

American Legion www.ALAforVeterans.org

Auxiliary

August 2020 \$3.75



Responding to new challenges
**A Community of Volunteers
Serving Veterans, Military,
and their Families**



Coming Soon: Even More Training Opportunities for Members!

ALA adding virtual events to its lineup



You've heard of ALA Academy, full of free courses on subjects like enhancing leadership skills, why branding matters, fundraising tips, and more. But you may not be aware of our **NEW** virtual training opportunities:

- ★ Mission delivery
- ★ Junior leaders
- ★ VA Voluntary Services
- ★ ALAMIS how-to
- ★ ALA Girls State information

... and more!

Stay tuned to ALA's social media channels
@alaforveterans for more information!

Auxiliary

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ON THE COVER: The American Legion Family is proudly represented on face masks made by Auxiliary member Kathy White of Georgia. **ABOVE:** ALA member Judy Wothke of Zionsville Unit 79 in Indiana works with members of the post home's Legion Family and local Boy Scouts during preparations for placement of 2,500 U.S. flags on veterans' headstones at Lincoln Memory Gardens Cemetery in Whitestown, Ind., over Memorial Day weekend (photos: Aaron Meyer/ALANHQ).



CARE AND ENCOURAGEMENT:

Calling ALA members to see how they're doing, and sharing messages of positivity and hope during the Auxiliary's Week of Caring and Sharing April 1-7 in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

World wars, terrorism, medical crises, and numerous natural disasters. Through all of that, and more, American Legion Auxiliary members have worked tirelessly in support of, and reverence to, our nation's veterans, military, and their families for more than 100 years. Helping and honoring those we serve — in good and bad times — has always been the ALA's mission.

ALA members assess the needs and wishes of those we serve. Adapting if needed, to overcome obstacles that may arise during tumultuous times, we selflessly do what we can for them.

In tough times, ALA members don't dwell on the obstacles to fulfilling our mission of selfless service. We focus on what we can do, not on

our limitations, while in the midst of crises and challenges. We double-down on our resolve, put our resourcefulness and creativity into overdrive, and find alternate ways to safely support and honor veterans, military, and their families.

Serving our mission in these uncertain and unnerving days of the COVID-19 global pandemic is no different than that. ALA members and our non-member volunteers have been finding ways to deliver selfless service — all while abiding by social distancing recommendations, safety guidelines, and local restrictions. We are also finding ways to help in our communities with needs stemming from

stringent stay-at-home orders or recommendations from government leaders and health officials.

For example:

- The ALA Department of Iowa answered the call when Iowa Secretary of State Paul D. Pate asked the department to make 10,000 masks for residents and staff at the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown, Iowa. Many ALA members throughout the department contributed to this effort.

- ALA Unit 178 and American Legion Post 178, both of Murrells Inlet, S.C., acquired and delivered two full Jeep- and trailer-loads of bleach, paper towels, Styrofoam containers, plastic utensils, and boxes of exam gloves to the VA hospital in Charleston. This was done in response to a call for assistance from the Veterans Administration in Charleston. Unit and Post 178's effort was helped along by Sunrise Beverages, a local business in Surfside Beach. Unit

178 has also been sewing hundreds of masks for the VA hospital in Charleston.

Auxiliary members have taken time to look out for one another, calling other ALA members to ask how each other is doing and to offer messages of hope and positivity. I made many phone calls, too. It was wonderful talking with Auxiliary members, and I felt as if we encouraged one another.

This telephone outreach was highlighted in early April during the ALA's special Week of Caring and Sharing, which mirrors the Legion's "Buddy Check" campaign. What made this outreach effort even more terrific is that some ALA members continued with their calls after the first week of April. Way to go! Learn more about Week of Caring and Sharing at www.ALForVeterans.org.

Other parts of our American Legion Family stepped up during the pandemic. American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford announced the April 2020 "Month of Hope" campaign, which was aimed at helping those impacted by COVID-19. Commander Oxford also addressed how Buddy Checks have helped many veterans get through the challenges presented by the pandemic, including isolation resulting from the social distancing implemented to slow the spread of the disease. In addition, Commander Oxford encouraged Legionnaires to consider donating blood as the need grew.

I am proud of all that our members of the ALA, and the entire Legion Family, are doing to fulfill our common mission of caring for America's veterans, military, and their families. We are in this pandemic together, and together is how we get through it. Please continue finding safe ways to help others, showing kindness and compassion as we, collectively and individually, forge our path forward.

Nicole Clapp

Nicole Clapp
National President

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GROWING: National staff have been together with members since the ALA was established a century ago.

It's summer, and ALA National Headquarters staff are typing away on computers in their kitchens, working on reports spread across the coffee table, and checking emails from their phones. But we're not unique — we join the rest of the world in adapting to new routines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Auxiliary magazine goes to press about a month and half before copies start reaching members' mailboxes. Right now, as this issue is being finalized for the printer, there's a lot of uncertainty and unrest in the world. 2020 has provoked feelings of anxiety, fear, stress, anger, sadness, and most of all, questions. What will we do to get through this? How will we improve? Things always seem to be getting worse — can *anything* be positive?

The American Legion Auxiliary turned 100 last November. You could say we've been through a lot in our century of service. In fact, when we were first being established as an organization, the world was slowly overcoming another major health event — the 1918 influenza pandemic.

Think back to a time when you felt seemingly powerless. Everything happening around you was crumbling, and nothing

good seemed to be on the horizon. Now fast forward to the present: *I got through this*, you remind yourself, and you're a stronger person today because of it.

In some ways, maybe that's the outlook we should have — one that focuses only on that *I got through this* element. Thinking this way can be tough for most of us since there's so much unknown out there, or we're currently in a situation that doesn't seem to be improving. But when we look to what we did accomplish and how we persevered, the positives aren't out of reach.

Times may seem crazy and scary and wrapped up in one big ball labeled with a giant question mark. But we've got to remember: *We will get through this*.

It's been said that laughter is the best medicine. Jokes may be the last thing on your mind right now, but if studies tell us it's important to recognize that levity in tough times can be a good thing, then maybe it's worth considering.

Here's one that's rimshot-worthy: "I am not sure how many cookies you have to eat to improve your mood. So far, it's not 27."

What keeps you in good spirits? Tell us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org.

ALA ON THE GO

Auxiliary magazine is fully digital and available for download at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

TOOLS & TIPS IN A CLICK

In addition, you'll find expanded magazine content, valuable unit and department resources, plus downloadable templates, news releases, and other ALA promotional materials available on the ALA website 24/7.



American Legion *Auxiliary*

*A Community of Volunteers
Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*
August 2020



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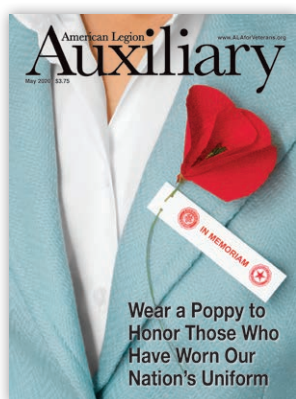
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WHY I BECAME A PAID UP FOR LIFE MEMBER

My family has a lot of veterans dating all the way back to the Civil War and a Union soldier in the Cavalry. I have veterans in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. My father and mother were lifetime members of the Legion and Auxiliary. What better way to honor my family of veterans than to be a PUFL. I love doing projects for veterans hospitals and sending Christmas cards to the USO. Support the Auxiliary and help our veterans [by being] a PUFL.

— Patricia Lindsten, Wisconsin

COLORADO UNIT INCREASES SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

We are growing, maybe not in numbers yet, but in our ability to be seen by our community!

We are starting to be seen and understood by our community of Woodland Park, Colorado. We have embraced our Facebook page and are starting to post more and more. The involvement is great, and now even members of our community who are not eligible to join are helping our programs.

We have started to post more events, photos, veteran and family resources, and even members in the spotlight. We went from less than 50 likes to 103 likes. Our social media presence is becoming an asset for us.

We would love for you to visit our Facebook page and see what a difference the last couple of months have made, even with COVID-19. We try to post at least twice a week, even if it's not about our specific unit. Search on FB by looking up "American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1980 Woodland Park, CO."

— Cynthia Sipes, Colorado

EDITOR'S NOTE: Great job on using social media to promote and increase your presence in your community!

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ON THE ALA BLOG

Content from *Auxiliary* magazine is often published via a digital version through the ALA blog. Here's what our followers had to say about stories that appeared in the May magazine:

Blog post: 'Poppy brings back memories, reminds to honor servicemembers'

"Our poppy queen, having a poppy distribution. We don't sell them, we accept donations and give back to the veterans' needs. The red poppy is made by the veterans and for the veterans."

— Lydia Zazueta

"Almost 40 years ago, I won first place in a contest from the American Legion Auxiliary National for poppies! I have never forgotten the meaning of poppies as a result of the organization! Thank you for all you do and have continued to do over the years!"

— Judy Johnson Cockle

Blog post: 'Should your post home go nonsmoking?'

"I would physically not be able to go to a smoking post anymore with my breathing issues. Unfortunately,

smoking doesn't just affect the smoker; it affects everyone in the room. I do, however, think that smokers should not be treated like second-class citizens. A place for them to sit comfortably and smoke should be provided."

— Theresa Vodika

"I think all American Legion posts should be nonsmoking. We need a healthy environment for families, and nonsmoking only makes sense."

— Sherri Doody McGee

"Post 550 in Pilot Point, Texas, went nonsmoking last year, and it was difficult at first. A few smokers do not come anymore at all, but we did make an outdoor, covered smoking area with a patio heater and ceiling fan. It has benefited our facility more than it has hindered it. People still socialize and just go outside to smoke."

— Mary Pelzel Rawls

"Way overdue."

— Emma Munoz

"I am fine with the main dining room being smoke free. Leave the bar smoking. I stopped going to mine because they went smoke free. Another club allows smoking at the bar only. They now have my regular business."

— Kitty Kovacs

"Sure would be nice if all posts went nonsmoking. As we travel around the country, there still many that still allow smoking inside."

— Evelyn McMahon

CORRECTION

In our May *A Wise Person Said* column, we inadvertently printed Sioux Falls as being in North Dakota. The city is located in South Dakota.

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HEAR FROM *you*

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JUNIOR *members*



STEPPING UP: Junior members Ashley Colegrove (left) and Olivia and Chloe Brozovsky help make cloth masks during the coronavirus pandemic.

SEWN WITH LOVE

Junior members make masks in times of COVID-19

Like their senior member counterparts, ALA Juniors across the country stepped up in a big way to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic through making face masks, serving as a learning lesson for younger members by helping their communities during a crisis.

Auxiliary magazine takes a look at Juniors from different states who have focused their time and efforts on a *Service Not Self* mindset.

Olivia and Chloe Brozovsky, Nebraska

Olivia, 11, said she and her sister have been making masks for family, friends, their church, and other people who needed them.

"We bought yards of different colors of cotton fabric and elastic," she said. "We looked online for a pattern and followed the directions for cutting and sewing."

Chloe, 10, added that their dad, Brent, helped them put the pattern on a large piece of fabric.

"We cut two pieces the same size," she said. "We put the wrong sides together and pinned one end of the elastic to the edge of the fabric to sew over, then pinned the other end of the elastic and sewed. We did this on both sides. Then we turned it right side out. We pinned three pleats and sewed them down. It was finished and ready to wear!"

The girls have made more than 35 masks and counting, getting a thank-

you from each person who receives a mask.

"It made me feel good to be able to help my community without leaving the house," Olivia said.

Chloe agreed.

"It made me happy to help out," she said. "I liked doing it and will sew more if people ask me to."

With some experience under their belts, the girls offer other Juniors advice if they take on a face mask project.

"I truly believe in giving back to our nation's heroes, our veterans...I love being able to volunteer for the local veterans organizations."

Olivia said to be sure to follow the stitch guidelines.

"Have fun doing it, and it doesn't matter if you mess up," Chloe added.

Kali Finch, Minnesota

"In this pandemic, it means a lot to help since most people won't go out in public anymore unless they have a mask on," she said. "This way, they feel more comfortable getting their groceries and other necessities."

Finch has made the masks using a sewing machine and fabric bought from Walmart and old clothes that were washed and then sewn together.

"The fact that all the stores sold out of masks inspired us to make our own since we couldn't buy any,"

she said.

The masks were originally made for the Finch household, and then friends and others asked for one. She has made more than 20.

"We have received quite a few thank-yous from people and even some money as a token," Finch said.

Her brother, Alex, has also helped with the masks.

"The project really brought my brother and me closer together," she said. "We learned that as a team, we are pretty great."

Having some experience with making masks, Finch has her own advice to offer.

"Have patience and have the time," she said. "It is pretty time consuming."

Ashley Colegrove, Florida

"I truly believe in giving back to our nation's heroes, our veterans," she said. "I love being able to volunteer for the local veterans organizations."

Colegrove, 15, has been making face masks for the James A. Haley Veterans' Administration hospital in Tampa, Fisher House, the Baldomero Lopez State of Florida Veterans' Nursing Home, and the All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg.

"All of these wonderful organizations have been very grateful and have sent thank-you notes," Colegrove said. "It was so nice to see that they appreciated the work I put into the masks."

She's made over 200 face masks to help places in need.

Like others, Colegrove has taken up the task of mask-making by hand.

"I had to learn how to sew, which was interesting," she said. "My father taught me after learning from a friend who is sewing masks for local health care providers."

A love for her community and giving back inspired her to make masks.

"When the coronavirus hit, many of the organizations I volunteer for no longer accepted help," she said. "I had to figure out a way to give back by volunteering from home if possible."

In addition to ALA Juniors, other members have also stepped up to help. Read more on page 28.

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS CREATE STRONG BONDS DURING PANDEMIC

Focus stays on mission in online world

With the coronavirus making it impossible to hold meetings in person, ALA Junior members have continued to stay on track with their projects, switching their meetings to the virtual world.

