BOARD — Composition, duties and powers, meetings and quorum.

Article VII: COMMITTEES

— Composition and purpose of standing committees; special committees and how they are appointed; ex-officio members.

Article VIII: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY — The ALA uses *Robert's Rules, Newly Revised*.

Article IX: AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS — Advance notice of amendments, how it is to be given, approval vote needed.

**Who should review them?** Set your organization up for a successful adoption process by assembling a small group of knowledgeable members together who have experience in writing governing documents. This is not a time to go solo!

Unit and department bylaws need to be tailored to meet the needs of the level of the organization; however, bylaws cannot be in conflict with the national bylaws. For example, a large unit may write into its bylaws that it will have chairmen for each of the programs of the organization — and the ALA has a LOT of programs. Some small but still very active units don't have enough members to appoint to chair all the committees, choosing instead to focus their efforts on just a couple of the Auxiliary's programs. So be

careful with using "must" and decide when you need the more flexible "may."

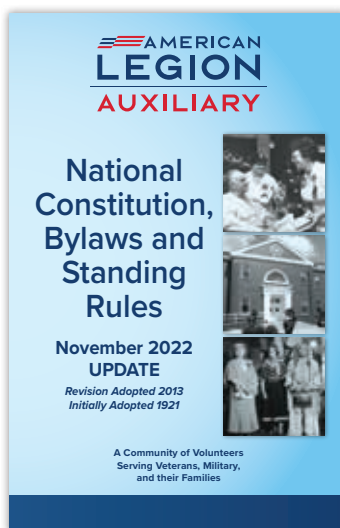
Amending governing documents is accomplished, basically, with a motion. The national organization uses the three-column format (available as a free template on the national website) to present proposed changes: it shows the

current wording, the wording with changes marked, and then the wording if adopted. It also explains in a rationale the reason for the change and any consequential changes as a result. That way, you can change every reference of "committeewoman" to "committee member" without putting each reference in a separate motion and on a separate

three-column form.

**Be compliant.** All incorporated nonprofits are accountable to the laws of the state in which they are incorporated. A professional registered parliamentarian can review your documents to identify any areas in your documents where you might want to ensure compliance with your state laws.

**After the vote.** Keep good records of when changes are implemented, and update the official governing document. This is a corporate record. All members, not just the leadership, are entitled access to the governing documents, so it's a good idea to make these easily available to your membership.



## REVISED C&B BOOKLET NOW ONLINE

The 2022 National Convention delegates and National Executive Committee were hard at work last August, making impactful changes to our governing documents. Go to [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) for the latest version of the ALA National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules, available for free download. Printed copies are available for purchase through American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or 1-888-453-4466.



## NEW YEAR, NEW VETERAN PROJECTS FUND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The start of each new year brings with it feelings of excitement, productivity, and hope. We set financial goals, personal goals, and professional goals for the upcoming year. But do we set goals to be of service? Are we taking the time to evaluate the communities we're living in and making it a priority to address the needs where we live and work every day? Make 2023 your year of service by applying for a Veteran Projects Fund grant and help the veterans in your community not only live better lives but thrive.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation will award grants up to \$10,000 to units and departments addressing a new, one-time need for veterans in their community. Is there transitional housing for veterans in your area? Do they need a washer and dryer set or patio furniture? Is there a food pantry nearby that serves veterans and their families? Do they need walk-in refrigerators or other appliances? Is there a state veterans' home, VA medical center, or VA outpatient clinic nearby? Do they need equipment that's not provided by the facility, but enhances the lives of its residents? For example, blanket warmers, tablets, or an outdoor recreational space? These

are all examples of projects funded by the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. Veteran Projects Fund grants are an easy way for your

unit or department to make a big impact on the lives of veterans in your neighborhood.

To qualify for funding, the applicant must be an ALA entity (unit, district/county, or department) and be able to provide 20% of the project cost. The ALA Foundation will provide the other 80% to fund the project, up to \$10,000. One grant per grantee will be awarded in a 12-month period, and the funds may not be used to reimburse expenses paid prior to grant approval.

There are several options for funding, but the Veteran Projects Fund does have some limitations. Projects that are not applicable through Veteran Projects Fund include those that benefit a single individual, funding for memorial projects, day-to-day operating expenses of the grantee, maintenance, or construction costs of any type for a building owned by The American Legion or Auxiliary, or

**AMERICAN  
LEGION  
AUXILIARY  
FOUNDATION**

**Apply for  
a Veteran  
Projects  
Fund Grant**

**4 Steps To  
Success**



### IDENTIFY A NEED

Work with your unit or department to determine the kind of project you would like to complete. Get internal buy-in from unit members or department for the project.



government-owned facilities, and scholarships.

The application for a Veteran Projects Fund grant can be found at [www.ALAFoundation.org](http://www.ALAFoundation.org) by clicking on the “Grants” tab in the top toolbar and then selecting “Veteran Projects Fund Grants.”

From there, you will have two options to submit your application; you can select the “Submit Online Application” option and you will be redirected to an electronic application, or you can select “Download Application” and a fillable PDF will appear. You can complete that version and email it to [ALAFoundation@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAFoundation@ALAforVeterans.org) or mail it to ALA Foundation, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

A Veteran Projects Fund grant will provide your unit or department with an opportunity to create a new funding stream that does not need to be repaid. In addition, securing grant funding can result in a domino effect with more organizations seeing the value in the ALA’s goals and mission and

***The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation will award grants up to \$10,000 to units and departments addressing a new, one-time need for veterans in their community.***

forging new partnerships in your community.

Organizations and businesses collaborating tend to be stronger than one entity going at it alone. When your objectives perfectly line up with the intended projects and goals established with a grant, applying is a no-brainer. Oftentimes,

finding grant objectives in alignment with the ALA’s mission is one of the most challenging aspects, so when a grant opportunity like the Veteran Projects Fund comes along, you do not want to miss it. A Veteran Projects Fund grant could enable your unit or department to do work you might never do

otherwise. In the spirit of *Service Not Self*, let’s make it a priority it set service goals

this year. And next year at this time, who knows what you will have accomplished.

To learn more about the Veteran Projects Fund grant opportunities, visit [www.ALAFoundation.org](http://www.ALAFoundation.org) or call (317) 569-4500 to speak with our Development Division and discuss your application today!



### **CREATE A PARTNERSHIP**

Reach out to your local VA, food pantry that serves veterans and military families, or state veterans home to see what their needs are and if they are in line with your unit or department’s goals for service.



### **SUBMIT APPLICATION**

Go to [www.ALAFoundation.org](http://www.ALAFoundation.org), click on the “Grants” tab, then select “Veteran Projects Fund Grants.” You will have two options to submit your application; you can select the “Submit Online Application” option and you will be redirected to an electronic application, or you can select “Download Application” and a fillable PDF will appear. You can fill that version out and email it to [ALAFoundation@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAFoundation@ALAforVeterans.org) or mail it to ALA Foundation, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.



### **FULFILL THE NEED**

The ALA Foundation’s Board of Directors will vote on your application at the next quarterly board meeting. If awarded, you will receive the funds via EFT within 10-15 business days of that meeting. Once funds are received, you can fulfill the need in your community.



# *Updated looks for the next generation* **ALA receives branding refresh for its second century of service**

Set against a gold background with symbolic rays of the sun, the ALA's traditional blue star emblem has remained a fixture during our 103 years of service. In our next era, complete with a set of new brand marks courtesy of The American Legion, our organization will still be represented as the go-to support for military, veterans, and their families — but with a different look.

Because the blue star emblem is as much of a legacy as the American Legion Auxiliary itself, it will not be going away ... it will simply be used in specific applications. A refreshed look and feel will help ALA members in recruiting efforts and publicizing our mission outreach to an audience we haven't touched yet.

## **A different course, but keeping with tradition**

ALA members have a good grasp on what it means to be branded, but what does that mean for the future?

As we say in the intro of the *ALA Branding Guide*, our brand is our identity. It's our reputation, our promise. It's how the public recognizes us. It defines who we are — a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.

In essence, branding means showing off your organization or company in the form of logos on apparel, signs, hats, business cards, coffee mugs, tablecloths — the possibilities are endless. You can have your logo branded on a big billboard and even on tiny M&Ms candy.

When you're working at an ALA unit event or mission outreach activity and you're not wearing the emblem on your shirt, hat, or jacket, or your signs don't give off the slightest vibe of what you do, it's a missed opportunity. Those simple things are advertisements for our organization as a whole, and your unit as a local place to support veterans, military, and their families.

Proper branding lets people know who's in charge of an event, who's running the show, and who's responsible for it. If someone has a question, they'll come up to you and see your organization. Bonus if they join your unit on the spot or afterward!

The logo for the American Legion Auxiliary. It features the words "AMERICAN LEGION" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, with "AUXILIARY" in a bold, red, sans-serif font below it. To the left of the text is a stylized graphic of three horizontal stripes, with the top stripe being red and the bottom two being blue. A thin blue horizontal line is positioned between "LEGION" and "AUXILIARY".

**AMERICAN  
LEGION  
AUXILIARY**

**A new look = exciting stuff for the ALA! We're ushering in a new generation of marketing resources with these new marks. Check out [www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org) for refreshed templates for your recruiting and promotional efforts, plus ALA membership needs, including flyers, PowerPoint templates, virtual backgrounds, and more.**

You've heard ALA National Headquarters talk about branding for quite some time now. In fact, the majority of photos submitted for consideration in ALA media usually have members wearing shirts emblazoned with the emblem. This is great news! It means we're all understanding the importance of being walking advertisements for the American Legion Auxiliary.