Using a variety of technology such as cell phones, computers, and tablets, Juniors of the 7th District in New York adapted to the times so they could continue helping our veterans, military, and their families. They held their first online meeting in March.

During a regular in-person meeting, members typically conduct the meeting, do a craft, and eat a snack.

“During crafts and snacks, we get to talk to each other and build our friendships,” said Junior member



MacKenzie McDaniels. “Virtual meetings are quicker, but we don’t get to talk causally or do big crafts as a group for our veterans.”

Continuing to meet, even if virtually, is vital for the unit members.

“It is important for the girls to meet to build relationships, knowledge about our great organization, build leadership, and work as a team to complete activities,” said Colleen McDaniels, 7th District Junior chair.

She said the meetings went well,

but as with anything new and several people using technology, there can be difficulties.

“We are spread out over a large area where internet and cell phones don’t always work, and some girls had a hard time trying to connect,” McDaniels said. “It allowed us to meet while social distancing, and it saved some people from traveling over an hour.”

One recommendation to other units with Juniors who are holding virtual meetings is to invest — just a little.

“Free platforms often only allow you to have 30 to 40 minutes,” said Terri Wallace, 7th District president. “Premium accounts allow more time for discussion. Adding slides that are shared also allows for more participation.”

The Juniors appreciated the longer time frame for interaction.

“Our district president hosted our meeting in her premium Zoom account, giving us longer time where we could talk to each other,” said Junior member Cassie Seacat.

Hoping to get back to in-person meetings on a regular basis, the Juniors have enjoyed the opportunity to still meet virtually during the pandemic.

Looking ahead, the district now knows it can use the virtual option in other times as needed.

“Our district covers a large area, and winter weather sometimes causes low attendance because we may have to travel over an hour,” McDaniels said. “We may offer girls who need to travel or don’t have transportation the opportunity to join the meeting portion, and this will allow us the opportunity to visit with our district Juniors more often. Also, if we have a storm, we now have another option instead of canceling.”

JUNIOR ‘ADOPTS’ VETERAN, FORMING FRIENDSHIP

When Pennsylvania Junior member Mazie Shipe met Joy, a World War II U.S. Navy veteran, in her local nursing home, she was simply dropping off a gift bag as part of a unit project.

The two sat and talked, and Joy asked Shipe to come back and visit as she had no living relatives to visit her.

Shipe had no idea what this simple request would turn into — “adopting” this veteran.

“Now I go every couple of months to visit her, and we share stories of her youth and things she experienced during World War II,” she said. “I enjoy our visits as much as she does.”

After attending the Baltimore national Junior meeting last fall, Shipe knew Joy’s birthday was coming up and wanted to visit her for the occasion.

“I gave her the pocket flag and the poppy bag and also made her favorite chocolate biscuits she was wanting,” she said.

Shipe said adopting a veteran is a lot of fun and very educational.

“I am glad I had the opportunity to meet Joy,” Shipe said. “She has many stories to tell, and since she was born so long ago, it lets me know how different we have things today. Makes me appreciate all of the freedoms our veterans have fought for.”

She still regularly visits Joy.

For other Juniors who may want to adopt a veteran, Shipe highly recommends it.

“They have a lot of things you can learn if you take the time,” she said.



GOOD DEED, YOUTH HERO AWARD WINNERS SHARE THEIR STORIES

Created in 2002 by the ALA national Children & Youth Committee, the Youth Hero and Good Deed awards are presented annually throughout the year to recognize the heroism and helpfulness of youths under age 18. Junior members Kyra Webb and Tamika Lode, both 13 of Montana Unit 70, are two of those Good Deed Award winners. Learn more about these winners and the awards on the ALA blog at www.ALAforVeterans.wordpress.com.

I AM THE ALA

“Part of my motivation is knowing I am part of one of the greatest volunteer organizations in the country”

CAROLE BALDWIN



As a young girl, American Legion Auxiliary member Carole Baldwin didn't quite understand why her father, World War II U.S. Army veteran William R. Vernotico,

sometimes went into rages. Baldwin didn't understand the fury that would occasionally erupt in her father, at times resulting in him tearing up the house and doing "other things," she explained.

She remembers her dad talking about being shell-shocked, but she thought that meant an artillery shell exploded near him.

"It wasn't until my father passed away at 62 years old — and I joined the American Legion Auxiliary — that I realized he suffered from PTSD that was never diagnosed or treated. This realization broke my heart," said Baldwin, of ALA Unit 28 in Millsboro, Del.

"As an ALA member, I learned about veterans' issues and rehabilitation. And, I met other veterans who may have gone through similar things that my father did after he returned home from war. All of this became my reason and my passion for recognizing, honoring, and helping veterans, military, and their families," she added.

What does your ALA membership mean to you?

My membership honors the military service of my father and his fellow veterans.

Why is it important to support and honor America's veterans, military, and their families?

Our veterans and military have protected the citizens of the United States and our way of life. That takes enormous courage, deep commitment, and a bravery that most of us will never comprehend. Gaining perspective and understanding of what our veterans experienced helps us appreciate more fully the sacrifices they made for all of us. Relatives of servicemembers and veterans need to be recognized and supported, too. They serve along with the military personnel or veteran in their families because they also sacrifice a lot.

As an ALA member, what keeps you motivated?

Part of my motivation is knowing I am part of one of the greatest volunteer organizations in the country, and that I give back to veterans, military, and their families in some small way. Also, I get to meet ALA members from all over the world. I witness greatness, commitment, and dedication that I am so very honored and proud to be a part of!

What is one of your favorite ALA mission-oriented activities or outreach programs?

I love our VA&R (Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation) program and related activities and outreach. One of my favorite events is the annual National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, which is co-presented by the ALA in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. NVCAF features creative works — such as paintings, leatherwork, writing, dance, music, and theatrical performance arts

pieces — done by veterans who are being treated at VA facilities. They create their art as forms of expression, rehabilitation, and treatment to help them recover and cope with physical and emotional challenges. The national festival lasts a week and includes exhibits and a live stage show for these talented artists and performers. I attended NVCAF when it was held in Buffalo, New York. The live stage show moved me to tears; it was an experience that will forever stay in my heart and soul!

Do you have advice for new ALA members who might feel a bit overwhelmed by the different things the ALA does for veterans, military, and their families?

Take it slow. Get to know your fellow unit members and officers. Volunteer when you can. Educate yourself on the programs, one at a time.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT:
Unit 28, Millsboro, Del.

ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:
World War II veteran
William R. Vernotico, father
(U.S. Army)

YEARS IN THE ALA: 16

ALA ACTIVITIES:
Unit 28 President (Millsboro, Del.):
2008-2011
Department Historian (Delaware):
2010-2011
Eastern Division Poppy Chairman:
2014-2015
Eastern Division Community
Service Chairman: 2016-2017
Eastern Division VA&R Chairman:
2017-2018
Eastern Division Leadership
Chairman: 2018-2019
Eastern Division Children
& Youth Chairman: 2019-Present



SHARE YOUR MEMBERSHIP STORY!

Tell us about yourself and how you support the American Legion Auxiliary as a unit member who also loves the ALA's mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families. Contact us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org or (317) 569-4500.

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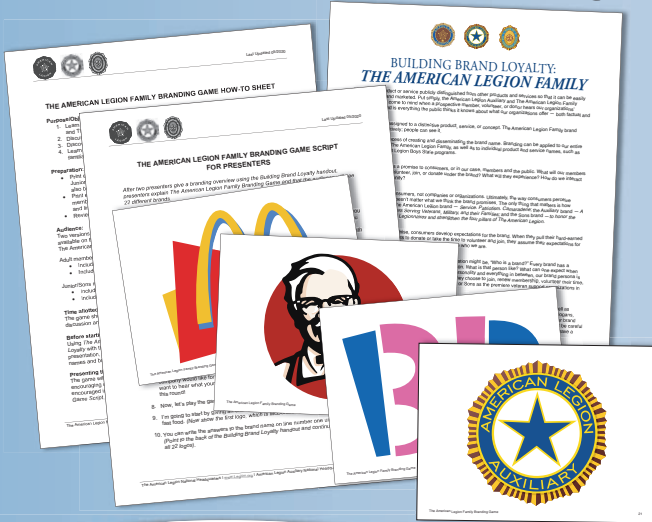


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The American Legion Family Branding Game objectives:

- ★ Learn more about branding and how it applies to The American Legion Family.
- ★ Discuss the importance of branding through review of company brands.
- ★ Discover the potential positive and negative consequences of branding.
- ★ Learn about and discuss public perception for both members and those who aren't familiar with our organizations.

Log in to the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org to download the free game

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Help provide scholarships to members, veterans, and military children

Recent events took a toll on students. As they return to the classroom, it is vital that we continue to support them through the ALA's national scholarship programs.

These scholarships provide much needed support for deserving members, veterans, and military children.

"My lifelong dream of attending an engineering school is moving forward thanks to the scholarship. Thank you for your generosity."

– Rachel Partington, ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship recipient

Students like Rachel need your help. Make a gift today at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Donate or mail a check to ALA National Headquarters, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268. Be sure to write "scholarships" in the memo line.



www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate

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**“You don’t need many words if you already know
what you’re talking about.”**

— William Stafford, poet

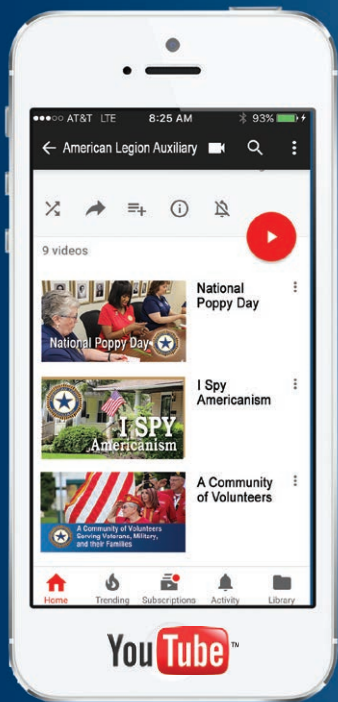


The American Legion Auxiliary, at more than a hundred years old, has faced its fair share of rough patches that could have thwarted members’ work in our longstanding mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families. From worldwide wars to major events in U.S. history to a global pandemic — our members always forge ahead with their mission outreach.

Above: Somerset, Wis., ALA Unit 111 members Brenda Guse (left) and Mary Shimon distribute poppies outside of a local grocery store to veterans and customers for donations in May.



Check out the
National Veterans
Creative Arts
Festival
ALA playlist at
[www.YouTube.com/
AmericanLegionAux](http://www.YouTube.com/AmericanLegionAux)



You'll see how veterans
throughout the country
showcase their talent
through the healing power
of the creative arts.



IT'S ALL *good*

GOOD IDEAS FROM ALA MEMBERS

While maintaining social distancing, how did your unit help veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic?



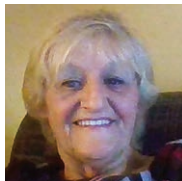
“Unit 30 in Pomona assisted with Buddy Checks, sent out a monthly newsletter, conducted food drives and delivery, and assisted the Legion with a blood drive.”

— Stephanie Huff, California



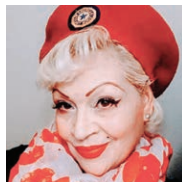
“Unit 280 in Benton donated gifts to the Marion VA for “in hall bingo,” donated face masks to the local hospital and nursing homes, and helped pay a veteran’s electric bill.”

— Freda Crider Broadway, Illinois



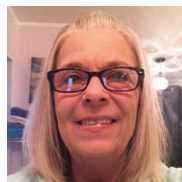
“ALA Unit 118 of Mars Hill put together boxes of essentials for a Navy ship’s crew.”

— Linda Ciarleglio Gaudino, Maine



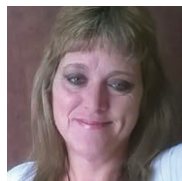
“Unit 13 in Albuquerque donated boxes of food and delivered them. We made masks and delivered them to veterans and military families.”

— Lydia Zazueta, New Mexico



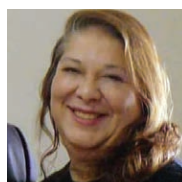
“Unit 17 in Talladega made face masks for several veterans homes, medical facilities, and more. Donated all perishable food the unit/post had stocked to our local Red Door Kitchen that delivers hot meals twice a day.”

— Teresa Cooper, Alabama



“Unit 87 in Hodgenville gave out food boxes, made masks for anyone in need, helped people file for unemployment, ran errands for the elderly and veterans, and more.”

— Maria Matthews, Kentucky



“Unit and Post 397 in Monterey Park had an ongoing food bank and put care packages together for veterans in need. We also collected donations for a virtual rummage sale to raise funds to help our Legion post stay open.”

— Karen Suarez, California

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NEW WAY TO DISTRIBUTE POPPIES: Barbara Wilson, a member of Unit 45 in Greenbrier, Tenn., proudly stands next to the unit's new and timeless National Poppy Day® banner.

CONTACTLESS DRIVE-THRU HELPS DISTRIBUTE POPPIES AND HONOR VETERANS DURING NATIONAL POPPY DAY®

American Legion Auxiliary members have planned special events throughout the year to highlight the ALA's 100th anniversary of serving veterans, the military, and their families. Members postponed all in-person celebrations and conventions, along with most mission-related projects, as a way to help ensure the safety of our Legion Family during COVID-19. With Memorial Day celebrations on pause, ALA members cultivated creative, no-contact ways to still honor National Poppy Day.

Three days before National Poppy Day, Kathi Carney, president of Unit 45 in Greenbrier, Tenn., decided to host a contactless drive-thru poppy distribution at the Greenbrier American Legion post. Carney and Unit 45 had always said their post home was a perfect place to host drive-thru events, which led to the National Poppy Day project.

"A 10-minute conversation on the phone with my treasurer turned into one of the best events we have had as a unit," said Carney. "Everyone participated in the last-minute planning, and as a team, we succeeded in creating something quite wonderful."

The whole unit dropped what they were doing and dedicated their next few days to help decorate and set up their unit's first poppy distribution drive-thru. After careful, yet quick discussion, Unit 45 decided the safest and most efficient way to distribute poppies was to create a no-contact clothesline system. They used target stands from their annual turkey shoot event to keep the clothesline secure,

"You have to learn how to market these events. Get it on social media; contact local media outlets..."

and the unit saved money by utilizing signs and props used in past events to decorate the drive-thru and post home.

Providing leftover poppies from last year, Unit 45 members took necessary precautions and wore gloves and masks to place each poppy in individual sealed bags, then they dangled them on the "Poppy Fence" with clothespins. Drivers followed an easy path to the fence and were able to pull the poppy bag off the clothespin without touching anything else. Several buckets were hung along

the clothesline, creating a contactless and safe way to drop in donations. They also lined the drive-thru exit with Legion Family signs and a "Thank you for your support" sign.

"In times of uncertainty, people always feel connected to our military and veterans," said Carney. "We were astonished at the donations we received even at a time when people's finances may not be the best."

With only a few days until National Poppy Day, Unit 45 Junior members had quickly started promoting the event on Facebook and other social media platforms. Carney sent information to local media to help market the event. One of Greenbrier's local newspapers attended the drive-thru and wrote a story about the safe poppy distribution project that Unit 45 had accomplished.

"You have to learn how to market these events. Get it on social media; contact local media outlets," added Carney. "You need to think outside the box. You can't keep doing things the same old way."

Unit 45 may have inspired and led this creative project, but it was a Legion Family effort to complete it. Everyone pitched in to help by setting up signs, maneuvering a clear path for cars, decorating handmade posters, posting on social media, and not to mention the time spent setting everything up and taking it down within a few short days.

Carney and Unit 45 members decided to host the National Poppy Day drive-thru as an annual event. They bounced around ideas that will improve next year's event and welcome a larger crowd. The unit may have only had a few days to organize their poppy distribution project, but they already have a great start for next year.

"We learned that we just need to find a way to do something to remember our veterans," added Carney. "We cannot let them be forgotten, even if that means coming up with a unique way of honoring Memorial Day."

Good works to share? Visit www.ALForVeterans.org for details.

VIRGINIA JUNIOR PROVIDES HANDWRITTEN THANK-YOU CARDS FOR SERVICEMEMBERS

Everyone is facing obstacles in their life, especially right now, but the American Legion Auxiliary's focus is still committed to helping veterans, the military, and their families. Many Auxiliary members have had to change and adapt to different ways of serving current and past servicemembers, including Taylor Curro, Junior member of Virginia Unit 49.

Her plan was to gather 2,020 handwritten thank-you cards for servicemembers overseas. Those plans changed due to COVID-19, but Curro managed to overcome the obstacle by creating an innovative way to continue making a difference and fulfilling the Auxiliary's mission.

Although Curro has a retired mother, and an active-duty father in the U.S. Air Force, her membership eligibility is through her grandmother, Terri Onushco U.S. Air Force. Growing up in a military family, she experienced the struggles military families face and wanted to

spread awareness.

Curro's 2020 New Year's resolution was to gather 2,020 thank-you cards for active-duty military. She planned to go to local schools and have students write personal notes on the decorated

cards she made, but because of the pandemic, Virginia schools were cancelled, forcing Curro to alter her original plan.

"I was determined and didn't want to wait until the pandemic was over to start the creation of these cards," said Curro. "So, I set up an online survey where people in the community could fill out a digital thank-you message."

Virtual cards were not part of her plan, but she managed to make each one personal and heartwarming. Curro handcrafted her own budget-friendly postcards made on index cards decorated with American



NOTES OF THANKS: Taylor Curro, Virginia Unit 49 Junior member, decorates postcards for veterans and servicemembers.



Legion Family stickers and "Thank You" stamps.

Curro set up an online survey through Survey Monkey where her goal is explained. The user is able to fill out a personalized thank-you card for military at home and abroad. Curro then takes the messages and handwrites them on the decorated index cards.

"I feel like instead of printing out the typed words, it's so much more personal if it's handwritten. So, I took it upon myself to handwrite each and every one," Curro said. "I've received 128 so far. Not ideally where I want to be, but it is still a lot and I'm really proud of that."



CREATIVITY FOR A CAUSE: Evan (left), Ryan, and Jamie McGuire make hundreds of ear guards with their 3D printer to relieve discomfort for healthcare and essential workers wearing masks.

MEMBERS HELP TWO GROUPS OF HEROES: VETERANS AND HEALTH CARE WORKERS

American Legion Auxiliary members are broadening their service to veterans by helping essential workers and our health care heroes

stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Service Not Self* is exhibited now, more than ever, with members doubling their volunteer service by making masks, donating blood, and so much more while also serving veterans. Jamie McGuire, president of Sackets Harbor Unit 583 in New York, and her two teenage boys, are distributing ear guards to healthcare workers and other essential personnel who may need extra comfort.

McGuire bought her two sons, Evan and Ryan, both Sons of The American Legion Squadron 583 members, a 3D printer as their big Christmas and Hanukkah present, hoping it would spark creativity.

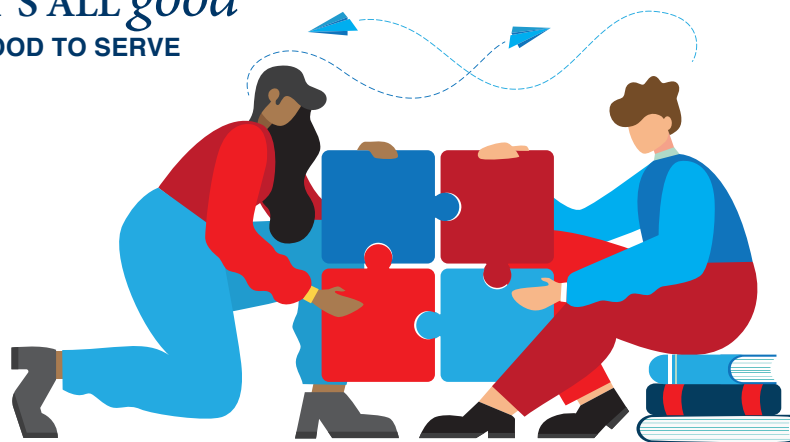
At first, the boys were unsure of what to do with the 3D printer, until McGuire saw a Facebook article about a child who used his 3D printer to make ear guards for essential workers' masks during

COVID-19. She told her boys the story immediately, and was extremely proud of their response.

This American Legion Family developed a continuous process to create and distribute hundreds of ear guards. Evan and Ryan worked out a system of printing nearly 24/7. They took 12-hour shifts with Ryan working during the day, and Evan taking the night shift. The 3D printer makes the ear guards in 34 minutes, so every 34 minutes, the boys push a button to start the process again.

While the boys are running the machine and producing the product, McGuire distributes them throughout the community, and mails ear guards across the country, to anyone who may want the extra comfort while wearing a mask.

"I'm trying to fulfill the need of the community. We have done hundreds of them!" said McGuire. "We get them out there to whomever needs them."



ALA AND VETERAN AFFAIRS WORK TOGETHER THROUGH VA'S RED COAT AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

While visiting a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, were you welcomed with a friendly smile and a helpful hand from someone wearing a distinctive red coat? Well, if you didn't know, those caring men and women are Red Coat Ambassadors and possibly fellow American Legion Auxiliary members.



Irma Wehrli

Irma Wehrli has been a member of Unit 57 in Lake City, Fla., since she was born. Continuing a 63-year ALA membership, she extended her passion and support for veterans by volunteering to be a Red Coat Ambassador at the Lake City VA.

"I was taught that you volunteer at the VA hospital," said Wehrli. "So ever since I was old enough to go there, I was there."

Growing up volunteering and visiting VA medical centers, Wehrli witnessed the obstacles veterans face just to be seen by a doctor. Her passion for supporting veterans, combined with her knowledge of VA facilities, persuaded Wehrli to join the Red Coat Ambassadors Program as a way to continue making change

and improving veterans' lives.

"The VA has changed the way they do things, and I can see a more positive transformation," added Wehrli.

The Red Coat Ambassadors Program was created by the Veteran Affairs' Veteran Experience Office to help improve the experience of health care for veterans, their families, and their caregivers who choose to receive care at the VA. The program is the new culture of customer service at VA medical centers throughout the nation.

Red Coat Ambassadors are dedicated to improving the lives of patients and visitors by helping with navigation assistance, providing information, and being there when they are needed most. These Ambassadors offer a listening ear, along with compassion and respect, to help veterans become more comfortable visiting VA medical hospitals. They undertake numerous responsibilities to improve their visitor's overall experience.

Wearing their distinctive signature uniform — a red coat or vest — Ambassadors are stationed at the main entrance of VA hospitals to greet visitors with smiling faces. They make a positive and impactful first impression by

providing assistance and access to information. Red Coat Ambassadors continue to help enhance the lives of veterans. Sound familiar?

"All I want to do is make their life easier, and I think we have," said Wehrli about her five-year dedication as a Red Coat Ambassador. "I see we are going in the right direction."

The VA asked the American Legion Auxiliary to be lead volunteer ambassadors and serve as a warm welcome, kind face, and guide for visitors at VA health care facilities. In December 2017, a memorandum of agreement was signed by the American Legion Auxiliary and VA's Veteran Experience Office. The purpose of the agreement was to combine the resources of both Veteran Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary to recruit and engage volunteers into serving as Red Coat Ambassadors at VA healthcare facilities.

During the annual DC Briefings in March 2020, the ALA signed a subsequent memorandum of agreement that included updated responsibilities for both partners to address, and it requires participation in joint roundtable discussions. The Auxiliary provides information about the program to ALA members through announcements at meetings and in email, and promotes the partnership through public outreach, on the ALA website, and at necessary public events.

"Things are so much better for these veterans today," Wehrli said. "They are really getting the treatment they are supposed to be getting. It may not have happened before, but it is happening now. "If people can volunteer, they need to," Wehrli continued. "I know it's not something for everybody, but if you can do it, please do because these veterans need it!"



Both the American Legion Auxiliary and VA's Red Coat Ambassadors Program built their foundation on improving the lives of veterans and their families. If you are interested in expanding your volunteer opportunities, contact the national ALA Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program at VA&R@ALAforVeterans.org.

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“Messenger from Heaven”

Illuminating Heirloom Glass Ornament




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- Individually hand-blown Heirloom Glass with glittering, raised filigree swirls and leaves

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Cardinals are among the most treasured gifts that nature shares with us during our time on earth. But this beautiful songbird's reach goes far beyond our physical world. Long associated with Heaven and the promise of the spiritual realm, cardinals are widely believed to be messengers from above, the embodiment of loved ones who have gone before us. Now, the symbolism of the cardinal and the comfort it brings in times of loss are celebrated in a hand-crafted limited edition. Presenting the “Messenger from Heaven” Illuminating Heirloom Glass Ornament, featuring the artwork of James Hautman. With one look at this precious ornament, you'll be captivated by the elegance of its design. In the center is a comforting sentiment in golden calligraphy. LED lighting inside the glass illuminates with a celestial glow.

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Exceptional demand is expected for this ornament, so reserve yours without delay. It's available now at the issue price of \$39.99*, payable in two installments of \$19.99, the first due before shipment. Your satisfaction is guaranteed or your money back. To reserve yours, send no money now; just sign and return the Reservation Application today.

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HEALTHY MEMBERS AND A VIBRANT ATMOSPHERE: Owner of Three 60 Fit and post commander Christian Koshaba (left) admires a plaque in honor of the newly established American Legion Post 2020 in Arlington Heights, Ill., with Franklin Park American Legion 9th District Commander Don Horn (center) and vice commander Matthew Monson (photo: Camille Fine).

LEGION POSTS THINKING OUTSIDE TRADITIONAL ROLES, ACTIVITIES

As we enter the next century of service, many American Legion posts are rethinking how their facilities are used or where the post is located. They are looking for ways to serve more veterans and their communities.

In Hoboken, N.J., Post 107 is helping homeless veterans by providing housing. Following damage from Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the post was rebuilt to include six apartment units for homeless veterans and a community center.

The Hollywood American Legion Post 43 in Los Angeles includes a movie theater. The facility was renovated and reopened in 2019. It hosts film festivals and movie screenings.

In Illinois, American Legion Post 2020 is taking a whole new approach, chartering a unique post inside a gym. Post 2020 Commander Christian Koshaba and Vice Commander Matthew Monson were looking for a way to serve fellow veterans. They developed the idea to house an American Legion post inside Koshaba's gym. Three 60 Fit

in Arlington Heights is designed to incorporate faith, family, and fitness. The goal is to give members the tools to succeed inside and outside the gym.

"What Post 2020 offers is a holistic route back to wellness, incorporating mind, body, and spirit," Koshaba said. "We seem to cater to the younger vets, though we don't turn away anyone, those who don't really have a landing pad when they return from service."

Koshaba said there are a multitude of benefits in having veterans work out together. "It brings back the sense of camaraderie and a 'one team, one fight' mindset, achieving a specific group-oriented goal. We have poured blood, sweat, and tears together, now in just a different environment. We're essentially able to do the same thing, but safely and holistically."

Many of the Post 2020 Legionnaires also worship together. Three 60 Fit hosts a fitness ministry that meets twice weekly for a 45-minute structured workout followed by a 45-minute Bible study. "When the physical stress relief is

completed, you are that much more able to comprehend and absorb God's word," said Koshaba. "I see many lives being changed already in front of my eyes. These men and women are healing from the damage life has done to them. They are far better equipped to handle day-to-day activities, but more importantly, more properly equipped to help and serve others in the same capacity."

Post 2020 hopes to expand, hosting more events in the future to promote health and wellness amongst the veteran community and their loved ones.

KEEP IT CLEAN: AVOID POOR KITCHEN CONDITIONS

Many American Legion posts are known for their restaurants and bars. These facilities can influence opinions of the post home and The American Legion Family.