But now, it's time for a new brand for the next era.

For over a century, the American Legion Auxiliary has been nobly and ably represented by its 1919-patented emblem. As we look to the next era of ALA, the time has come for new brand marks to be used in all marketing communications applications. This also includes new marks for The American Legion Family and program brands. What does this mean for the ALA? It means new brand marks — or logos — on those shirts, hats, signs, and other items visible to the public.

### Traditional emblem isn't going away

Back in September 2022, the Legion — which owns the ALA's trademark name and emblem — obtained the final trademark on a new set of Legion Family marks that included the Auxiliary. National Headquarters was notified over the summer that some changes were coming, and the final versions were approved for trademark in the fall.

If you read the November 2022 issue of *Auxiliary* magazine, you might have noticed a teaser page about the new marks. Our social media accounts, [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), and many other national ALA media pieces were updated thereafter.

It's important to note that the new marks will not replace the ALA's traditional blue star emblem. Instead, the emblems and brand marks alike are to be used in specific applications that will better serve The American Legion Family going forward.



### What the heck does that mean?

We can assure you it's not as complicated as it sounds. Here's a quick visual from The American Legion on how to use either of these new logo options:



#### Marketing, recruiting, and fundraising uses, such as:

- advertising
- apparel (use word mark, above right, for embroidery)
- business cards, letterhead, email signatures
- credentials, event badges
- press releases
- digital (apps, web, social, PowerPoint presentations)
- promotional communications (flyers, handouts, etc.)
- events (signs, backdrops, tents, tablecloths, swag/giveaways)

#### Official, legal, and historical uses, such as:



- uniform caps
- financial documents
- history books
- flags
- legal affairs
- internal manuals and guides
- reports and resolutions
- awards (option emblem or brand)
- building signage (option emblem or brand)
- formal government communications (option emblem or brand)

### What all of this 'new marks' stuff means for members

There are two notable takeaways from the news about these new marks: One, they are helping us promote the ALA with a refreshed look and feel. This will help us in our recruiting efforts and publicizing our mission outreach to an audience we haven't touched yet. Two, the traditional blue star emblem isn't going away, meaning *we're not completely rebranding*. But we are moving in a new direction with the new marks.

In a nutshell, the emblem will be internally facing, meaning to our Legion Family members. The new brand marks would be used most often in an externally facing format, to our general public, and yes, potential new members.

We think it'll be fun to set out on a different course, but keeping with tradition. We hope you feel the same way, and we can't wait to take you along on the journey. ★

**EMBLEM/CREST**



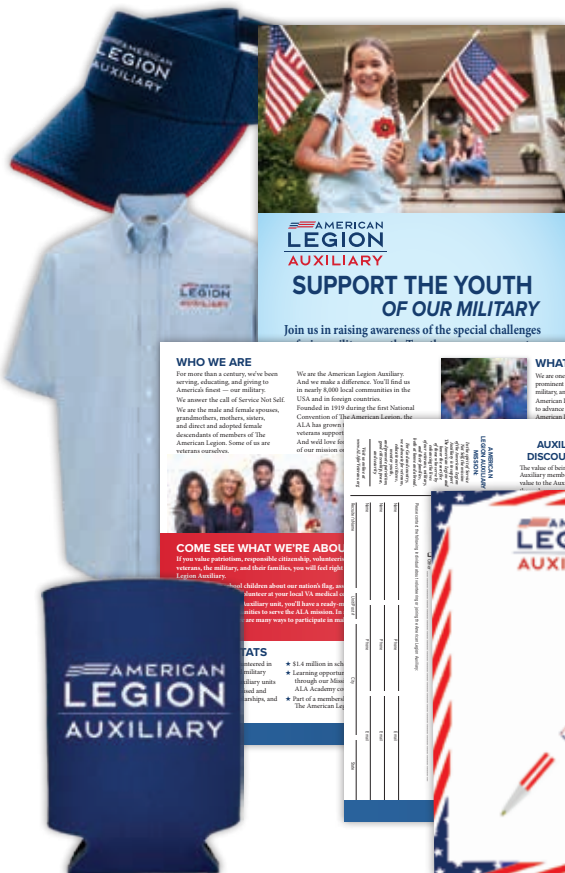
**SYMBOL/LOGO**



Source: www.defense.gov

**Two looks: How the U.S. Armed Forces does it**  
 Development of The American Legion’s brand mark (which the new ALA mark mirrors) followed a deliberative three-month journey to understand the origins of the Legion, its role in American society, and the people who are, and will be, its members. Other veterans organizations, corporate brands, and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) were also benchmarked. In the process, a precedent established by the DoD served as a model for how the Legion brand could be evolved.

Each department of the U.S. Armed Forces effectively utilizes two separate identities. One is the “department seal,” and the other is its own brand mark. The department seal is used for all DoD documents, communications, and identifying marks. However, when it comes to marketing communications for events, recruitment, and other promotional functions, each department has a marketing brand. It is this marketing brand that is most familiar to the general public. Examples of each U.S. Armed Forces department and its respective marketing identity are shown here.



**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY**  
 Where does your poppy donation money go?



**WHO WE ARE**  
 For more than a century we've been serving, educating, and going to America first — our military. We answer the call of Service Not Self. We are the sons and daughters, grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion. Some of us are veterans ourselves.

We are the American Legion Auxiliary. And we make a difference. We'll fund up to nearly 6000 local commitments in the USA and in foreign countries. Founded in 1919 during the first National Convention of The American Legion, the ALA has grown.

**WHAT WE DO**  
 We are one of the nation's most prominent supporters of veterans, military, and their families. The American Legion Auxiliary helps to advance the mission of The American Legion. From helping to

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY	AMERICAN LEGION
1. Support the U.S. Armed Forces	1. Support the U.S. Armed Forces
2. Promote patriotism and loyalty	2. Promote patriotism and loyalty
3. Provide financial assistance to veterans and their families	3. Provide financial assistance to veterans and their families
4. Promote the welfare of the community	4. Promote the welfare of the community
5. Support the education of our youth	5. Support the education of our youth
6. Promote the health and welfare of our members	6. Promote the health and welfare of our members
7. Support the American Legion	7. Support the American Legion
8. Promote the welfare of our members	8. Promote the welfare of our members
9. Support the American Legion	9. Support the American Legion
10. Promote the welfare of our members	10. Promote the welfare of our members

for veterans help: to the VA hospital interview their family

**COME SEE WHAT WE'RE ABOUT**  
 If you value patriotism, responsible citizenship, volunteerism, veterans, the military, and their families, you will feel right at home with the American Legion Auxiliary.

...children about our patients, for a number at your local VA medical facilities, we'll have a ready-to-serve the ALA mission. In so many ways to participate in our

**AUXILIARY MEMBER DISCOUNTS & SERVICES**  
 The value of being an American Legion Auxiliary member is growing! You bring so much value to the Auxiliary and American veterans.

In the spirit of Service Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support the American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and country.

...for veterans, advocate our interests, health, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and security.

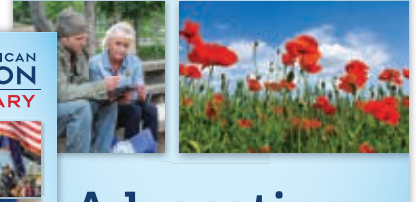
**STATS**  
 • \$1.4 million in scholarship awards  
 • Learning opportunities through our Military and ALA Academy on-line and in-person  
 • 20% off a membership to The American Legion

...hours of Auxiliary activities outreach are volunteered annually for veterans and their families. Come join us!

Read more about the American Legion Auxiliary at www.ALAforVeterans.org

...all your questions or comments to help@ALAforVeterans.org

Local American Legion Auxiliary Contact:



**Advocating for veterans and military**

**At a Glance**  
 A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families  
[www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)

New logos for the ALA provide an opportunity for updated marketing resources at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) and items from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales. Purchase your branded apparel and accessories at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or 1-888-453-4466. ALA National Headquarters teams are here to answer any questions you might have about our branding, emblem requests, etc. Contact us at [PR@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:PR@ALAforVeterans.org).

# Walking with Purpose

By Jennifer Donovan

On June 6, 2022, the anniversary of D-Day, highly decorated retired Marines started out on a hike on U.S. Highway 20. This was no ordinary hike. The voyage would take these men from Boston, Mass. — through 12 states and 3,365 miles — to the final stop on our nation's west coast: Newport, Ore.

The “why” is even more impressive — to bring awareness to Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, and to emphasize the importance of continuing search efforts.

The three men call themselves Team Long Road. It includes U.S. Marine Corps veterans Justin “JD” LeHew, Coleman “Rocky” Kinzer, and Ray Shinohara who joined in August. These men served our country, and now that they're retired from service, they continue to serve by working to make sure all who served are returned home.

Their journey began via the USS Constitution in Boston.

“That was pretty cool because we went on board the USS Constitution to start because we are naval infantry Marines,” said LeHew, chief operating officer of History Flight and 2022-2023 national commander of Legion of Valor. “I requested permission to go ashore for 3,365 miles.”

The decision to walk U.S. Highway 20 is significant for several reasons. The highway is known as America's longest road, which relates to the long road to bring our POW/MIAs home, the War in Afghanistan and Iraq is America's longest war and began 20 years ago, portions of the road are known as the POW/MIA Highway, and it's designated as the Medal of Honor Highway.

“It really just tells the journey

of America. It's America's grandest highway,” said LeHew. “The bones of America are everywhere across Route 20. We could think of no better highway to be able to walk as Marines.”