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion often assist with their post home's food operations. It's important to keep facilities clean. No one wants to receive a citation from their local Board of Health because of poor kitchen conditions. This is important not only for restaurant operations, but any food service that occurs at the post during an event.

Too many citations can cause a post to cease food-related activities. It can give the post a bad reputation, leading to a loss in revenue and membership.

Regulations vary by state, so check with your local Board of Health to make sure your post home is following requirements.

It's a good idea to set up a checklist of rules to follow when using the kitchen. Things to consider include personal hygiene (handwashing, gloves, hair nets), food preparation (cooking temperatures, cross contamination, allergens), and proper food storage.

Think of your post home in the same way you would a restaurant. Would you eat at a restaurant that looked like your post home? If the answer is no, it's time to rethink your food service.



Does your American Legion Family conduct mission-related activities or host events that fall outside of routine roles? Tell us about it! Contact ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org.

WE'RE MARKETING THE ALA IN VA MEDICAL CENTERS ACROSS THE NATION

A lot of people don't know what the American Legion Auxiliary does or how we support veterans, the military, and their families. Because of this, marketing the ALA is very important. A popular form of marketing is through television advertisements; unfortunately, though, these can be an expensive budget item. Luckily for the ALA, a news network shown in waiting areas and lobbies at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers throughout the country will share the ALA's story for free.

As an Auxiliary member or caregiver, you may have spent time watching whatever program was on the TV while waiting for loved ones in VA hospital lobbies. VA medical centers across the country are starting to air Veteran News Network (VNN), a television station established for veterans, largely by veterans, as a way to improve your wait, build trust, and improve the veteran's experience.

You might dislike whatever is on TV while you are in a VA facility, and that can lead to a poor overall experience — the VA wants to change that. Veteran News Network was created in response to customer feedback from Veteran Signals surveys. VNN entertainment is specifically created to meet the interests and needs of veterans, and military family, and friends. It is an alternative to cable news and the usual daytime television channels. The VNN offers specialized programming that is fun and informative while still honoring, entertaining, and educating their viewers.

Located in 50 VA medical centers nationwide, Veteran News Network has a monthly outpatient viewer reach over 1.7 million, resulting in around 57,600 daily views. The ALA will get to share our mission with all of those people. Maybe some viewers will be inspired and join, maybe some will decide to volunteer or donate, maybe it will educate the unknown — no matter how it

affects the organization, it is a great opportunity to spread the incredible mission and legacy of the American Legion Auxiliary and its members' commitment to Service Not Self.

The VNN features broad categories of veteran-inspired news, offering veterans and their visitors a positive and informative program. They feature veteran-focused entertainment, education, stories, and news.

Entertainment: The VNN provides viewers with the resources and services they may need. They entertain with music from military bands, active-duty military stories, shows based on shared military experiences, and inspiring veteran

on important stories related to Veteran Affairs. The series teaches you about the latest innovations and treatment options. It also features senior leader messaging, volunteer and employment opportunities, cybersecurity information, emergency preparedness material, and VA event announcements you won't want to miss.

The VA's Veteran Experience Office and the American Legion Auxiliary signed a memorandum of understanding earlier this year, giving the Auxiliary an opportunity to air ALA-generated content on the Veteran News Network — a benefit of the collaboration between our two organizations.



MARKETING THE ALA IN VA FACILITIES: American Legion Family members and ALA National Headquarters staff make poppies during filming of a National Poppy Day® video.

stories that motivate other veterans to fulfill their lives.

Education: VNN programming offers their audience tools to live happier and healthier lives. Veteran-focused health education is an essential portion of VNN programs. Showing military and veteran health education encourages veterans to use more of the services and benefits they have earned. They teach their viewers about mental, physical, and emotional health.

News and Information: The VNN has its own news programming series, VA News. Instead of watching your typical daily news, VA News keeps you interested and updated

The Auxiliary began work on this project last fall with the search for appropriate content to air on VNN programs. National Headquarters sent the VA three videos allowing veteran patients and their caregivers to see who we are, what we do, and why our mission matters. Videos include a National Poppy Day® PSA, ALA Welcomes Spouses, and the American Legion Auxiliary Declaration. The Auxiliary and VNN will continue their collaboration to better enhance veterans' lives. To see the ALA's current videos for VNN, check out the American Legion Auxiliary national YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/AmericanLegionAux.



IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSTANTLY REVIEW YOUR C&B

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters receives many questions from departments and units in regard to constitution and bylaws. These questions are not always easy, as there is usually not a one-size-fits-all answer. This page will help give members guidance and updates on anything related to constitution and bylaws.

Given the opportunity, parents pass on wisdom handed to them by their parents. Two expressions that come to mind are “learn something new every day” and “something good comes out of everything.” When a disaster hits, we don’t always see the good, nor do we immediately learn the valued lesson, but they are there just waiting for us to recognize them.

COVID-19 forced us to re-examine the way we work, the way we go to the store, the way we greet people, and even the way we wash our hands. But at ALA National Headquarters, we learned something else. We learned that in a time of crisis, the governing document needs to hold the answers to that age-old question: “What do we do now?” So, we borrowed a page from the military playbook and did an operations review. This is what we learned:

Convention cancellation

The ALA’s National C&B clearly states that our National Convention occurs at the same time and place as The American Legion’s. This means that when the Legion voted to cancel its 2020 convention, ours was cancelled too. Some might question whether it should be that way, but tying our convention to the Legion’s makes good financial sense. We get more bargaining power for the best rates, and families can go together, saving room costs. The decision to cancel was not taken lightly. In the end, it was the health and safety of Legion Family members that guided the decision.

Election of officers

Because of the National Convention cancellation, we next looked at what our C&B said about national officer elections. For many years, the Constitution stated, “The National Convention shall elect annually...”, but in the 2013 revision, it was changed to “The National Convention shall elect the following term-limited national officers...” (Article IV, Section 2). But how long is that, you ask? The officers serve one term or until their successors are elected, and a term starts upon “... the adjournment of the convention

at which they are elected and end at the adjournment of the following convention.” So, because of this wording, our administrative year was able to be extended and our national officers continue in office.

Electronic meetings

Our standing rules state that the National Executive Committee (NEC) shall meet three times a year. Because our current administrative year was extended through 2021, it may not have been necessary for the NEC to meet until later; however, there was pressing business that needed attention, such as national appointments and charter cancellations, and eventually budget approval. But with National Convention cancelled and health concerns, how would they meet?

Indiana State Law (the state in which the ALA is incorporated) allows for electronic meetings, unless they are prohibited in the organization’s bylaws. A review of the national C&B revealed there was nothing in it prohibiting electronic meetings; therefore, the NEC could meet this way. There are other state requirements, such as everyone must be able to hear everyone else. The NEC did meet virtually and will continue to meet this way until things open back up.

So, what have we learned?

- That an organization’s C&B is never a one-and-done document. It constantly must be reviewed and updated.
- It’s important to know state laws and be aware of any changes that could affect the ALA.
- We might want to consider more explicit provisions for emergency governance operations in the C&B as they might alleviate any angst a disaster can cause.
- Most of all, be prepared! Just when you don’t think it will happen to you, it does.



Missing Goodwill Gail?

This advice column has moved to the ALA blog at [ALAforVeterans.wordpress.com](https://www.ALAforVeterans.wordpress.com)! You can still send your questions for Goodwill Gail to pr@ALAforVeterans.org.

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THE LEGION ACT PROVIDES A NEW MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT TOOL

It's been one year since the LEGION Act (Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service) was signed into law. The legislation declares that the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941, and has opened up membership in The American Legion Family to those who served during the Cold War and other conflicts, and their eligible family members. More than 4 million veterans — who previously weren't eligible for membership in The American Legion — can now join. Think of the large number of family members of those veterans who are eligible for American Legion Auxiliary membership.

What does this mean for your ALA unit's recruiting efforts? It opens up membership opportunities to a whole new group of veterans and their families in your community. Now is a good time to check back with those who may have been interested in joining in the past but couldn't. It's important to let all veterans and their families in your community know they are

now eligible.

Your unit should consider incorporating this change into its recruiting efforts. It may take a while for all members to get used to the eligibility change. Consider posting reminders in newsletters and discuss during unit meetings. Current members need to be prepared to explain the LEGION Act when recruiting because it can be confusing to veterans who were not eligible before, but are now.

“...our members have embraced this opportunity...”

“We need to become visible in our communities with membership drives providing information about the updated eligibility requirements,” said Pam Ray, ALA national Membership Committee chairman. “I truly believe that person-to-person connection is so effective. It gives you the opportunity to speak with someone and read their excitement or concerns.” Ray also advises being comfortable inviting a veteran to

join The American Legion Family. “It is time to stop saying, ‘No one wants to hear about us or do anything more than they are already doing.’”

Gone are the concerns that a potential member may not be eligible because of when they or their family member served. You no longer have to explain the confusing eligibility periods.

“I do believe some of our members have embraced this opportunity more than others. They are excited about the new eligibility requirements provided not only by the LEGION Act, but also the ability to recruit male spouses of veterans and active military who are Legion members,” said Ray. Many veterans are proud of their service and would love the opportunity to give back. Ray encourages members to ask anyone who is a veteran to join.

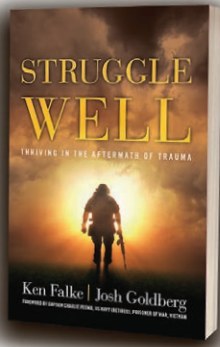
Units should also recruit for the entire American Legion Family, not just the Auxiliary, to grow as a group. Let potential members know about each organization in the Family. The LEGION Act is one of the easiest recruitment tools American Legion Auxiliary members have, Ray said. Current members should make every effort to ask anyone they come in contact with if they are a veteran and let them know the benefits of being part of The American Legion Family.

So, how do you spread the word about the LEGION Act?

- Word of mouth — As you talk to potential members, let them know about this change.
- Contact your local media — Make sure they know about the LEGION Act, as well as the change in eligibility for male spouses. These topics tie in well with the ALA's centennial.
- Buy advertising space in local publications.
- Post on your unit's social media pages and ask members to share.
- Ask to speak at a Chamber of Commerce meeting.



Now is a good time to check eligibility requirements listed on your post home's printed and online materials. Make sure you have the new dates. There are now just two periods of membership eligibility: April 6, 1917 to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941, until a time when the U.S. is no longer at war.



TURNING STRUGGLE INTO SUCCESS AFTER TRAUMA

Everyone experiences some form of struggle during their lifetime, but can you change that struggle into strength? Ken Falke and Josh Goldberg have dedicated their lives to helping veterans, the military, and military families overcome depression, anxiety, and more specifically, PTSD. Falke and Goldberg wrote *Struggle Well: Thriving in the Aftermath of Trauma*, focusing on those who have been deeply impacted by war or other traumatic events and helping them conquer posttraumatic growth. This book provides different approaches for making peace with your past, embracing the present, and planning for a positive future.

Coming together for a cause

Falke and Goldberg teamed up to speak honestly about the struggles and needs of men and women who have faced combat, war, or other traumatic experiences. Falke is the founder of Boulder Crest, an organization focused on the teachings of posttraumatic growth and improving the lives of our nation's military, veterans, first responders, and their families. Goldberg is executive director of the Boulder Crest Institute for Posttraumatic Growth. The two have spent years working with veterans and medical experts to find productive ways for veterans, or anyone to move past their struggles and onto the healing process and posttraumatic growth.

Falke, a 21-year combat veteran of the U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) community and

retired master chief petty officer, uses his knowledge and experience of turning struggle into success as a way to relate to *Struggle Well* readers. After devoting his life to veterans and the military, Goldberg joined the Boulder Crest team and led the organization to develop the nation's first comprehensive, non-clinical curriculum for posttraumatic growth.

Live the book through resources mentioned in *Struggle Well*

Struggle Well: Thriving in the Aftermath of Trauma has a website with more information about the authors, along with highly positive reviews from top military leaders and world-class psychologists. As a way to help their readers interact and experience the book, Falke and Goldberg share two downloadable documents on their website, www.strugglewell.com.

One fillable document is mentioned in chapter three: *Look Back to Move Forward*, and it concentrates on childhood training and experiences. It begins with *Where It Began*, focusing on your grandparents and your parents, and their "traumas" and/or "gifts." Then it breaks down you and your trauma and gifts. There are many different forms of trauma listed: physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect, depression, poverty, racism, and divorce, etc. The gifts mentioned were humor, compassion, fighter, and brave, etc. Download the document while you're reading chapter three to help understand the book even more.

The second interactive document is from chapter five: *Creating and Living Your New Story*, and it focuses on the importance of building and living a new, positive future. It begins with formatting The Goal by considering the SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-Dated, goal setting criteria. It has you fill out the date you start your goal and the deadline to achieve it. The document then has you break down the foundational principles to support

the goal, benefits from achieving it, resources needed to accomplish, possible obstacles, and possible solutions. Try filling this document out while you are comprehending chapter five in *Struggle Well*.

After reading *Struggle Well*, listen to the podcast

If you finish the book and you are still hooked, you're in luck because there's an ongoing podcast from the authors, focusing on the same topics from the book. The podcast features many veterans' stories about channeling their struggles into strength. Falke and Goldberg also discuss posttraumatic growth with medical professionals and how combat veterans and anyone can learn to succeed after their traumatic experience. A podcast from October 2019 highlights a Navy EOD wife, Lindsey Stacy, and her life as a caregiver and military wife. If you or someone you love needs a little extra help, the *Struggle Well* podcast is on Apple Podcasts.

You can purchase *Struggle Well: Thriving in the Aftermath of Trauma* on Amazon.com in paperback, Kindle, and Audiobook form.

AUXILIARY WORD SCRAMBLE

Terms associated with positivity:

1. IATNECR _____
2. CERUEHFL _____
3. IOEDFCNNEC _____
4. SGNTOR _____
5. UENGENI _____
6. ENHADNCE _____
7. TUER _____
8. OLOC _____
9. IENERCTEG _____
10. ROWFARD _____
11. CMASLSEN _____
12. SIMTIPMO _____
13. EPABTU _____
14. HGIRBT _____
15. CIVAUSIOV _____

Answers on page 57.



LEGACY SOCIETY WALL AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS HONORS DONORS

For 100 years, the American Legion Auxiliary has relied on generous donations to continue the support of veterans, military, and their families. These gifts have allowed the Auxiliary to provide hope in times of need, support for education and youth leadership programs, grants for veterans' art therapy, and much more.

In February 2020, a commemorative donor wall was installed on the first floor of ALA National Headquarters, displaying the 25 initial Legacy Society members. This group of dedicated individuals have chosen to include a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation in their estate plans. Since the unveiling, an

additional three donors have joined the Legacy Society and will have their names displayed on the wall later this year.

"This was decades in the making," said Madison Maves, Development Division director. "I'm so excited we have a place to honor such an amazing group of people who are passionate about the mission."

MEET TWO OF THE NAMES ON THE WALL

Ann Crawford was signed up for the American Legion Auxiliary the day she was born. Both of her grandfathers served in World War I, while her mother and father served in WWII, and her father was recalled for Korea.

It is no surprise that Crawford's

entire life has been dedicated to honoring their legacy through her service in the American Legion Auxiliary.

"My father told me I couldn't join the military, so this is the way I serve," Crawford said. "It's built into me."

To extend that service even further, she made the decision to leave a planned gift by simply making the ALA a beneficiary of her IRA.

"There are so many good programs in the ALA that need to be supported, and if we don't support them financially, they won't exist and we won't be able to support them with our time," Crawford said.

Jeri Greenwell says the American Legion Auxiliary has given her so much over her nearly 53 years as a member. That's why she makes it a priority to give back.

"I really feel that you should devote all of your passion and support to the program that best reflects your values; the ALA certainly does that," Greenwell said.

For Greenwell, the daughter of two U.S. Marines, leaving a planned gift to the Auxiliary in her will was an easy choice. So when she went to rewrite her will, she simply stated her wishes. Then she notified the ALA of her intent.

"I would encourage others to do the same," Greenwell said.

"By doing so, they will help our organization honor those who fought, those who gave their life, and those who willingly stand ready today to do the same, without question, when the defense of freedom calls on them."

JOIN THE LEGACY SOCIETY

As the American Legion Auxiliary moves into our second century of service, we are looking to build an even stronger future.

We ask that you join us in this mission by becoming a part of the Legacy Society. Each gift — no matter the size — will provide future financial support to the Auxiliary.

You can contribute to the future of the Auxiliary by including a legacy gift in your estate plans. If you have already done this and would like to join the Legacy Society, please contact us at development@ALAforVeterans.org or (317) 569-4500, or to learn more about the Legacy Society and how to join, visit ALAforVeterans.org/Planned-Giving.



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Auxiliary Members Continue Selfless Service to Others Amid COVID-19 Pandemic



With every stitch she puts in the face masks she makes for others during the COVID-19 global pandemic, American Legion Auxiliary member Kathy White of Georgia knows she is doing what generations of ALA members before her have done: fulfilling the Auxiliary's mission of selfless service — even in the midst of major society-wide challenges.

The same is true for ALA member Jenny Tracy of Indiana, as she tapes and posts online her heartfelt video tributes to America's military servicemembers and veterans, which also underscore the solemn significance of the red poppy flower. Tracy overcame the obstacles offered by the call for social-distancing in an effort to slow the spread of the virus that causes the deadly COVID-19 disease.

Many times throughout the course of the ALA's 100-plus year history, Auxiliary members have overcome challenges in times of war, widespread medical emergencies, natural disasters, and other tribulations, to serve the greater good. The American Legion Auxiliary is a community of volunteers serving veterans, military and their families. At our core, we are helpers. When

a catastrophe strikes or hard times cast long shadows of devastation and despair, we assist others.

These days, many ALA members are finding alternate ways to safely help others amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, as fear and uncertainty spurred by this new disease swirl around us all. This is our members' response, fueled with reinforced resolve and dedication, to COVID-19 — a merciless medical menace that has killed millions of people globally during the first half of this year.

We leave it to our best and brightest medical researchers and scientists to find a vaccine, cure, or treatment medicines and therapeutics to help in our fight against the virus. But ALA members won't stand by without trying to serve veterans, military, and their families, or without trying to help communities or individuals in need, especially during times like this. When future generations of Auxiliary members look back to see how their predecessors managed during this worldwide medical crisis, they'll see we found ways to safely fulfill our mission of selfless service. They will be proud. And they will be inspired.

Making Masks for the Public, Branded Masks for Legion Family

ALA member Kathy White had never made masks. But White's adult daughter Amanda Faulkner said she needed one. Faulkner is a dog groomer who was deemed an essential worker while Georgia's shelter-in-place order was in effect. Wearing a cloth face covering over the mouth and nose was recommended by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention for people unable to maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other individuals.

For a while, masks and cloth face coverings that were usually sold in stores became scarce.

White went to YouTube for instructional material and figured out how to make a fabric mask. She made several masks for Faulkner, who gave some of her extra ones to her co-workers and the pet salon's customers who said they needed masks. Then, White made extra masks to give to anyone who said they needed one.

"I've talked to several older veterans and they are so scared about COVID-19. If a family member of theirs called me and asked me for masks and I didn't have any left, I would stop everything and make that mask for them. If that would help that veteran feel safer, he or she is going to get a mask," White said.

"People kept asking: 'Can you make me a mask?' and 'What organization are you with?' or 'Are you with an organization?' And I'm like, 'I'm an ALA member.' It got

to a point that I was constantly saying that. And I started thinking, 'There's got to be a way I can put [the ALA emblem] on my mask that I'm wearing,'" she added.

After consulting with Unit 70 President Kara Andrus-Bennett about the branded mask idea and getting encouragement, White ordered ALA emblem patches from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales. She stitched the small Auxiliary emblem on a blue fabric face mask she sewed. Then she made a fabric face mask for her husband, Legionnaire Kenneth White of Post 70 in Villa Rica, Ga., and stitched a Legion emblem on it.

"That way, my husband and I could wear the branded masks when we are out doing stuff or giving away [mission outreach] stuff, and people would know who was giving out stuff or helping them. They would feel more comfortable accepting our help. And, maybe they'll see our emblems, ask about us, learn about us, and want to join. I'm not trying to advertise. But it's a good way to educate the public that

we're out here and these are the type of things we do," she explained.

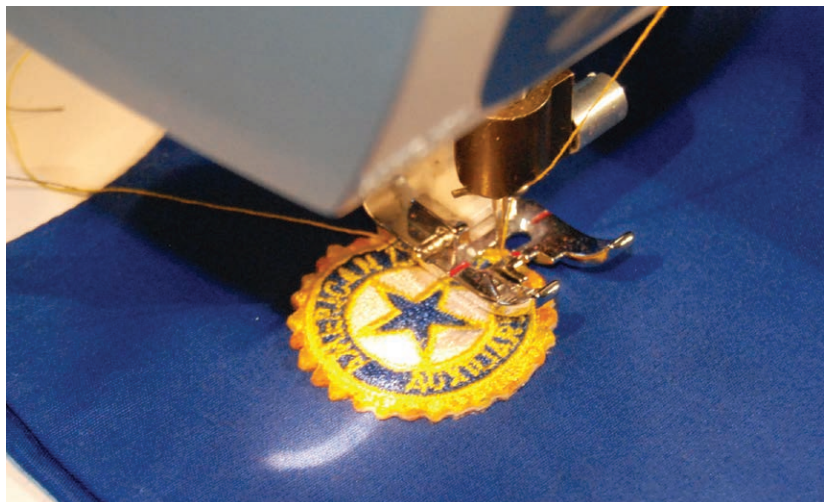
White posted a photo of the ALA-branded masks on her personal Facebook account, and the post was then shared via the national ALA Public Relations Facebook group. What came next surprised her.

"My cell phone started going off with all the calls from people from our Legion Family requesting branded masks. So did Kara's phone. I didn't think it would be that popular," White said. In some cases, White was asked to stitch onto the mask (in addition to the emblem patch) ALA unit, American Legion post, Sons of The American Legion squadron, or American Legion Riders' chapter numbers. When possible, she accommodated those stitching requests.

Keeping up with production to fill mask requests from Legion Family members from various parts of the nation, and unrelated requests from others who wanted unbranded masks, was tough for White, she said. Assistance with the fabric cutting came from Barbara Propst, a member of Unit 70 and American Legion Riders Chapter 70 in Villa Rica. But White did the sewing and stitching herself, washing the material cutouts in very hot water, heat-pressing the fabric frequently during production, and putting each finished mask in a plastic baggie. As of June 1, White had sewn about 450 masks.

To ease the production pressure on her, White posted online an instructional video on how to make masks. While adhering to her community's regulations and guidelines for social contact, she has also taught other local ALA members how to make fabric masks.

Still, requests kept coming, including one from an area hospital. At the same time, costs for materials and shipping of the branded masks began to mount.



MISSION MINDED (opposite page, from left): ALA member Kathy White of Georgia wears an ALA-branded fabric mask she made; ALA member Jenny Tracy of Indiana extends a cloth poppy; (above): White stitches an ALA emblem on a mask.

While she continued to provide unbranded face masks to the general public at no charge, she started to charge a nominal fee for masks branded with either the ALA, Legion, Sons, or Legion Riders emblem patches. She doesn't sew more than one emblem on a mask. Initially the fee was \$5 per mask. To cover the cost of emblem patches, fabric, and related materials, plus shipping costs, the fee went up to \$10 per mask. Andrus-Bennett, who handles the financials for the branded masks, accepts the orders from units, posts, squadrons, and Rider chapters, and passes those requests onto White.

White, a Type 1 diabetic who takes care of her disabled husband and her mother, doesn't think twice about making masks for others or taking the extra steps to promote the ALA and other Legion Family organizations with branded masks.

"When I was learning about all that the Auxiliary, the Legion, and the entire Legion Family does, I realized that it's all about helping — doing what we can," White said. "I am so proud of being an ALA member and being part of the Legion Family. It is truly a family."

White became eligible for ALA membership through the military service of her husband, U.S. Army Cold War veteran Kenneth White — who became eligible to join The American Legion last summer, thanks to the passage of the LEGION Act in July 2019. The Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act declares that the United States has been in war since Dec. 7, 1941. This declaration expands the military service time periods criteria for American Legion membership.

White and her husband became members of Unit and Post 70 in Villa Rica in January 2020. Prior to that, Kathy was an active nonmember ALA volunteer for several years.

Kenneth White is also a member of the Sons of The American Legion, honoring the military service of his father, U.S. Army World War II veteran Jake White; and Kenneth's brother, Army Vietnam War veteran and Purple Heart recipient Larry White. Kenneth, his father, and brother Larry are all Legionnaires of Post 70 in Villa Rica. The Whites' grandson, 10-year-old Blaze Faulkner, is a member of the Sons.

For more information about the branded face masks, please contact Unit 70 President Kara Andrus-Bennett directly via email at bkara@bellsouth.net or text (no calls, please) at (404) 983-0958.

Honoring our Fallen Military Heroes, Sharing the Meaning of the Red Poppy Online

Practicing social-distancing presented a challenge for one of the ALA's longstanding year-round poppy distribution days — which gets more emphasis on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and National Poppy Day®

(the Friday before Memorial Day). Traditionally, ALA members and nonmember volunteers hand out red crepe paper poppies to people nationwide in exchange for donations.

But ALA member Jenny Tracy of Unit 18 in Bloomington, Ind., refused to give up on honoring to veterans and servicemembers, and sharing the solemn meaning of the red poppy.

Tracy developed Petals of Honor, a four-month-long online video series which serves as a tribute to America's military heroes and a way to educate the public about the symbolic and iconic flower. The brief videos appear on Unit 18's Facebook page.

"This way, we can still honor veterans. We can still bond together," Tracy said. In exchange for the tribute poppy flowers, Unit 18 is accepting donations of any amount. As of May 27, Unit 18 has raised \$79 from Petals of Honor. All proceeds will be included in Unit 18's poppy funds — money from which is used to directly support veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and their families.

In the videos — usually about three minutes each, Tracy names the servicemember or veteran being honored and gives basic background information about him or her. The initial visual in each video includes patriotic elements, such as a folded American flag and a small red crepe paper poppy. She places the poppy in a clear vase containing a small, battery-operated tea light. Beside the vase is a folded American flag and a small ALA table-top flag. She also shares facts about the poppy, ALA, and patriotic literature such as the *In Flanders Field* poem or the Prayer for our Veterans.

Tracy also lists the name and branch of military, along with a photo, of the honoree in the comments section of the Facebook video post.

Launched May 4, Tracy plans to fill the vase with poppies, one flower for each servicemember and veteran. She posts tribute videos every other day or so, with the last video going up Sept. 11, 2020. Tracy might produce a compilation video of all the tributes and posting that as well.

"The footage is raw. It's not edited by some pricey videographer. It's done by me. There are glitches. I misspeak a couple of times. But I can still make an edit and be customer-service friendly," Tracy said. "My hope is that it encourages people and makes them think: 'Well, I could do that. I totally could do that!'"

The first Petals of Honor tribute was for U.S. Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Paul Pabla, who was killed in action in Iraq on July 3, 2006, seven days shy of his 24th birthday.

Tracy knew of Pabla because, at the time of his death, Pabla was serving in the same Army National Guard unit with her husband, Matthew B. Tracy. And she already had a rapport with Pabla's mother, Lisa Carroll of Fort

Fulfilling the ALA's Mission, Taking Care of Business

The American Legion Auxiliary remains resolute in its unwavering commitment to support veterans, military, and their families — even in this time of fear and uncertainty. ALA members are continuing to find safe ways to impact the lives of veterans, military, and their families in the midst of the COVID-19. And, our members are coming up with ways to carry on ALA business when possible.