## Why the search for POW/MIAs is relevant today

You see the POW/MIA flag, you see the empty chair, you see the table setting ... but do you ever take the time to really stop and think about what it means? Do you think about the families still waiting for their loved one to return to the United States and finally get the much needed closure?

The Long Road saw these reminders throughout their journey. LeHew points out that in every town across America, large or small, a POW/MIA flag is flying.

“A lot of people, especially in the younger generation, do not know what that means,” he said.

Those who understand the meaning behind the POW/MIA flag may not realize search efforts continue because they think everyone has been brought home and they are buried in military cemeteries. LeHew says that's not the case.

“When you tell them no, they're laying underneath pig styes; they're underneath housing complexes. I have found that every American you tell that to, regardless if they believe they have a military connection or not, is appalled when they hear that.”

Awareness is so important. “That's someone's son, someone's brother, that's an American,” said Kinzer, assistant operations manager for History Flight. “They did their part. There's 81,000, roughly half that are recoverable. The rest are lost at sea. That's 40,000 — the size of

## Interesting Facts

- Averaged 20 miles a day for six months
- Hiked with 50-lb. backpacks
- Backpacks included survival needs: water, food, tent, change of clothes, shoes, first aid supplies
- New pair of shoes needed every 300-400 miles

a midsize town — all over battlefields where the U.S. has fought.”

“Some people may ask the question: Why are we focused on the people from the past who are already dead? Why not on the living? It’s because we’re Americans. We promised every servicemember that we would bring them home. And we were able to do that in the war era that we were in, but in the previous ones, they didn’t have that,” said Shinohara, a retired Marine. “For us to go out there and bring these individuals home, it provides closure for their family.”

In some cases, the search for a POW/MIA has touched several generations. It may not be their grandchildren or great-grandchildren, but just like their parents before them, they want to bring the remains home.

“Because all of us, regardless of service branch, we all grew up in the military, and we were told we don’t leave our dead or wounded behind,” said LeHew.

“The more I walk, the more I feel connected to this project,” Shinohara said. “The amount of times I’ve been deployed and lost guys, I was able to bring them back home.” Shinohara said being part of Team Long Road has given him the opportunity to be part of leaving no one behind.

### Interacting with families along the way

During the voyage, Team Long Road has met families who are still holding out hope for their loved ones to be returned home.

LeHew said the World War II generation still has some living family members who were sons and daughters of these servicemembers, and they are now in their 90s. They keep up the search because they made a promise they would continue to do so. Those sons and daughters are now asking their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to keep going.

“We actually got to meet some of these families. It happens generationally, so the generations suffer from the loss of a member of their family, and they tell the stories of how they missed them,” said Shinohara.

Meeting these families not only personalizes the mission but gives LeHew the opportunity to talk with them about steps they can take to make sure the search continues. LeHew asks the families, “Is your family connected with the DPAA? Have you received the case brief? When’s the last time you received the case brief?”

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) hosts briefings across the country and through livestreams to keep families updated. During these meetings, families are updated on the latest information available on the U.S. government’s worldwide search. They hear from senior officials, scientists, and experts about the mission. The DPAA started these meetings in 1995 and have reached more



**JOINING THE MISSION (top):** The American Legion Family joined Team Long Road for a hike along Highway 20 in Vale, Ore. The American Legion’s Mario Marquez with Ray Shinohara and Rocky Kinzer. Kinzer, Shinohara, and JD LeHew outside of Post 96. LeHew and 2022-2023 ALA National President Vickie Koutz discuss the importance of the mission. Hikers welcomed into Vale. Koutz and Marquez talk with ALA members.

than 17,000 family members. During the briefings, families also have the opportunity to talk directly with a representative about the search for their family members. You can find a schedule for these meetings at [www.DPAA.mil](http://www.DPAA.mil).

### Support from The American Legion Family

In November, 2022-2023 ALA National President Vickie Koutz and American Legion National Security Director Mario Marquez, who served in the Marines with LeHew and Kinzer, spent some time with Team Long Road as they were walking in Oregon. Like the trio, Koutz is raising awareness for POW/MIA.

The Auxiliary's mission aligns with their mission, particularly this administrative year: Koutz has pledged on National's behalf to raise awareness for our country's Prisoners of War and Missing in Action.

Koutz was grateful to be able to walk with Team Long Road, hear their stories, and learn how The American Legion Family can help. The passion Team Long Road has for bringing home POW/MIA is infectious. As Koutz hiked with them, she could feel it. The conversations she had with all three men were informative and engaging.

"Words can't express how much it meant to me," she said. "I'm going to continue promoting this everywhere I go, to every group I speak to."

Koutz speaks about POW/MIA at all ALA visits as national president, but says she now has so much more information to share.

LeHew talked with Koutz about the importance of the Legion Family and similar organizations to keep up efforts to bring these servicemembers home to be given a proper resting place on U.S. soil.

"More importantly, as those of us, like you and I, who are sitting at the

top of organizations and running national programs that have advocacy — that is representation to Congress," said LeHew. He points out that returning our servicemembers home was part of the charters for many veterans service organizations (VSOs).

## Legion of Valor

JD LeHew is the 2022-2023 national commander of the Legion of Valor. Founded in 1890, it's America's oldest veterans service organization. Members of the organization are recipients of the nation's two highest honors for valor in combat. These include the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, the Army Distinguished Service Cross, and the Air Force Cross.

### History Flight's mission

Funds raised from The Long Road are supporting the mission of History Flight, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Fredericksburg, Va., that assists the DPAA in the search for missing military personnel.

LeHew and Kinzer both work for History Flight. LeHew is chief operating officer, and Kinzer is operation manager and team leader. Kinzer conducts operations in both the European and Pacific theaters of operation.

Since its founding in 2003, History Flight's researchers and scientists have helped bring home the remains of 160 servicemembers.

The organization has a dedicated team searching for missing-in-action servicemembers from the Battle of Tarawa, remembered as one of the bloodiest battles in the history of the U.S. Marine Corps, killing roughly 1,000 Marines and Sailors and leaving more than 2,000 wounded. You can read more about the organization at [www.HistoryFlight.com](http://www.HistoryFlight.com).

## Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency needs your help

- Are you a descendant of a missing servicemember?
- The DPAA says the greatest challenge in accounting for missing servicemembers is not having the necessary DNA family reference samples in order to make an identification.
- If you are a descendant of a missing servicemember, the DPAA would like you to contact your service casualty office about a DNA sample. You can find contact information at [www.DPAA.mil/Families/Contact-Information](http://www.DPAA.mil/Families/Contact-Information).

### Their work continues

Team Long Road walked across the country to get people talking about the need to bring our POW/MIA home. Now it's our turn to continue bringing attention to the 81,000 still unaccounted for. They fought for us. Now we need to fight for them.

Team Long Road's journey across America was completed in mid-December, but the work continues. The Marines will continue to bring awareness to POW/MIA and do their part to leave no one behind.

LeHew says his greatest hope is that others out there will continue searching for years to come. ★





## ADVOCATING FOR VETERANS FROM HOME

To strengthen our mission of serving veterans, military, and their families, American Legion Auxiliary members are tirelessly at work keeping veterans' issues in front of legislators at the local, state, and national levels. Joining together, Auxiliary members can and do make a difference when they advocate for our nation's heroes.

United as an American Legion Family, the Auxiliary supports the legislative priorities adopted by The American Legion, which regularly adopts and renews legislative intent resolutions.

### American Legion Legislative Center offers assistance

The American Legion's Legislative Center is a useful tool to learn more about legislative priorities, to discover tips and resources for being an advocate for veterans, and to make direct contact with lawmakers to advance American Legion priorities. The site offers the latest news regarding issues related to legislation and advocacy. Visit [www.Legion.org/legislative](http://www.Legion.org/legislative) to learn more.

The Legion's Grassroots Action Center has important legislative-

focused stories to browse and gives you an option to sign up for Legion legislative alerts. To make things easier, the Legion offers a "Find Officials" tab to locate your local elected officials. There is also a tab for "Find Legislation" which allows you to search bills related to the issues you're passionate about. Visit the Grassroots Action Center: [www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home](http://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home).

### Identifying legislators

Before you begin advocating for veterans, it is important to first identify your legislators. Decide if you want to start at the local level, state, or federal. To find your federal elected Congressional officials, visit [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov), [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), or the Legion's Grassroots Action Center. You can also call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 or toll-free at (877) 762-8762.

### Communicating with your legislators

Communication is key! Elected officials want and need to know the views of their constituents who elected them. You do not need to

meet with a legislator face to face to build a relationship. You have the opportunity to communicate with your legislators using a variety of methods. Writing letters, sending emails, sending faxes, and making phone calls are the easiest ways to contact your legislators — allowing you to communicate from the comfort of your own home.

#### Written communication:

Hand-signed and mailed letters are always appropriate but may not be as timely. Letters sent to a congressional office using postal mail must go through a decontamination process, which can delay arrival. Faxing a letter instead of postal mailing shortens the delivery time. Most lawmakers publicize an email address for receiving constituent communications. Visit your lawmakers' website to find their preference for receiving communication.

As for the message, we suggest you type your letter instead of writing it by hand. Make sure to clearly identify yourself as a constituent and express your issues politely. Try to keep your letter/email short to one page or less and focus on one subject. Summarize your position in the first paragraph and explain to your legislator why they should be concerned, and the rest of the letter can include supporting information. Be specific in your letter and recite facts. Make sure to thank your legislator for their time and attention.