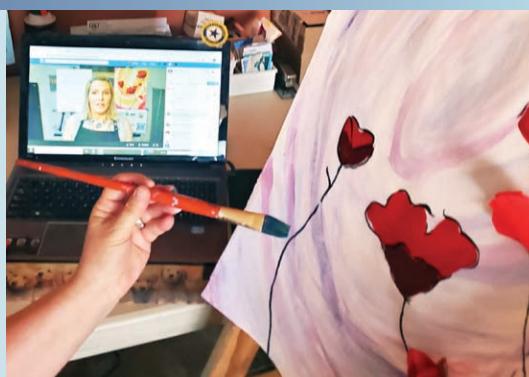
The Department of Arizona American Legion Family teamed up with other community organizations and area businesses on several outreach initiatives under the department's "Food for Vets" program early on in the COVID-19 pandemic. Shown here are American Legion Auxiliary member Marge Christianson (left) of Unit 62 in Peoria, and Alison Bosen of the Chick-fil-A Arrowhead restaurant, getting ready to distribute chicken sandwiches to veterans, their family members, and event volunteers in the Maryvale neighborhood of Phoenix. In addition to the sandwiches, the veterans and their family members received a variety of items from a regional food bank as part of the department's program.

Junior members of Unit 351 in Indiana continued their ALA monthly meetings online amid COVID-19 and social-distancing recommendations for safety. They held their virtual meetings on Facebook Live via the unit's private Juniors' page. Shown here are Emily Cross (left) and her sister Bree, leading the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of the meeting. When state restrictions were eased in Indiana, the Juniors met outside under big shade trees — spread apart but still together — and in person.



ALA Junior member Anna Bross stands outside her home in Illinois, holding one of the many gift bags she made for essential workers, such as delivery people, working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bags include items such as hand sanitizer, cookies, gum, and candy. On the outside of the bags are messages of appreciation. The message on the bag she is holding reads, "We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude."

Professional artist Dana N. Ramsey, member of ALA Unit 62 and American Legion Post 62 in Peoria, Ariz., teaches a virtual session of "HEAL HER Art," a class that's part of an art wellness program for women veterans developed by Unit 62. The classes were being taught online because of COVID-19 and the call for social distancing. The virtual version of the class, conducted by a couple of professional artists, was open to anyone. Classes are archived on the HEAL HER Art Facebook page for anyone with a Facebook account who wants to take them.



Wayne, Ind. His mother responded positively to the video tribute.

“When I watched that video, it was so emotional. Flashbacks of those days (that whole summer). Being first [on Petals of Honor] for me was an extremely beautiful honor! I am grateful he is remembered. Thank you,” Carroll stated in a direct message to Tracy on Facebook.

Petals of Honor tributes can be requested for any veteran or servicemember, Tracy explained.

“I wanted to capture this one small glimpse of our lives [during the COVID-19 pandemic], when all or most of us are home doing only a little of what we used to do. And we still have our passion for, and dedication to, our veterans. My hope is that things are more back to normal soon, in terms of COVID-19. We can say, “This is how we, as ALA members, adapted during the time of COVID-19; we didn’t miss a beat when it came to honoring our veterans.”

Tracy joined the ALA in 2006. Her eligibility is through the military service of her husband, retired Army National Guard 1st. Sgt. Matthew B. Tracy, a Legionnaire at Post 18 in Bloomington.

For more information about Petals of Honor, please contact Jenny Tracy directly at jtracy@bluemarble.net, (812) 320-3871, or mail: PETALS OF HONOR, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 18, 1800 W 3rd St, Bloomington, IN 47401, ATTN: Jenny Tracy

ALA’S HISTORY OF HELPING DURING EMERGENCIES

The American Legion Auxiliary’s main focus has always been on supporting our nation’s veterans, military, and their families. But throughout the ALA’s 100-plus years of existence, Auxiliary members have often stepped up to assist communities and individuals in need — especially after a natural disaster or other widespread emergency. A few examples:

1932: Widespread Flooding in the Oklahoma City Area

ALA members of Oklahoma City Unit 35, and of Capital Hill and Unit 13, mobilized quickly to help the community following a flood in the greater Oklahoma City area. The flood was responsible for numerous deaths and a lot of destruction there. Auxiliary members worked early mornings to late nights at temporary shelters, serving meals in food lines and distributing clothing collected by local ALA units.

The ALA members, who aided the Red Cross in surveying the flooded districts and investigated all persons asking for help, did not stop until every family in the flooded area was housed.

1933: Earthquake in Southern California

Following a devastating earthquake that struck parts of California’s Los Angeles and Orange counties, many ALA members joined Legionnaires and others to help those affected by this natural disaster.

Published in the June 1933 edition of the *American Legion Auxiliary Bulletin* (*Auxiliary magazine’s predecessor*): “The members of the Auxiliary functioned in various ways. Cooks, dishwashers, waitresses, dispensers of clothing and food, nursing, and the care of children were some of the posts filled by our [ALA] members. No one complained of the work allotted — no partiality was shown. The lack of gas, water, and light hampered the workers, but they remained cheerful. Hot food was available at all hours.”

2017: Hurricanes through America’s Southeast, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

ALA members, many teaming up with others in The American Legion Family, helped people affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria by collecting or purchasing and distributing necessities such as bottled water, food, and cleaning supplies. ★

By Landa Bagley, Staff Writer



STILL SERVING (from left): ALA Junior Emily Cross holds bags of crafts she safely delivered to Juniors for their virtual meeting; (center): ALA member Amber Lawlar and her daughters, Juniors Sydnee and Kenzie, hold signs with uplifting messages while visiting senior citizens; (right): dual member Dee Hoisington (top) and ALA member Tina Ganados (below) help during the Department of Arizona Legion Family’s “Food for Vets” program.

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ALA membership offers personal benefits that help professionally

You signed up for the American Legion Auxiliary to honor a veteran in your life, to attend a community function at the local post home, or because you love the longstanding mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families. But what about the hidden perks of being an ALA member?

For many, membership goes beyond the reason(s) you signed up and has benefited you in your profession/career. All because of the involvement and nominal investment in the Auxiliary, many members have benefited from the training received over the years through ALA events and the ALA Academy, the leadership skills absorbed serving in various roles within the Auxiliary, the confidence gained in public speaking, and more.

Beyond learning skills related to the mission such as poppy making, flag folding, and presenting the Military Child's Table Setting Ceremony, the ALA can give you lots of skills if you just say, "Yes, I will" when asked to do something. Members have gained a variety of skills from their Auxiliary membership, such as presenting and leading meetings, managing large projects, developing newsletters, confidence in public speaking, and more. Developing yourself more makes you become a better leader. There's nothing wrong with personal fulfillment and becoming a better person.

The American Legion Auxiliary has more than 100 years of strong women who have used their transferable skills in both their ALA membership and in their job. In fact, two of our founders were doctors!

Auxiliary magazine takes a closer look at a few of these women who have utilized skills that benefit them in both worlds. These members said "yes" and have used the assets from their ALA membership to positively help them in their careers.

Noelle Bonjour
Massage Therapist
South Dakota

Having been a massage therapist for 11 years, Noelle Bonjour was recently approved to be an off-site massage therapy provider for her local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospital.

"It's because of the Auxiliary that I decided to pursue registration/certification for being an off-site provider," Bonjour said. "It was a lot of work with many hoops to jump through, but the ALA's spirit of *Service Not Self* helped me persevere. Now I'm getting a fair number of referrals and expect to get even more once the pandemic subsides. So, you could say that membership in the ALA has actually helped me grow my business!"

For Bonjour, membership in the Auxiliary eventually helped in her career by cultivating a passion for assisting veterans. That passion had been there since a young age — but it didn't intertwine with her career until later in life.

"I was signed up as soon as the membership chair for the South Dakota Unit 131 — where my maternal grandmother and my mom both had their memberships — found out I had been born a girl!" she said. "As soon as I was old enough, I was given a can of poppies and stood at the door of the Legion hall, pushing poppies to those who came for the Memorial Day program."

Along with her older sister, the two performed clarinet duets for special music at the Memorial Day programs for many years.

"I have the *Gettysburg Address* and *In Flanders Fields* memorized because of giving them so many times at the Memorial Day programs," she said. "And even though my birthday frequently falls on Memorial Day, it takes a backseat to Memorial Day."

"But that passion for veterans, instilled in me because of the ALA, spurred me to keep going."

Bonjour has been an ALA member for 28 years and is eligible for membership through her grandfathers, both of whom were World War II veterans. Sadly, they both passed away when she was 7 years old, before she really had developed an appreciation for the sacrifices of our veterans.

“My initial passion for veterans was probably my desire to remember my grandfathers,” Bonjour said. “But that appreciation and passion for veterans grew as I got older and was able to start talking with other family members who were also veterans.”

Fast forward to 2019 when Bonjour’s business, Noelle’s Therapeutic Massage, was only about a year old. During this time, she was trying to figure out how to grow her clientele and continue being active in the ALA — but the two aspects had not yet come together. At that time, she received a letter from the insurance company that had taken on the billing services for off-site VA-approved chiropractors and various therapists, inviting her to register as a massage therapist.

“I didn’t even hesitate,” she recalled. “It was a win-win situation. I would be able to help veterans while also building my business.”

There were a lot of paperwork hoops she had to jump through, but because of her ALA membership and her deep-rooted *Service Not Self* mindset, Bonjour persevered.

“If veterans had not been involved, I would have just decided it wasn’t worth my effort and would have given up,” she said. “But that passion for veterans, instilled in me because of the ALA, spurred me to keep going. Because of the veterans, it didn’t matter how many forms I had to fill out.”

It took a couple months, but she was able to register as a VA-approved off-site massage therapist.

Bonjour wasn’t expecting to develop skills in the ALA that would transfer over into her career.

“I was aware of my growing passion for veterans, but I did not realize just how deep that passion had gotten,” she recalled. “In February 2019, I finally had to tell a client that I could not continue to submit her massages to her workman’s comp insurance because I could no longer deal with the insurance billing. She graciously took to

paying for her massages upfront and getting her insurance to reimburse her instead. I had no desire to deal with insurance and all the necessary coding ever again. But my passion for veterans had grown so strong that I didn’t even give a thought to the fact that I would once again be billing to an insurance company. I never considered that membership in the ALA would ultimately cause me to bend over backwards for veteran clients.”

The benefits of ALA membership to her professional life haven’t stopped just with her VA work. Inspired by the various perks that businesses will offer ALA members, Bonjour decided to offer a perk of her own — a discount on massages to all members in good standing of the various American Legion Family organizations.

For those members who want to utilize skills from their membership into their profession/career, Bonjour advises to go for it.

“Be proud of your ALA membership,” she said. “You may have to think outside the box to find a way to utilize skills from your ALA membership, but I do not believe there is a single profession that cannot use at least one skill that a person would acquire from ALA membership.”

Jennifer Shaw
Enforcement Attorney
Oklahoma

Joining the American Legion Auxiliary helped Jennifer Shaw experience the many benefits it provides, which in turn, helped her career. Shaw joined in 1998 after attending ALA Girls State, eligible through her grandfather, a World War II merchant Marine.

“When I first attended the program, I was timid and not very outspoken,” she recalled. “This program helped me realize there were young women in the state/country that wanted to help others and had strong opinions on how that could be accomplished. It helped me find my voice and realize there was a support system for speaking in front of others.”

This led to her college years. With her continued involvement in the ALA Girls State program, Shaw already knew people when she went to campus, giving her a built-in support system.



DEDICATED (from left): Noelle Bonjour carries the American flag during the National Anthem; Bonjour at a grocery store distributing poppies last year; the ALA Oklahoma Girls State program is led by Jennifer Shaw.



HELPING OTHERS (from left): Rita Redd (far left) helps deliver leftover lunch food from the local high school to the Salvation Army; Redd with one of her real estate clients; Debra Rumery shows her pride in her ALA membership.

The ALA continued to help her beyond college with her career path.

“All of my references for law school came from people I had met through the ALA Oklahoma Girls State program,” she said. “These connections continued to help me when it came time to apply for my career.”

Staying involved in the ALA Oklahoma Girls State program helped Shaw in both her personal and professional lives.

“I learned how to organize large events, present ideas with confidence to large groups, and be able to break down legal and technical areas to help others understand,” Shaw said.

Additionally, her ALA involvement has continued to instill a desire to serve others.

“I feel I get to do this with my career choice and with the different organizations I volunteer with,” she said.

When Shaw signed up for the Auxiliary, developing skills beyond her membership that she could utilize in her career wasn’t exactly top of mind.

“I honestly joined the ALA because I wanted to continue to participate as a staff member for the ALA Oklahoma Girls State program,” she said. “I was not prepared for the many benefits both personally and professionally that my membership would bring.”

At first, Shaw didn’t realize she was developing additional skills, such as public speaking, that took her beyond just basic benefits of an ALA membership.

“As I volunteered and presented at both ALA Oklahoma Girls State events and other smaller meetings, I didn’t really realize I was gaining a valuable asset,” she recalled. “However, looking back, I can see how it helped me become comfortable speaking in front of large groups.”

She added it has been a great asset for both college and her professional career.

“As a part of my job, I go out and speak to groups throughout our state about different aspects of investor education and protecting their life savings,” she said.

For Shaw, it has been life changing that the perks of her ALA membership rolled over into that of her professional life.

“It is a nice benefit of getting to volunteer for

the organization,” she said. “I always volunteer for groups/organizations because I support their mission and programs. To get a personal benefit that helps professionally is an unexpected benefit.”

Every year during the ALA Oklahoma Girls State program, Shaw shares with the girls why she joined the organization and the benefits she has received. This talk is usually in connection with encouraging the participants to join the ALA.

With all the added benefits experienced over the years, Shaw offers advice to other members about tying together the ALA and a career.

“I think members should try to use their skills in their profession,” she said. “They should know there is always a built-in support system with the ALA that will help them as they go out and support the community and their profession.”

Rita Redd
Real Estate Agent
Texas

When asked to share how her ALA membership has helped in her career, Rita Redd immediately had an answer.

“As a realtor who works mostly with VA loans and veterans, sharing that I am with the American Legion Auxiliary helps a great deal in introducing the Legion Family to potential buyers as well as listings,” she said. “Being on the Public Relations Committee for most of my 22 years as a member has also helped with marketing both real estate, as well as the American Legion Auxiliary.”

Redd has been a member of the Auxiliary since 1998, eligible through her father (U.S. Army, World War II) and her husband (Air Force, Vietnam).

As president of her unit, skills Redd acquired through membership went hand in hand with her professional career.

“I have sold homes for many of my members and have sold several of them their current homes,” Redd said. “I have recruited over half of our current membership through being a realtor, either getting them to join when I sold or listed their home, or have sold or listed homes for current members who have moved.”

When Redd moved to the Lufkin, Texas, area in 2000, there was not an active unit in the city. It took about five years to find out that the original unit had lost its charter in 1998 due to not being able to keep the minimum requirement of 10 members. Redd further found out the post was active, but not as far as meetings or promoting programs — they just had the required member numbers.

“When I finally found 10 charter members so I could transfer my membership, most of them I knew through the real estate business even though I was not a licensed realtor at the time,” Redd recalled.

She didn’t realize right away that the combination of her profession and involvement in the ALA was helping her develop skills beyond her Auxiliary membership.

“I think it pretty much all came together about the same time,” she said. “As I built my real estate business, I also built the unit. The biggest benefit to most of our members was the ability to work together as a group to help our veterans, their families, and our community. The other benefits were not really an attraction at first.”

In time, though, those benefits of her ALA membership have shined through into her professional life.

“It means a great deal the benefits have rolled over,” she said. “Due to my husband’s health and the fact I am 71, I have started slowing down in the real estate business to give me more time with him and the ALA.”

Redd encourages her fellow Auxiliary members to utilize skills learned across both their membership and careers.

“I have always urged them to use their skills or work to enhance their ALA membership and vice versa,” she said.

Debra Rumery Customer Service Representative Maine

“Being an American Legion Auxiliary officer has created a new sense of listening skills, patience, teamwork, and family that I never had before,” Debra Rumery said. “I cannot imagine my life without the Department of Maine Auxiliary.”

Rumery has been a member since 2018, eligible for membership through her father, who served in the Air National Guard during Vietnam.

Initially, Rumery didn’t expect joining the Auxiliary would help her develop skills both useful for ALA membership as well as her career as a customer service representative for a communications company. She was a volunteer for five years before becoming a member. After joining, she became president of her unit within six months, and later, after a year, became the district president.

“Being a district president for 23 units has taught me listening skills, patience, compassion, integrity, family values, and teamwork that I bring to my career and personal life,” she said. “The ALA spirit of *Service Not Self* is not something you can’t just turn on and off. It is a lifestyle I will continue for the rest of my life.”

The American Legion Auxiliary’s legacy of *Service Not Self* is something we can all benefit from and means a lot to Rumery as a customer service representative, she said.

It took time for Rumery to understand her ALA membership was helping her develop leadership skills she could use in her professional and personal life.

“I did not realize it right away, but my mentors did,” she said. “They saw things in me that I did not see in myself. At first, I did not believe I could be president because I had no experience and held no other officer position, but my mentors thought otherwise.”

The benefits to an ALA membership that go beyond the mission while also serving a purpose professionally have helped Rumery recruit potential members.

“Knowing what the organization is all about and speaking with passion to people really is the key,” she explained. “The American Legion Auxiliary’s track record speaks for itself at our post home. The community sees what we do for our veterans, and they want to be a part of it. We have so many fundraisers that we get the community involved and they see that we really are a family and want to be part of that.” ★

By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer

“They should know there is always a built-in support system with the ALA that will help them as they go out and support the community and their profession.”

Sharpen your skills through online courses



For members who may want to learn the different ways their ALA membership can help in both this organization and their profession, the ALA Academy is available for free to members.

The online courses are a great way to think outside the box on ways you can utilize skills as a member, while also sharpening skills that are applicable in your profession/career. Although the classes are designed and geared toward your ALA membership, there are useful tips that can

be applied to your job as well.

The online courses will help you learn a variety of skills for both areas of life such as how to use social media, more about leadership, goodwill toward others, and dealing with conflict. To take an ALA Academy class, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org.

IMPACT ALA!

ALA CONTINUES 100TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR INTO 2020-2021

What a year it has been (so far) for the American Legion Auxiliary. Since nearly the beginning of 2020, our world has been turned upside down; our lives drastically changed.

But as we have for the past 100 years, resilience is a strong part of who we are. The ALA's community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families has continued to persevere through it all, finding new and creative ways to fulfill our mission. We've learned to embrace technology, try different approaches, and help one another in ways we didn't know were possible.

National Convention

Earlier this year, several summertime meetings were canceled and/or moved to an online platform because of health concerns related to COVID-19. The American Legion Auxiliary's largest annual youth event, ALA Girls Nation, was canceled. As the virus continued to sweep across the nation, we knew there could be more cancellations to come.

Every August, we look forward to gathering at our National Convention in a new city, bringing together hundreds of members from across the nation to inspire continued forward momentum in serving our mission. This annual meeting celebrates the administrative year's accomplishments and milestones while also beginning a focus on the upcoming year.

With the rising cases of coronavirus throughout the country, The American Legion National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 3 to cancel the 2020 National

Convention in Louisville, Ky. A portion of the resolution reads: "Due to the uncertainty of the duration of the disease known as coronavirus (COVID-19), the numerous government regulations being enforced to contain it, and concern for the safety of all members of The American Legion Family, The American Legion National Executive Committee (NEC) agrees that present circumstances constitute sufficient reasons to cancel the 2020 American Legion National Convention."



MORE CAKE! The ALA will celebrate our centennial through 2021.

This led to the Auxiliary responding in the same manner. Per the National Constitution & Bylaws, Article VI, Section 1: "The American Legion Auxiliary National Convention shall be held annually at the same time and place as the convention of The American Legion for the purpose of electing officers, receiving reports, and transacting such other business as shall properly come before it."

Although the decision was difficult, the health and safety of all members of The American Legion Family is of the utmost importance and the No. 1 priority of any of our events.

Looking Forward

As we prepare to enter the 2020-2021 ALA administrative year, we

turned to our Constitution & Bylaws for guidance in these unprecedented times.

After careful review of our C&B and consulting with National Parliamentarian Chris Dickey, the 2019-2020 national officers, chairmen, and committee members will continue to serve in their roles until the 2021 National Convention or upon resignation.

At the department and unit levels, consult your department or unit C&B on what this change means for those officers. National can make recommendations, but cannot mandate changes at those levels of the organization.

Additionally, although the timeline to change national committee structures was scheduled for the 2020-2021 year, that will be postponed — all national committees will remain in place for another administrative year.

Think of this upcoming administrative year as a continuation of our 100th anniversary — continue celebrating, and continue working

the mission for our veterans, military, and their families. We will still celebrate our centennial together at the 2021 National Convention in Phoenix.

Heading into another administrative year, ALA National President Nicole Clapp will continue her department visits. The first priority will be to those who had to cancel due to COVID-19 hitting hard in the spring and early summer. Clapp will likely do repeat visits to departments with the extra year/time to do so.

Reporting periods: This will be done on a two-year basis, encompassing the 2019-2021 administrative years. However, impact reports will still be sent in annually. For the most part, awards will also remain on an annual basis. For more information about these changes, see the individual Programs Action Plan files at www.ALAforVeterans.org.



IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSTANTLY REVIEW YOUR C&B

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters receives many questions from departments and units in regard to constitution and bylaws. Learn more on page 22.

Finally... a better mobility solution than Scooters or Power Chairs.

The **Zoomer's** versatile design and 1-touch joystick operation brings mobility and independence to those who need it most.

If you have mobility issues, or know someone who does, then you've experienced the difficulties faced by millions of Americans. Once simple tasks like getting from the bedroom to the kitchen can become a time-consuming and potentially dangerous ordeal. You may have tried to solve the problem with a power chair or a scooter but neither is ideal. Power chairs are bulky and look like a medical device. Scooters are either unstable or hard to maneuver. Now, there's a better alternative... the Zoomer.

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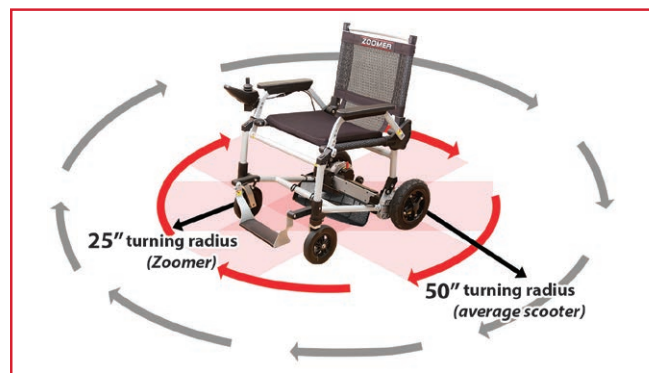
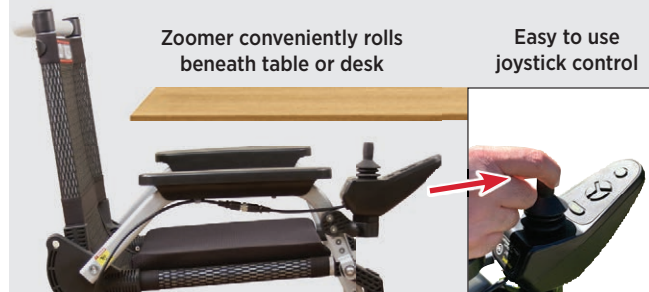
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FINANCE: NATIONAL COMMITTEE CONTINUES DUE DILIGENCE

Your national Finance Committee has met in accordance with our bylaws. Our budget meeting will look a little different this year with the coronavirus; however, be assured the committee has been and will continue to do our due diligence in safekeeping our finances. Each month, the committee is given a complete accounting of our finances.

The national Finance Committee consists of five members with financial backgrounds, and they are willing to go the extra mile to protect national finances in accordance with our National Executive Committee-approved budget.

One responsibility is to develop the annual budget, which is monitored closely throughout the fiscal year. We must ensure the funds are available to carry out the programs and mission set forth by the program chairs and our national president.

ALA Mission Trainings, national Junior meetings, and department secretary/finance/treasurer trainings are programs the Finance Committee supports and looks forward to in the future.

Although training may look a little different this year, your Finance Committee stands ready

to support what is best for ALA membership. The face-to-face training may take a different form for our 2020-2021 administrative year, but we understand the need for all kinds of training opportunities and will be looking to support our members this year and in the future.

I have learned financial reports can be understood if we take the time to ask questions, to learn, and make decisions that are best for our organization.



Sharon Conatser is a 66-year member of the ALA. She belongs to Urbana Unit 71 In Illinois.

PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY: HELP US FIND FORMER AWARD RECIPIENTS

In past years, there have been three major points of interest for this committee: 1) honoring a Unit Member of the Year from each ALA department; 2) honoring a servicewoman from every branch of service for her outstanding contributions to her community; and 3) sharing experience and knowledge with each other on every level. In celebration of the 100th anniversary of our organization, we have added a fourth focus point — honoring our past and celebrating our future — and we need help.

In order to accomplish this, the

Past Presidents Parley Committee is requesting your help to locate former department Unit Member of the Year recipients. Our goal is to have responses from as many of these former winners as possible. Please share with us if this honor made a difference in their future involvement in the American Legion Auxiliary. Did this recognition impact their life on a personal basis? And if so, in what way? What did being selected as Unit Member of the Year mean to the recipient? What year did they receive this award? This information can be submitted by the

member herself or by the chairman. Please submit the member's name, unit name and location, and contact information, along with their story, to pastpresidentsparley@ALAforVeterans.org by June 1, 2021.

We are also excited that another service branch has been added to the Servicewoman of the Year recognition. The new Space Force branch will be included with the other five branches.



Carlene Ashworth is a 54-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to Texas Unit 521 in Pasadena.

HISTORY: WHY ARCHIVING OUR PAST IS RELEVANT TODAY

Have you ever been asked why you do what you do? Author Simon Sinek said that while most of us can talk about what we do and how we do it, few can talk about why we do it. In the world of working with the past, the question can sometimes be a little difficult to answer. Instead, we talk about what we actually do, or we talk about the fascinating items in the collection. Recently, I was reminded why I enjoy working with the Auxiliary's history, and I bet our chairmen, whether at the unit or department level, will agree.

Earlier this year, Chris, whose mother, Nancy, would turn 80 in April, contacted ALA National Headquarters. Nancy had attended ALA Girls Nation in 1957 and Chris was hoping to obtain some photos to surprise her at the birthday celebration. I found some photos and the biographical sketch form Nancy completed.

Shortly after the virtual birthday party, I received emails from both Chris and Nancy that the party was a success. She was very surprised, and they were able to find Nancy in

a couple of the photos! Nancy recalled wonderful experiences with Sen. Everett Dirksen's wife, who was also serving as a chaperone. After all these years, Nancy even remembered her roommate's name!

So, if you ever wonder why those of us who bother to preserve the Auxiliary's history do it, remember this story. I am sure all of our history keepers have a story just like this one.



Cathi Taylor is the archivist at ALA National Headquarters and a member of Indiana eUnit 438.

MEMBERSHIP: SMALL ALA UNITS CAN MAKE A BIG IMPACT TOO

One of the questions I hear almost daily is, “How can I get new members?” Another thing I often hear: “I just can’t get these members to pay their dues.” We all struggle with this at one time or another. I wish I had a magic wand to make recruiting and retaining our members easy. No one does. I have asked for unit success stories. I unexpectedly received this story and I believe it is worth sharing.