**Verbal communication:** Phone calls are always effective. Before you call your legislator, put all your facts together. Know the information of the bill that concerns you. Be courteous, brief, and to the point. You do not need to speak directly to your legislator; it is fine to leave your message with the person answering the phone. Present your facts and position. Be polite. Thank the person listening to your request, and be prepared to answer questions. Lastly, make sure to follow up. Building lasting relationships with legislators is crucial to supporting veterans.

## ALA LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY GUIDE

For additional information and resources about communicating with legislators, check out the American Legion Auxiliary's *Legislative Advocacy Guide*, which will help you become a competent and informed advocate. It includes tips on gathering information

on legislation, making legislative contacts, and building relationships with legislators and their staff at all levels of government. Visit [www.ALAFORVeterans.org/member/guides/Advocacy-Guide](http://www.ALAFORVeterans.org/member/guides/Advocacy-Guide) to log in and download the guide.

## AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND: MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS ... AND A NEW PIN

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/AuxEmergencyFund](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/AuxEmergencyFund)



The American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund is our program that helps ALA members in need by providing funds to those who have experienced a natural disaster or who have found themselves in financial crisis. There are two grants available, with each providing up to \$2,400 in assistance. Grant applications can be found on the

national website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF).

The AEF is funded by donations from our members and nonmembers alike. Have you started your estate planning? Have you considered setting up a bequest to the AEF?

This would be a great way to continue helping members. We all work hard for what we have — what better way to help members in need? Planned giving is a way of including a charitable gift in your estate plans. It is a method of establishing your legacy for the organization you love and support while providing for your current financial needs. Consider including

the Auxiliary Emergency Fund in your planned giving.

This year, we have introduced our new AEF pin: “Members Helping Members.” You will receive one of these beautiful pins by donating \$100 or more to the AEF. Your donation must be sent directly to ALA National Headquarters or by clicking on “Donate” at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) and selecting the AEF. It’s another wonderful incentive for contributing to the AEF, and you could be one of the very first.



**Kelly Elliott** is a 22-year member of Ray & Virginia Boyer Unit 166 in Shellsburg, Iowa.

## LEGISLATIVE: ADVOCATE, EDUCATE, AND COMMUNICATE

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative)

The American Legion Auxiliary national Legislative Committee works closely with the national Legislative Commission of The American Legion on their legislative agenda. Departments of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary also have committees which function in a comparable manner with their states. The Legion Family is made up of nonpartisan organizations that do not promote, advance, or support any party, candidate, or policy, but ADVOCATE solely for The American Legion’s position on legislative issues. We are the voice for our veterans and their families to Congress.

The American Legion Auxiliary Legislative Committee EDUCATES the grassroots members by using bulletins to inform their division’s departments, and those departments send bulletins of

their own to their members. Unit legislative activities may be handled by the unit president, by a standing committee, or by a specially appointed committee. Social media over the years has enhanced our education efforts through sharing alerts and appeals through the Legislative Facebook group’s weekly report. Zoom meetings at all levels have become a very useful tool in educating our grassroots members.

COMMUNICATION is crucial in getting information from our members to their congresspeople. *The Legislative Advocacy Guide* at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Member/Guides/Advocacy-Guide](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Member/Guides/Advocacy-Guide) helps each Auxiliary member become a competent and informed advocate. It includes tips on gathering information on legislation, making legislative contacts, and building relationships

with legislators and their staff at all levels of government.

The national Legislative Committee Facebook group at [www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative) has weekly information on legislative information.

These two sites provide information on signing up to receive the alerts: [www.ALAforVeterans.org/advocacy](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/advocacy) and [www.Legion.org/legislative](http://www.Legion.org/legislative). For those who need assistance notifying their congresspeople, contact your department Legislative Committee chairman. They will be able to figure out who your elected officials are and provide help in writing a letter to them.



**Pam Bates** is a 46-year Auxiliary member of Unit 526 in Fairborn, Ohio.

## CHILDREN & YOUTH: WHAT IS KDH2?

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACHildrenandYouth](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACHildrenandYouth)

Children & Youth Good Deed and Youth Hero awards, Purple Up!, Halloween coloring books, child holiday parties. Sound familiar? We are so excited to see all of our units working so hard for this program and the children in their communities and military kids. What about KDH2?

KDH2 — Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2! This has been a part of the Children & Youth initiative for several years. I have a feeling with one small step, you are working this part of our mission. KDH2 is a program that recognizes military kids whose parent or parents are deployed at home or abroad (both active and reserve), are on a temporary duty assignment, or are actively serving.

How many of you hold spaghetti

suppers, holiday parties, dinners, or invite military families into your post? That is definitely working the mission of the Children & Youth program. Why not take it one step further? Distribute KDH2 buttons and/or stickers. Recognize those brave, young heroes who serve every day. There is a fillable certificate for those special kids on the Children & Youth program page at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

Unsure where to start? Go to our program page for help. Include as many members as you can in the planning and carrying out of this special mission. Make it a Legion Family project. The more the merrier! How about a monthly birthday party for military kids? Games, stickers, and how about a parent or grandparent button with

the child's photo on it? "I am a KDH2 parent or grandparent." And don't forget that cake and ice cream!

Have you visited our Children & Youth Facebook page? Many units have posted what they are doing. It is a great way to get ideas! Work with those ideas or start there and build on them.

There are so many ways to celebrate and honor our military kids. They truly are heroes. I can't wait to see what units around the country do to further this mission! Take pictures and share them with your division chairman and me.



**Pam Ray** is a 66-year member of the Department of Illinois.

## POPPY: PROMOTE, PARTICIPATE, AND PROVIDE

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy)

Our poppy — promote awareness of the poppy and its story, participate in activities that involve our poppy, and provide for the needs of veterans, military, and their families.

In the 1910s, Flanders Field, Belgium, was a battle ground during World War I and was filled with destroyed limestone buildings which made a base for the growth of the red poppy. The *In Flanders Field* poem penned by Canadian Lt. Col. John McCrae continues to remind us of the sacrifices of war. Using the poem and *The Poppy Lady*, a story by Moina Michael, the first to wear a poppy as a symbol of remembrance, helps share the poppy story. Promote our Poppy Program by involving

a Junior member as the unit's poppy princess and inviting youth from second to 12th grades to participate in the ALA Poppy Poster Contest.

In 2017, Congress designated the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day®. This year, the date will be May 26. This official date gives The American Legion Family a time to distribute poppies and invite all to make a donation (poppies are never sold — they are distributed). Unless your department has designated times when poppies can be distributed, set up a poppy table at community events to distribute poppies. Remember: Poppy rules allow other items such as poppy buttons, fabric poppies, painted rocks and pictures, and cookies

and cupcakes to be used to collect donations for the poppy funds as well.

Funds collected from poppies and poppy items can be used to provide for the needs of veterans, active-duty military, and their immediate families.

To become familiar with the ins and outs of the Poppy Program, use the *ALA Poppy Program Guide*, which can be purchased through American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or 1-888-453-4466, or downloaded at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).



**Jeanne Haas** is a 68-year member of Phillips Stuckey Shaffer Unit 296 in Gridley, Kan.

## AMERICANISM: PROMOTING PATRIOTISM THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/alaamericanism](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/alaamericanism)

The main focus of the American Legion Auxiliary Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship. As a unit member, there are many ways to accomplish this within our communities. Proper display, respect, and disposal for our flag is just one way to get into action. Thank local businesses and neighbors for flying the flag, and let them know they can retire their tattered flags at your local Legion post home. Sign up at [www.Legion.org/newsletters](http://www.Legion.org/newsletters) to receive notifications on when to display your flag at half staff.

Set up a time to visit your local schools or any after-school programs available in your area, such as JROTC or Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Teach proper flag

etiquette and good citizenship through our constitution, as well as promoting this year's ALA Americanism Essay Contest.

Speaking of the essay contest, by now you should have already contacted your schools. Department deadlines are set by your department Americanism Committee chairman. All department winners must be to your division chairman no later than April 15. All entries must include an essay cover sheet, which can be found at <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/awards/americanism-program-awards>. Don't forget: This year's essay question is "What does patriotism mean to me?"

Another way to promote Americanism is by supporting The American Legion's Americanism

programs. Offer to work the concessions or help with statistics for Legion Baseball. Volunteer to be a judge or timekeeper, or offer to help with refreshments at your post or district Oratorical Contest. Supporting the Junior Shooting Sports is also easy. Help recruit candidates, or volunteer to help with scoring or transportation.

These are just some of the many ways to support the Americanism program within your community. For more ideas or to share some of yours, join us on social media at [www.facebook.com/groups/alaamericanism](http://www.facebook.com/groups/alaamericanism).



**Michele DeGennaro** is a 19-year member of Hudson, Unit 335, in the Department of Florida.

## NATIONAL SECURITY: RAISING AWARENESS OF POW/MIAs

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/ALANatISec](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALANatISec)

Did you know? Approximately 81,000 servicemembers (POW/MIAs) remain unaccounted for, with nearly 71,000 from World War II. This year's special focus of the National Security program is to raise awareness of POW/MIAs, provide ideas to become more aware of POW/MIAs, and assist with spreading that information throughout our communities.

A great place to start is the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) website, [www.dpaa.mil](http://www.dpaa.mil), which shares a vast amount of information. The DPAA's mission is to provide the fullest possible accounting for missing personnel from past conflicts to their families and the nation. The website contains a full listing of POW/MIAs, both

accounted for and unaccounted for, searchable by conflict, state, and branch of service. Recovery efforts are chronicled, complete with service profiles of those identified. Remains identification can only succeed through the matching of service records and DNA. Now is the critical time for all families of POW/MIAs, and especially those from WWII, to search for their loved ones and provide DNA to assist in identifying remains.

In your communities, you can proudly fly the POW/MIA flag, drape a POW/MIA chair with the POW/MIA flag while reading the POW/MIA resolution, or plan a special ceremony of remembrance on National POW/MIA Recognition Day (Sept. 15 this year). White table ceremonies

can be conducted with the help of the book *America's White Table* by Margot Theis Raven. This resource helps to explain the significance of each item on the white table as a remembrance of those who are unable to dine with us.

The DPAA's motto is "Fulfilling Our Nation's Promise." The American Legion Family can help fulfill that promise and raise awareness of those who did not return from battle. We ask for your support in this vital endeavor. Let us remember and never forget their sacrifices.



**Barb Washburn** is a 46-year PUFPL member of Bickel-Nelson Unit 360 in Cook, Neb.



## CONNECT WITH ALA PROGRAMS THROUGH OUR FACEBOOK COMMUNITIES

As American Legion Auxiliary members, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism through our many different mission outreach committees. Each ALA national committee has a community of their own through our Facebook groups.

Our Facebook groups are helpful places for ALA-related resources and information. You're able to communicate with other members in the groups, ask questions, share ideas, and explore all ALA possibilities. These forums are also a great way to learn more about a particular ALA program. We encourage you to share photos and videos about what your unit is doing

to serve veterans, military, and their families.

Our Facebook groups are useful tools that provide organic discussion about topics related to each committee — join in on the conversation! Following us on social media is how you'll discover creative projects and share success stories to inspire others.

You can find these groups by going to the ALA national website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/) social-media or by visiting National Headquarters' Facebook page at @ALAFORVETERANS. At the top of our Facebook page, under the cover photo, click the "more" button which gives you many options; you'll want

to select the "groups" tab to locate the different outreach committees. Most groups are private, so you will have to click "ask to join" and answer a few membership-related questions. Don't let this discourage you — the private status is an effort to protect our members.

These groups are a great place to keep up to date on what's happening with the Auxiliary and Legion Family. Along with the groups, we also have Facebook and Instagram accounts for our Junior Activities program (@ALAJuniors) and ALA Girls Nation (@ALAGirlsNation), as well as Facebook pages for the ALA national president (@ALANationalPresident) and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (@NVCAF).

It's important to stay connected! Join our Facebook groups and follow our National Headquarters' Facebook page to discover what's new, what's coming up, and be among the first to know all things ALA. See the *We're Digital* page in this issue of *Auxiliary* (page 50) for additional information about ALA national Facebook groups.

## SHARE *WHITE TABLE* BOOK WITH YOUR UNIT

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary know it's essential to teach today's children about the importance of honoring and recognizing America's silent heroes — the prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. When children see the White Table set up at certain events, they may not fully understand the significance of what this small table symbolizes.

Seeing the need for this understanding, Margot Theis Raven easily explains the meaning of the White Table and the meaning of each item that is placed on the symbolic table in the children's book *America's White Table*. In the book, Katie and her sisters help their mother set up the White Table for dinner, and their mother describes the significance of each item placed on the table.

Katie comes to understand and appreciate the depth of sacrifice from our servicemembers, veterans, and POW/MIAs.

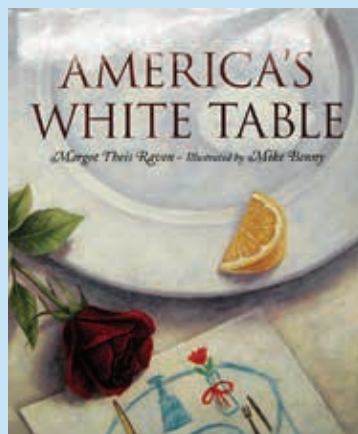
Now more than ever, it is important to educate our children and youth about the sacrifices our nation's veterans made in the past for the freedom we have today in the present. Try reading *America's White Table* book to Junior Auxiliary members in your unit, or read it at your next ALA meeting as a refresher — it's a great book for all ages.

You could reach out to your

local school librarian and ask if they can read the book to each class as a Veterans Day initiative. Work with local schools on making this a regular

program every year for Veterans Day or National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Have students invite their special veteran to attend the program. As the book is being recited, ask the children to set up each part of the table, while explaining the importance of each step. Physically setting up the table,

while listening to the story, will surely resonate with each child.



  
**AMERICAN  
LEGION**  
**AUXILIARY  
FOUNDATION**

## Breaking Down Your Gift to the Mission Endowment Fund

The Mission Endowment Fund is permanently restricted so that the interest earned may benefit ALA programs that support our veterans, promote education, and good citizenship. In 2022, the interest and dividends received from the Mission Endowment Fund made an incredible impact on the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary, including ALA Girls Nation, and National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, thanks to generous donors like you. The interest and dividends from the endowment were also used to distribute Mission in Action grants last year.



### **ALA GIRLS NATION**

Last year, the ALA Foundation was able to grant over \$14,000 to ALA Girls Nation.



### **MISSION IN ACTION GRANTS**

The ALA Foundation was able to give \$25,000 to units and departments for Mission in Action grants in 2022.



### **NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL**

The ALA Foundation was able to grant \$65,000 to the ALA for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in 2022.



Donate to the ALA Foundation's Mission Endowment Fund today by using the QR Code or by visiting [www.ALAFoundation.org/donate](http://www.ALAFoundation.org/donate).

## FEBRUARY

Who are the Four Chaplains?

On Feb. 3, 1943, at 12:55 a.m., a periscope broke the chilly Atlantic waters. Through the cross hairs, an officer aboard the German submarine U-223 spotted the Dorchester. The U-223 approached the convoy on the surface, and after identifying and targeting the ship, he gave orders to fire the torpedoes, a fan of three were fired. The one that hit was decisive and deadly, striking the starboard side, amid ship, far below the water line. Capt. Danielsen alerted that the Dorchester was taking water rapidly and sinking, and gave the order to abandon ship. In less than 20 minutes, the Dorchester would slip beneath the Atlantic's icy waters.

Those sleeping without clothing rushed topside where they were confronted first by a blast of Arctic air and then by the knowledge that death awaited. Men jumped from the ship into lifeboats, over-crowding them to the point of capsizing. Other rafts drifted away before soldiers could get in them. Through the pandemonium, four Army chaplains brought hope in despair and light in darkness. Those chaplains were Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Dutch Reformed.

The chaplains gave up their gloves. They passed out life jackets. When there were no more life jackets in the storage room, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men.

"It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven," said John Ladd, who saw the chaplains' selfless act.

As the ship went down, survivors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains — arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. Their voices could also be heard offering prayers.

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13.*

Prayer of Love: God, thank You for loving and blessing us every day. We are thankful for these Four Chaplains who gave their life for their comrades. May we strive to love and help each other every day. We love You and need Your guidance every day. Amen.

## MARCH

The Call for Help

*"I look up to the hills, but where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth." Psalms 121: 1-2*

Depending on the type of person you are, you may not be very good at asking for help. There are those who like to be helpers — they do best serving others because they feel capable and useful. Then there are those who gladly accept

service any time they are given the opportunity. Neither is better than the other, and both have their positive elements. It is good to serve, and it is good to allow others to serve us.

In different seasons of life, natural helpers may need to be the ones receiving help. Sometimes, this is hard to accept, and we have to be careful not to let pride take control. Asking for help is part of being vulnerable. We push everything aside to say, "I can't do this alone." God has put capable people in our lives who love to help, but they won't know we need it until we ask.

Prayer: Father, show me when I'm being stubborn in not asking for help. I trust You to place people in my life who can both share my burdens and allow me to help them with theirs. God, with every new opportunity that arises, help me to seek You for wisdom and peace in how to approach it. I trust in Your peace to guide me. In Your name we pray. *Amen.*

## APRIL

*"Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! ...tell of his salvation from day to day." Psalm 96:1-2 (ESV)*

It does not matter what part of the country you live in during winter. Whether the temperatures have just dipped below freezing or you have endured a deep freeze for months, we always eagerly anticipate spring! I try very hard to be upbeat all winter, keeping my grumbling to myself.

On the other hand, when sunshine peeks through the clouds and warm breezes penetrate my skin, my mood changes immediately. The truth is that I have a hard time persevering through winter months. I wish it were spring all year long.

Why do I like spring? I like new life. I can't help but open my eyes with a smile when birds' songs announce a new day. The smell of fresh, wet dirt just after a good rain causes me to breathe life back into my wilting soul. Maybe it is the call of the wild or a basic instinct to start tilling — I am not sure. I just know that I thrive on all things in the spring.

How can I make every day like spring? Praise God every day with new songs that tell of His love and new life. Be intentional every day to be renewed. Make it a priority to become deeply acquainted with God.

Prayer: Thank You that every day You shower Your new mercies down on those You love. Help us to always see the new thing You are doing in our lives. Give me wisdom and strength to respond in a way that would please and glorify You. In Your Name, we pray. Amen.



**Karen Peel** is a 32-year member of Firestone Memorial Unit 449 in Akron, Ohio.

## 'FRIENDLY FIRE' CONFLICT ON THE HOME FRONT

We are all familiar with the tragic consequences of “friendly fire” on the battlefield. Unfortunately, many of us experience friendly fire in our organizations, resulting in wounded volunteers and with deadly consequences for our mission. What is conflict? What are the sources of conflict? Why does it matter? How, as leaders, will we address conflict in the ranks? Who will lead the effort?

Dr. Robert Kegan, renowned psychologist, says the origins of conflict begin within us as “conflicts of interests” commonly attached to needs, wants, values, and personal belief systems. Conflict (positive and negative) has its origins in personal power and how we use our power to navigate relationships. As we engage with others, we may or may not find common ground based on these interests, values, and/or beliefs.

We must also be courageous enough to ask ourselves: What types of friendly fire leave our volunteers wounded ... or worse yet, dead on the battlefield (membership attrition)? Well, our department presidents provided their insights in a 2021 president’s retreat. When asked to identify the top five sources of conflict on their watch, they answered: 1) personality conflicts, 2) power struggles in leadership, 3) bullying and jealousy (3 and 4 tied), and 5) resistance to change.

Closely following the top five causes are poor communication, lack of humility and patience, and disagreements over process or procedures. How do these sources of conflict affect or serve our members or our mission? We can all agree we do not want these behaviors to represent who we are or who we will be.

Why does addressing unresolved sources of conflict matter? It is a matter of psychology, physics, and ethics. We want to belong and matter. Our intent and purpose is “service and not self.” This is a source of energy or power at the heart of successful missions. Most of us really dislike the social and emotional costs of conflict as it robs us of our energy, belonging, and focus. Each ALA volunteer has finite time, energy, talent, skills, knowledge, and resources. Every measure of these qualities bound by conflict cannot be invested elsewhere (e.g., successful investment in, and execution of our mission).

What happens if these qualities volunteers bring to our mission are not honored, respected, and valued?



Conflict deepens and becomes systemic as we build our armies (cliques), prepare our counterattacks (intensify conflict), or we retreat (leave the organization). Ethically, members join the ALA with an agreement to honor our constitution, bylaws, Code of Ethics, and at every meeting a commitment of our ethical obligations as recited in our Preamble: To maintain law and order. To promote peace and goodwill on Earth. To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation. To consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

Conversely, poor ethical behaviors, hostility, and bullying as examples, wound individuals and compromise the ability of organizations to

succeed. It’s impossible to execute the principles and actions of our Preamble for our veterans, their families, and the community when we do not honor these principles among our own. Our mission and our devotion to each other cannot consecrate or execute the sanctity of our mission if we are at war with each other. We must be courageous enough to protect our membership by holding those individuals who violate our Code of Ethics accountable.

How, as leaders will we address conflict in the ranks? The million-dollar question! The best measure of resolving conflict is to prevent conflict.

- 1) Vigilant focus on our mission, vision, and values.
- 2) Honoring diversity, equity, and inclusion (diversity includes personalities, viewpoints, experience, inexperience, rank/no rank, new vs. old members, etc.).
- 3) Leaders teach, train, and mentor the ALA’s values. The most critical effort lies with leaders who “walk the talk” by modeling our values and ethics.
- 4) ALA officers intervene in member/group conflict early, frequently, and justly.
- 5) All members hold each other accountable to behave according to our values and principles.

Who will lead the effort? We all must! Resolving conflict is not the sole responsibility of leadership. It is our responsibility as members of our organization. Hostility and/or bullying are not honorable behaviors, nor representative of our core values. Resolving conflict is our duty “to maintain law and order.” How do we do so if we allow conflict to create chaos or cliques to drive members away? We don’t.

So, why must we deal with conflict in our organization? Our Preamble provides the answer. “To consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.” Our veterans and the legacy and future of the ALA depend on our ability to do so.





## ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROJECT PROVIDES BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES

When Susan Johnson, ALA Unit 427, came across an Adopt-a-Highway sign while driving through Alamance County, N.C., she realized it represented an ideal opportunity to showcase her American Legion post home while supporting clean-up efforts in her community.

As with other Adopt-a-Highway programs throughout the United States, a practice that dates to the 1980s, ALA Unit 427 was prepared to regularly keep a one-mile section of a road free of litter. In exchange, local government officials would erect a sign that prominently displayed The American Legion Family brand.

Johnson also realized the importance of trash collection efforts in the area. According to a Keep America Beautiful report, nearly 50 billion pieces of trash are left on U.S. roadways and waterways every year. Yet, highway clean-up efforts have resulted in a 54 percent decrease in litter on roads since 2009.

She was eager to get started with her project in 2021. However, Johnson found that getting the process underway would take a lot of persistence.

“I thought it was a wonderful idea,” Johnson recalled. “But it took me over a year. After I emailed all of my paperwork, nobody ever got in touch with me.”

Johnson admits she was frustrated at times, but she didn’t give up. She continued to reach out, and, eventually, called an official in nearby Raleigh who helped her get the ball rolling. The next time she called local officials, the woman on the other end of the line responded, “Let’s do it now.”

Several weeks later, Johnson received the designated section of Keck Road in Haw River, N.C., to clean. She organized a clean-up event, which was attended by numerous Legionnaires and Auxiliary members, neighborhood volunteers, a sheriff, mayor, and a

senator. They donned orange safety vests and got to work by cleaning up trash that had been left along the road.

“I just started calling people, and they just showed up to help clean,” Johnson said. “We are a small post, but we have a lot of impact. It makes me very proud. We’re trying to improve our community by keeping it clean.”

Any time the volunteers clean up the stretch of road, they place the bags of trash in a designated area. They then call county officials to pick up the trash bags, informing them of their specific site along the road.

“Everybody loves it,” Johnson said. “We just wanted to do something positive for our neighborhood.”

Johnson also said the Adopt-a-Highway project has had a ripple effect in the community. Nearby neighbors have been making more of an effort to keep their roads clean, she said.

“People who are not even members will come up to us and talk about how they saw the sign, and how they’ve noticed that neighbors in the area are trying to keep their streets a little cleaner,” Johnson said. “I think it’s changed the neighborhood.”

Her advice to other ALA units? “Just keep calling. It might take a while, but never give up.”

## READY TO START AN ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROJECT? FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

- Contact your local government about Adopt-a-Highway opportunities.
- Fill out the required paperwork.
- Be persistent but polite in follow-up messages.
- Organize an inaugural clean-up event.
- Invite members, neighborhood volunteers, and community leaders to the event.
- Check the area regularly for trash.
- Schedule clean-up events as needed to keep the road clean.
- Follow your local program instructions for ensuring bags are collected.



## 9/11 AND ALA GIRLS STATE LEAD TO A CAREER IN PUBLIC SERVICE

**DEDICATED TO PUBLIC SERVICE** (top): Kelsey Whitt and Vanessa Wimsatt at ALA Missouri Girls State in 2002; (right): Whitney Nolan, Whitt, and Macae Mickens serve on staff at 2022 ALA Missouri Girls State.

Kelsey Whitt's day started out like every other day. She dropped her siblings off at school and headed to Spanish class. She was looking forward to homecoming festivities and thinking of her boyfriend who had enlisted in the Army and was just beginning basic training.

But that day would be far from ordinary. It was Sept. 11, 2001.

Class was interrupted by the news that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. The news was shocking, but they continued with class. Then the second plane hit.

"Everyone in the room silently stared into space. We were 16 years old, but we knew that life would never be the same," said Whitt, an ALA Missouri Girls State alumna. "In that moment, I grew up. My country had been attacked. And my boyfriend was in basic training, getting ready to defend it."

Whitt was taking a government class and



in pursuing and was where I would meet other young women who were like me."

Whitt attended ALA Missouri Girls State in 2002.

"The week was so much more than I expected. I learned about city, county, and state government in Missouri. And I finally felt at home with a group of my peers for the first time in my life," she said. "But it was so much more than learning about government and making friends. It was truly understanding the sacrifices of our nation's veterans and active-duty personnel — sacrifices they and their families made and continue to make to ensure my safety as an American.

"It's been 20 years now, but the stories the veterans told us about their time of service in defense of our nation still impact me," she continued. "I can't think about the gentleman who talked about the abuse he endured as a prisoner of war without tearing up. Or the Vietnam veteran who recalled

following the news closely about America's response.

"I wanted to learn everything I could about our democracy, and I was beginning to think I might want to work for the government or go to law school after college," she said. "I knew ALA Missouri Girls State was where I could test whether a career working for our government might be something I was interested

returning home with tears in his eyes."

The experience influenced Whitt's career path. Following ALA Girls State, she decided to embark on a career of service.

As Whitt was planning her future, she was also concerned for our country.

"When news broke in December that the 3rd Infantry Division — of which my boyfriend was a part — was likely to be deployed to Kuwait ahead of the invasion of Iraq, those lessons about patriotism I learned at ALA Missouri Girls State hit home," said Whitt.

Graduating from high school in May 2003 as class valedictorian, Whitt later graduated law school with a legal public service job — working for the Supreme Court of Missouri as a law clerk to the same judge who gave the inauguration speech at ALA Missouri Girls State in 2002.

Fast forward to today. That boyfriend is now her husband, and they are both public servants. He's a police officer, and she is an employee of the Missouri judiciary and serves as the education liaison for ALA Missouri Girls State.



"We're raising a 6-year-old ALA Junior member with the same lessons we learned as young adults. We regularly talk to her about the importance of public service, our democracy and its values, patriotism, and respect for veterans," said Whitt. "The impact of ALA Missouri Girls State on my life cannot be quantified. It is going to last generations in family we've created."

**Do you have a unique fundraising idea for your ALA Girls State program? Let us know! Email us: [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org).**

## SPIRIT OF YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP WINNER THANKS DONORS FOR EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

The American Legion Auxiliary annually provides one Junior member in each of the five American Legion Auxiliary divisions with a \$5,000 Spirit of Youth scholarship. Rylie Lach, Maryland Unit 11 member, received one of these scholarships.

### How long have you been an American Legion Auxiliary member?

I have been a member since birth, so 19 years.

### Who made you eligible for ALA membership?

My grandfather, who was in the U.S. Army.

### What does it mean to you to have this connection to the military?

I love having a connection to the military and I am proud to have a veteran in my family. Having the advantage to be in the ALA and to support our veterans, servicemembers, and their families due to my grandfather's service is rewarding.

### Share your experiences as an ALA Junior member — any favorite events or programs you participated in?

Being a Junior member has introduced me to some amazing women who inspire me all the time. Some of my favorite events and programs I have participated in are Operation We Care, which sends necessities and goods to military personnel stationed overseas. Another one is our Fall Conference because I love seeing all of my friends from across the state.

### Why do you think it's important for Juniors to be involved in the ALA?

So that the organization continues to grow and stay strong as the years go on and we lose some of our wonderful senior members. The younger generations are a key part of maintaining this organization, and without instilling in them the important lessons and roles of the ALA, the strength and mission of the organization will go away.



### What college are you attending, and what are you studying?

I go to Susquehanna University, majoring in biomedical sciences.

### What sparked your interest in this area?

In middle school, I had a speaker come to school and talk about a program at our local career and technology center that sounded interesting. After doing more research and applying to the school, I completed a two-year course in biomedical sciences that made me very passionate about this field.

### Any advice to other ALA Junior members who may want to apply

### for this scholarship?

Continue being an active volunteer as a member of the ALA.

### What would you say to donors who support the ALA scholarship funds to help students like you?

I would like to say thank you. There are so many Junior members in need of assistance when it comes to paying for furthering their education. Scholarships from the ALA scholarship funds benefit many Juniors across the nation, and without the donors, it would not be possible.

### Is there anything else you want to add?

Being a Junior member has given me many opportunities and helped me form so many relationships that I would not have had the opportunity to make without this organization.

*Want to apply for the ALA Spirit of Youth scholarship? Applicants must have held membership in the ALA for the immediate past three years, must hold a membership card for the current year, and must continue to maintain their membership throughout the four-year scholarship period. The application deadline is March 1.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Biomedical science (BS) is the foundation of knowledge for all health care professionals. A degree in this area of study can lead to working in many different fields such as education, research, sales, medical practice, and hospital and institutional work.

### 7 ideas for careers to pursue with a biomedical science degree:

- Forensic technologist
- Health policy
- Pharmaceutical sales
- Toxicology
- Dentistry
- Biomedical researcher
- Zoologist



Source: [blog.nuhs.edu](http://blog.nuhs.edu)



## ENGAGE THE PUBLIC, REDUCE VETERAN SUICIDE

*American Legion Family members in Oregon distribute nearly 800 bracelets to educate veterans and civilians about how they can “Be the One” to save a veteran’s life.*

As The American Legion shines a light on veteran suicide, the NBA’s Portland Trailblazers assisted the Department of Oregon in illuminating the Be the One initiative on Nov. 15, Military Appreciation Night.

Cory Brockman, first vice commander in the Department of

Oregon, conceived the idea to engage and educate fans about the program with swag items.

“Over the past couple of years, we have moved from developing Buddy Check slipknot bracelets to expanding our outreach tools for the Be the One initiative to engage the public,” he explained as American Legion Family

members staffed a high-profile Be the One booth inside the area as fans streamed in to watch the Blazers game against San Antonio.

American Legion Family members distributed 771 bracelets in about 90 minutes to veterans and civilians, ranging in age from young children to seniors. Fans expressed thanks, asked about the program, and strapped the bracelets on their wrists.

“The bracelets are a civic engagement tool, whether you are a veteran, family member, or just John Doe Public,” said Brockman, a member of Post 104 in Aloha, Ore. “All of us want to support veteran suicide prevention.”

Printed on the bracelets were the words “Be the One” and the website URL. They were in a plastic baggie with an information card explaining the Be the One program. It was created to reduce the perceived stigma around mental health treatment while empowering everyone to act when the life of a

### A NEW EVENT TO PROMOTE THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

Save the date! American Legion Family Day is Saturday, April 29, 2023.

During The American Legion Fall Conference in October of last year, a resolution was passed to establish an American Legion Family Day. The day will be observed annually on the last Saturday of April. On this day, all American Legion posts throughout the nation will open their doors to their members and the members

of their local communities with the intent of celebrating all great deeds and works of The American Legion Family with the intent to educate, recruit, recognize, and to give back to those members that continually support the gift of giving.

The day will also place special emphasis and awareness on the “Be the One” program.

Watch our social media @ALAforVeterans for more information.



veteran may be in danger.

“It takes a community — not just an individual — to end veteran suicide,” Brockman said. “The bracelets are an engagement tool. They are a way to reach out to the community. They can wear one and share one. They can pass one off to a veteran or family member. They are designed as an engagement tool so the public can ask questions of us so they know what to do. And ask questions of veterans: Are you doing all right? Is your home life OK? Are you healthy? How can I help you?”

For Brockman, who served in the Air Force and Army, the effort is personal.

“I’ve seen enough veterans to know the hurt inside and they are not well,” he said, referencing the daily number of veteran suicides, estimated to be 22. “In my mind, one is too many. Being a veteran, we’ve been there on the front lines, or we’ve been there supporting our troops on the front lines. It’s just taking care of our veteran community. A healthy veteran is a healthy veteran family is a healthy community.”

Navy veteran Allyson Kropf, commander of Post 158 Tigard, Ore., is a mental health therapist. She specializes in helping veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

“That is something very near and dear to my heart,” she said. “Having this program in The American Legion is amazing because it is so needed and fantastic.”

Such volunteer work is a labor of love and compassion for Kropf.

“I don’t see it as work,” she explained. “Coming out here isn’t work; it’s more fun to give back, and I love doing it. It’s really nice to be out here talking about the thing I love.”

Kainoa Yamada was among the veterans who stopped to speak with Legion members about Be the One,



**BE THE ONE AND THE NBA:** Legion Family members of the Department of Oregon launched their Be the One initiative at a Portland Trailblazers game. Members handed out packets that included bracelets and information about veteran suicide prevention (photos Jeric Wilhelmsen/The American Legion).

the organization itself, and more.

“I think what The American Legion is doing is awesome, supporting all of our veterans,” said Yamada, who separated from the Air Force in 2020. “It’s absolutely amazing that they are out here. We’re all just supporting each other. It’s amazing for everyone to come together.”

The American Legion’s support of Yamada began when he was a youth. He attended Oregon American Legion Boys State in 2018.

“The Boys State experience for me was wonderful,” he recalled. “It meant a lot. I felt amazing when they did sponsor me.”

Brockman’s wife, Catherine, sees the volunteer work as part of her service.

“It’s very important for us to be here to show that you don’t have to have served to be able to serve now, and serve the veterans,” said

Catherine, department first vice commander for the Auxiliary. “To be here now, we want to be able to let veterans, servicemembers, and their spouses know that we play an important part. We are here supporting our veterans because they supported us by defending our country.”

She noted the interest of fans who inquired about Be the One.

“We want to put the awareness out there that you don’t have to be a veteran, or be in a veteran family to be able to ‘Be the One.’ That’s all it takes. You have to talk to them and be aware of them. They need somebody to listen to them, and you just have to be there.”

While not every American Legion post will have access to a major professional sports franchise, both Brockmans noted how the concept is scalable. For example, posts in smaller communities can

engage with veterans and civilians at bazaars, farmers markets, parades, and similar events.

“For us, we scaled up the bracelets because they are a great engagement tool,” Cory Brockman said. “Wear one, share one. Give the packet to someone else. In a smaller community, it’s just doing it in a smaller scale. Find an event you can focus your outreach on. Small communities have great parades — Fourth of July celebrations, holiday festivities, and bazaars. It’s not that you have to be in a large metropolitan area to take care of veterans; this venue allows us a great opportunity to engage a lot of the public who don’t know veterans, but we can tell their stories. Thank you for coming tonight. Thank you for supporting our veterans. Thank you for being the one.”

*By Henry Howard/The American Legion National Headquarters*



## AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

### Help more heroes enjoy the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

Each year, the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival celebrates the achievements of talented veterans from across the country.

Though all gold medal winners are invited to attend the Festival, not all are able to attend. For some, the cost of attending is too much for the veteran’s companion, who is often so vital for everyday activities.

You have a unique opportunity to enhance the veteran experience by supporting the needs of companions at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Make your gift in service of this incredible program online today at [donate.legion-aux.org/NVCAFCompanions](https://donate.legion-aux.org/NVCAFCompanions).

Or you can mail a check to:

American Legion Auxiliary

3450 Founders Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46268

Write 22-23 NP Project in the memo line



*The title of their show tells the story of their commitment to veterans and their families.*

*Since 2017, Bob and Sue Fratino have hosted a weekly radio show called They Sacrificed for Us in Willoughby, Ohio, near Cleveland.*

*The show focuses on the valor of the military and the support available for those who served. Its guests have shared their stories about veterans and groups that assist them and their families, including leaders of the American Legion Auxiliary.*

*Sue, the daughter of an Ohio National Guard veteran, is the president of ALA Ohio Unit 214. Bob, the son of an Army veteran, is commander of the Sons of The American Legion Ohio Squadron 214.*

*The Fratinos' show airs each Tuesday at 8 p.m. Eastern time on WINT radio, at 1330 AM or 101.5 FM in the Cleveland area and streaming online from anywhere at winradio.com.*

*To watch the show live or view recordings of prior episodes, visit the show on Facebook at Facebook.com/theysacrificedforusradioshow.*

**How did the show originate?**



**Sue:** Somebody at my [ALA] unit was looking to do a show. I looked into it, and we received a call

to go to the radio station and just talk to them. I think Bob and I were both scared to death.

**Bob:** It was very interesting, to say the least. They came up to us and said, "OK, go in there, and pretend like you're doing a show." That was the longest half-hour. You're trying to pick a topic and talk about it, and you don't realize that it's really hard.

**What is your goal for the show?**

**Sue:** We are just trying to pay it forward. We've had some phenomenal guests on the show, not only veterans but also organizations that help with veterans. We want to let veterans know what is available, and there are so many organizations we didn't even know existed until the radio show.

**Bob:** One of the really cool things is when we get a guest on the show, and they say, "Hey, you should talk to this person." You get that snowball effect, finding people who can provide assistance to a veteran who's looking for housing

or things of that nature. Getting to know these amazing people from organizations or the veterans themselves is what drives us to keep going until they tell us we can't do it anymore.

**Who's been your favorite guest?**

**Sue:** I think the most exciting guest was the Tuskegee Airman [Col. Harold Brown] who joined us. Who would have thought in my lifetime that I would have spoken with somebody who was such a part of history, and the things that he had to go through to become a pilot? Nothing was going to stop this man from serving our country.

**Bob:** We've had so many amazing guests, but the Tuskegee Airman stands out because of his experiences and everything he had to go through. We also have a lot of repeat guests, like Debby Kocsis, who's with the Daughters of the American Revolution and its project Wreaths Across America. It's an outstanding program in its own right.



**What's your advice to others thinking of starting something new to support a cause like honoring veterans?**

**Bob:** Use every resource you possibly can to find the direction you want to take. There are so many great people who are so knowledgeable who you can use as resources to reach out and ask questions. When we first started, we had so many questions about what we should do and how we should approach this, but we used the resources within our own community to move our agenda forward.

**Sue:** Don't be afraid to try. In the beginning, I would think that we failed. But you're going to learn from anything you do. I had somebody tell me once that even on your worst day, you can take away 10% and learn from that.



## PROMOTING OUR MISSION AND VALUES IN EVERYTHING WE DO

Everything American Legion Auxiliary members promote, publish, post, etc., should always come back to the mission. Whether it's posting the mission statement on your website or promotional materials tied to your fundraising and community events, it's important to share what our organization is all about.

In an article on the marketing/signage company website HighValueSigns.com, Myra Brown writes that as an organization or company grows, communicating the “why” of the organization becomes increasingly important. Brown writes that those involved in your organization care about the services you provide, but also why your organization does what it does, every day, day after day.

Developing your mission and values and finding ways to communicate them is essential for many reasons:

- engenders a sense of pride and purpose for those involved to know and understand the purpose for being
- helps those you are trying to reach and those who are already involved connect with you on a deeper level

- communicates one more vital reason why they should start (or continue) to be involved with you

While it is always important to communicate the ALA's mission,

it can sometimes be hard because we are all so busy. Sometimes, our day-to-day grind of activities and processes can become all-consuming and prevent us from devoting time to promoting the mission in everything we do.

In addition, our current members, and the community members we are trying to reach, are just as busy. When everything just seems to blend into each other, a reminder about *why* our members joined and the *reasons* we do what we do, is a good idea that can yield impactful outcomes and possibly deeper, more meaningful relationships.

In a blog article for the Ambition Institute, Aimee Monteith, operations director at Grebot Donnelly Education Marketing Consultants, offers some tips on how to communicate your mission and values more effectively.

### Keep it visible



Don't let your mission become a statement that sits on a memo in a desk drawer. Instead, it should be included in all key messages, and in both internal and external documents. Is the ALA's tagline — “A community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families” — visible on your unit's Facebook page, for example?

### Use a variety of channels



In addition, Monteith says to communicate your mission, and values through as many channels as possible.

Promoting an upcoming event or activity hosted by your ALA unit? Your marketing campaigns need to utilize all channels available, such as newsletters, website, recruitment packs, press releases, social media, and your front-of-house team.

In addition to Monteith's suggestions, Brown writes that communication theory suggests we must tell others what we want them to know a minimum of eight times before our message is really heard and understood. Brown advises putting the mission in your email signature, flyers, and on your website or social media accounts. Consider as well the value of putting your mission on the walls of your post home and in various locations such as the lobby, bar rooms, meeting rooms, common areas, hallways, etc.

### Speak with one voice



Monteith recommends taking internal measures to get everyone on board and ensure everyone speaks with one voice about your mission. Communicating the ALA's “who we are” in a positive, excited manner will ensure everyone involved engages positively with what you have set out for the organization to achieve.

### Share success stories



Choose success stories wisely and keep repeating those stories and moments that demonstrate your mission and values. It's as important to do this internally as it is externally so that everyone is well-versed in the stories that have the biggest impact.





# You've Got Mail!

With the rise of digital media, the American Legion Auxiliary has increasingly turned to the power of digital communication. It makes sense: consumers are spending over five hours a day on smartphones. However, this has caused an increase in digital overwhelm.

In response, the ALA and the ALA Foundation are sending their message where it can be clearly received: to the mailbox.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive themed packages and seasonal gifts for a small donation, please email:

[Development@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Development@ALAforVeterans.org)



Visit our social media at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media)



### NEED RESOURCES FOR AN ALA PROGRAM?

Each of our Auxiliary programs has a section in the MyAuxiliary portion of [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). You can access resources, award information, and more.



### RESOURCES TO HELP PROMOTE MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE AT [WWW.ALAFORVETERANS.ORG](http://WWW.ALAFORVETERANS.ORG)

- American Legion Family membership applications can be downloaded and printed in both black and white and color formats.
- Fillable PDF flyers can be printed and attached to items, such as takeout boxes from your post home.



### DOUBLE-CHECK THAT ALA FACEBOOK GROUP: IS IT OFFICIAL?

ALA National Headquarters has discovered Facebook groups that appear to be official Auxiliary groups but aren't. We know these accounts may have been created with good intentions, but they can lead to misinformation. For example, we found a group called "poppy program" and spotted some familiar names posting on the newsfeed. However, the admins

of the group are no longer monitoring the account and are no longer affiliated with the ALA. Before you join a group, make sure its admins are associated with the ALA at the national, department, division, or unit level. For a list of the official national Facebook groups, visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Social-Media](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Social-Media).



### HOW TO FIND US ONLINE

- ALA website: [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
- ALA blog: [www.ALAforVeterans.org/blog](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/blog)
- Social media: [@ALAforVeterans](https://twitter.com/ALAforVeterans)



### COMING UP

In between issues of *Auxiliary* magazine, you can follow the latest news from American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters digitally. Follow the ALA blog, social media, *ALA eNews*, and our website. Here's a look at what's coming soon:

- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival: April
- Month of the Military Child: April
  - Purple Up! Day: April 15
  - American Legion Family Day: April 29 (watch our social media [@ALAforVeterans](https://twitter.com/ALAforVeterans) for more info)
  - National Poppy Day®: Friday before Memorial Day (May 26 this year)

### NEW AUXILIARY LOGO APPAREL!



\* Proceeds support American Legion Family programs

### American Legion Emblem Sales

1-888-453-4466

[Emblem.Legion.org](http://Emblem.Legion.org)

AUX MG 0223

# “The past actually happened, but history is only what someone wrote down.”

— A. Whitney Brown, humorist



History — it's always in motion, sometimes within reach and oftentimes very distanced from us. Thank goodness for technology. You've seen *Auxiliary* magazine as an informational space recommending the digitization of historical documents when possible, as well as cataloging items for archiving purposes. That's exactly what we've been doing at National Headquarters for quite some time. Coming soon: a new place for American Legion Auxiliary history, accessible from your fingertips. Be sure to follow our social media @ALAFforVeterans for updates.

*Above: Delegates of FIDAC Congress (Federation Interalliee des Anciens Combattants) and its Auxiliary. The photo was taken Sept. 18, 1930, at Mount Vernon, Washington, D.C., during the 11th annual meeting. Sitting in the front row, center, is ALA National President Mary Virginia Macrae.*

***A Community of Volunteers  
Serving Veterans, Military,  
and their Families***

# ALA Blog: Big Stories in Small Reads!

Read the ALA Blog for captivating posts about members in the American Legion Auxiliary, those we serve, and much more!

## Helping to heal homeless veterans

Auxiliary members continue their efforts of honoring the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of veterans in all aspects of life. Participating in a veterans stand down event is truly a life-changing experience — people from all walks of life come together to provide help for veterans in need. Sue Ruda, Florida American Legion Auxiliary Unit 107 member, served the Auxiliary's mission by volunteering at a stand down in a neighboring town.

"We raise money for veterans, and we do other activities, but this was the first time I was able to actually be with the homeless veterans and see where these mission-focused projects end up, and it was so nice," said Ruda.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, on any given night, over 131,000 homeless veterans are on...

*Read more online!*

"What an uplifting article!"

—Christy

"I love your blog  
and all that you do."

—Jennie

## Tips on leading presentations in meetings and events

American Legion Auxiliary members not only deliver presentations and bring greetings at unit meetings, but sometimes we're asked to present on the ALA to local groups like Chambers of Commerce, the Lions Club, local libraries, and other community organizations.

As the saying goes, "dress to impress." What to wear can vary based on the type of meeting. Following are a few pointers to keep...

*Read more online!*

"Love this idea."  
—Cindy

"Great advice!"  
—Ken

"Thank you so much for  
this article on how to help  
recruit new members."  
—Kim