ALA Unit 16 of Goffstown, N.H. is a small unit of 27 members. I have learned from Unit Secretary and Membership Chair Linda Lambert that these members work very hard to be a 100% unit. How do they get there? Linda admits, it sometimes takes some persistent communication (“nagging”), but they work the mission of the ALA. “We are an organization of respect, honor, truth, compassion, empathy, and dedication to veterans and military everywhere,” Linda said. With a passion like this, who wouldn’t want to be a part of that?

Linda said that even though the number of participating members is

small, they still accomplish many extraordinary projects each year, many for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Manchester, N.H. Unit 16 donates thousands of dollars annually so veterans can have opportunities they would not otherwise have. To name just a few: adaptive sled hockey, bee-keeping, computer gaming, barbecues, arts and crafts, and so much more. Upon request, they have also purchased items for the occupational therapy/physical therapy departments and diabetes department. Christmas gifts for seven to nine nursing home veterans are also fulfilled each year. The unit participates in poppy distribution and offers a free community gift wrap service. Of course, donations are accepted as well.

As you can see, a small unit with a few dedicated members can do so much. I am sure the friends and family of those veterans remember what has been done and share that information with others. Giving comes from the heart and is felt by



SPREADING JOY: Linda Lambert (left) and new member Laura Gilman at the gift wrap at Ace Hardware last Christmas.

so many. New members are being recruited. I am sure the mission this unit serves is partially responsible for that recruiting. Thank you, Unit 16, for your passion and dedication to our veterans, military, their families, and to the community.



Pam Ray is a 63-year member of the ALA. She belongs to Urbana Unit 71 in Illinois.

LEADERSHIP: MENTOR NEW MEMBERS FOR OUR FUTURE

As we continue to celebrate our centennial and all of the outstanding accomplishments from our past 100 years, it is apparent that we have had exceptional individuals at every level of this great organization who did not hesitate to share their knowledge and vision with others in their group.

Benjamin Franklin said, “Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I may not remember. Involve me and I learn.” As leaders, we should always remember how important it is to keep our members focused on our mission and involved at whatever level they feel comfortable. This is especially important when new members join our units.

We spend a great deal of time and effort to bring new members in, but what do we do after that?

Many times, we forget to include these members and never bother to find out what their interests are. Or we inundate them with so much information and overwhelm them. We find that seasoned members do not relate to new members. If we think back to when we first became members, we might remember being in one of these situations.

Mentoring a new member or someone just getting “active” is a key role for our current leaders. We need to take time to explain our values, mission, and traditions. When asking a new member to take on a responsibility, a leader needs to be willing to work shoulder to shoulder with that person, guiding, listening, complimenting, and trying new ideas that will bring success to a project or program.

Think back to when you were a new member, and be the mentor you wish you had back then.

We consistently face new and ever-growing challenges in our organization. We are faced with the question, “How do we lead in these challenging times?” One of the best answers is to create a meaningful mentoring program for our new members that will encourage them to be leaders when they are ready. For over a hundred years, our leaders have met every challenge that came along. If we mentor our new members, we will continue to meet every challenge for the next 100 years.



Diana Sirovina is a 32-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to Bixby-Hansen Unit 171 in Union Grove, Wis.

IMPACT ALA!

WHAT'S NEW AT NHQ

ALA FOUNDATION BOARD APPROVES GRANTS, POLICIES

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board of Directors awarded several grant requests from units and departments and approved a handful of policies during its spring quarterly meeting.

The board approved seven Veteran Projects Fund grants:

■ North Carolina Unit 116: Awarded \$3,007.16 to replace broken bingo equipment at the Fayetteville U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospital long-term care unit.

■ Maine Unit 86: Awarded \$1,920 to buy two all-terrain beach wheelchairs with umbrellas for resident use at Scarborough Veterans Home.

■ Department of South Dakota: Awarded \$8,000 to buy three fully equipped adaptive sports kayaks for veterans' physical therapy at Sioux Falls VA Medical Center.

■ Delaware Unit 28: Awarded \$10,000 to buy a minivan for the Home of the Brave transitional housing center to transport veterans to medical appointments, jobs, and schools.

■ Department of Kentucky: Awarded \$8,000 to install

compressors for an existing but broken walk-in refrigerator and freezer at the Lady Veterans Connect female veterans transitional housing center.

■ Illinois Unit 474: Awarded \$7,400 to purchase 37 Echo Shows for patient use at the Hines VA Hospital Blind Center.

■ Department of New Hampshire: Awarded \$1,900 to purchase a new stove and refrigerator for the Warriors at 45 North, a veteran camp program providing outdoor activities to veterans and active military.

Six Mission in Action grants were also approved at the meeting:

■ Nevada Unit 60: Awarded \$1,100 to purchase branded pop-up tents, banners, signs, totes, and display holders to use at their booths at many local festivals, parades, and events throughout the year.

■ Department of Nebraska: Awarded \$2,120 to purchase a pop-up tent, banners, large standing flags, and table covers to use at their ALA Cornhusker Girls State program throughout the week, as well as orientations and other

community events in the state.

■ Department of Michigan: Awarded \$615.78 to purchase branded banners, table covers, and storage containers to use at their ALA Girls State program.

■ Department of Virginia: Awarded \$160.24 to purchase a retractable banner to use at their ALA Girls State program.

■ Department of Colorado: Awarded \$120 to purchase three small banners, one signifying each group or "county" the 120 girls will be split into at their ALA Colorado Girls State program, helping participants tie their experience back to the Auxiliary.

■ Department of Missouri: Awarded \$2,380 to purchase a branded cargo trailer to haul materials to and from conferences, conventions, and other department programs throughout the year.

Additionally, the board approved updates to ALA Foundation policies — Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Internal Board Policies, Check Signing Policy, and Gift Acceptance Policies and Guidelines. These updates were confirmed by the National Executive Committee.

CONTINUING ALA MISSION WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

Throughout the spring and into the summer, American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters staff worked from home to continue serving the ALA's mission. Some staff already had office space while others had to convert rooms or dining tables into makeshift workspaces. Many have had to also help their children with e-learning, run errands for an elderly parent, or adjust to older children returning home after college or job loss, all while trying to maintain a semblance to the normal workday.

The change of location did not lessen the services provided or alter

what National Headquarters does to support veterans, military, and their families. The Auxiliary has been around for more than 100 years, and the national organization continues to adapt to the times through flexibility and creative ideas to ensure the mission endures.

Staff diligently answered phone calls, emails, social media messages, and more, working to engage members on a daily basis. Like the staff, volunteers across the country have also had to change the typical way of conducting business to accommodate the changing times with the coronavirus. Working

together through these difficult and unprecedented months, everyone has succeeded in continuing the ALA's legacy of *Service Not Self*.

Resilience is in the ALA's nature — we've proven it over and over again in our century-old history. Despite the hardships and changes made during this pandemic, we've continued to serve those who rely on our services in different and unique ways. No matter what crises we may face as units, departments, or as a national organization, we will continue to be 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 Family, those we serve, and much more!

“What an uplifting article!”
—Christy

“I love your blog and all that you do.”
—Jennie

Look at this time as an opportunity, not a setback

Guest blog by ALA National President Nicole Clapp

As the American Legion Auxiliary's current administrative year continues to be largely interrupted at no fault of our own, we want to applaud and celebrate all of the great mission work our members are performing with an undivided mindset of Service Not Self at our next National Convention in Phoenix, Ariz., in 2021.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, The American Legion Family has made difficult decisions about upcoming events. One of the most difficult was canceling the 2020 National Convention. We are making our first priority the health and well-being of our members.

I ask that you look at our 2021 National Convention as a celebration in many ways. We will still celebrate our centennial, but we will also celebrate the opportunity to be together again. Next year, we'll remember making it through the challenges of social distancing. We'll also fondly recall the ALA members who are essential workers and how they made it through what was most likely the toughest time in their careers.

We started our 2019-2020 year strong. We had many great celebrations, unveiled an expanded shadowbox to highlight our 100 years of service, and don't forget all the cake we enjoyed. Then the world seemed to come to a halt in March. With that, many events and activities were put on hold...

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

Walking in the shoes of a military spouse

Guest blog by Sarah Thompson, military spouse

I am honored and excited to share a year in the life of a U.S. Air Force family. My husband is Staff Sgt. Will Thompson. He has been in the Air Force for nearly seven years. Here is a blog I wrote about the time period prior to Will's deployment in January 2020:

Will leaves for deployment in January and will be back sometime in July or early August 2020. I will be going home to be with family since I will be delivering our son while he is deployed. This is a hard topic to think about, but there'll be more on this later.

I am originally from northern Virginia, and my husband is from Maryland. While he was stationed with the Air Force Honor Guard at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. in 2013, we met at a country line dancing bar – and have been two-stepping through life together ever since. Arizona was our first duty station, and it happened to be far away from our family. It was hard moving across the country. But we knew that was a possibility being in the military. We took on the adventure with open minds. I grew up an Army brat, so I knew what I was getting...

Read more online!

Visit today at ALAforVeterans.Wordpress.com

Provided by *Mary Anne Casadei, National Chaplain 2019-2021* | www.Facebook.com/groups/alachaplains

AUGUST

“But if we hope for what we do not have, we wait for it patiently.”

— ROMANS 8:25

What does it mean to be hopeful? Hope lifts our spirits. It gives us comfort and peace. It makes us optimistic about what the future may hold. Being hopeful increases our faith. Faith that God has our backs. Faith He will keep his word.

Hope makes us patient. “I hope my loan application is approved.” “I hope my tax check is in my account.” “I hope my new dryer arrives today.” Hope is not just sitting and waiting. Hope is praying for what you want. Hope is having faith that God will provide. Hope is always reaching out for what you want and having the faith that you will be able to grab it. Hope gives us the comfort of knowing that God will show up. He has promised us that He is always with us, watching us, renewing our faith and answering our prayers.

When we believe in our faith and that God will show up for us, we can patiently wait for Him. Our Hope and faith remind us that God keeps his promises to us. Hopeful hearts experience bitterness, impatience, and become disheartened. But with the strength of God, and our faith, we are refreshed and able to go on.

We need to remember to always renew our faith in God. Keep it strong. Refresh our hope. Hope gives us strength to stand in the presence of God. We always need to set our sights on God, renew our strength with His power, and remind ourselves that God is never early or late, but right on time for what is needed in our life.

Dear God, thank you for giving me a hopeful heart that brings glory to Your name and peace to my heart. Amen.

SEPTEMBER

“It is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God and made Him my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.”

— PSALM 73:28

There are many examples in the Bible of man and woman questioning, doubting, blaming, and even criticizing God’s word. Then they realized they were being foolish; they repent and turn back to God.

Oftentimes, we question God. “How come I never seem to get ahead?” “I try to live a good life, and still you ignore me.” We get caught up in our own disappointments, our own failures. If you are stuck in a place of bitterness, you need to forgive and move on. Bitterness and anger will fester and boil. It will take over your whole being. Anger toward God blocks your spiritual health and well-being.

Anger toward God closes the door to the only one who can bring you healing and peace. He can bring you comfort and restore your relationships and life. God doesn’t need our forgiveness, but we need to forgive him and seek his forgiveness and help to be released from bitterness and resentment. If we have been harboring a resentment or grudge against God, we must forgive Him so that we may experience His power and blessings in our relationships and lives.

It doesn’t work to feel anger toward God. We have no reason to hold on to anger toward God. It affects our whole life, our relationships, how we look at life, and how we react to situations. God is the one who knows what is best for us. We must trust that He will answer our prayers in His own way and on His own time.

We need to keep trusting in the Lord. Dear God, bless me with Your gift of forgiveness. I shall hold no grudge against You. Amen.

OCTOBER

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because he cares for you.”

— I PETER 5:6

We go, we go, we go. We do, we do, we do. We give, we give, we give. Oftentimes, we feel like we are running in circles trying to do everything for everyone. Trying to be everything for everyone. We end up anxious, stressed, and unfulfilled. Is this normal? Is this how God intended our life to be? I don’t think so. This is the way our life turns when we place ourselves away from God.

We become anxious when we take matters into our own hands and try to control the outcome. We have the added stress of trying to manipulate circumstances to fit our desire. It is at these times when we need God. We need to hand our troubles over to God. We need to trust that God has our best interests at heart.

I have a very dear friend who is very spiritual; under every situation she is calm. She always says, “I have prayed over it, and now I have placed it in God’s hands.” It works! She is the person you want advice from. She is the person you want in a stressful situation.

God works! He will gladly take your problems. He will gladly relieve your stress. Turn your problems over to God. Take a deep breath; relax. There is relief for us in God. There is comfort for us in God. He cares about us always.

Dear God, thank You for your willingness to take my burdens and relieve my fears. Remind me that You are in control. Amen.



Mary Anne Casadei is a PUFL member of Henry P. Smith Unit 24 in Rome, N.Y.

CENTENNIAL Moments



ALA-BRANDED JEWELRY: LONGTIME SYMBOLS OF AUXILIARY PRIDE

Throughout the American Legion Auxiliary's long history, many ALA members have found ways to self-identify as a being part of our storied service organization — and expressing their ALA pride — through what they wear. Auxiliary members have worn their love on their sleeves, literally, with ALA arm bands. More popular ALA apparel and accessories included T-shirts, hats, bags, and jewelry.

American Legion Auxiliary jewelry dates back to the early years of the organization. With the ALA emblem prominently featured on them, an Auxiliary ring and brooch were included in the 1923 *Official Catalogue of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary Emblems and Supplies*, published by the Emblem Division of The Legion's national headquarters in Indianapolis. The price for the ring was \$6.30. The brooch was \$2.10. A war tax was included on both.

In the opening letter to ALA

members published in the 1937 *Auxiliary Catalog, Emblem Sales* Director E.O. Marquette wrote: "The American Legion Auxiliary has an enviable record of distinguished and unselfish public service. Yours is a distinct privilege — that of being eligible to wear the Auxiliary emblem. It is an honor and distinction of which you can justly be proud."

Choices of ALA jewelry for members has expanded through the years to include items such as earrings, necklaces, and bracelets. Some Auxiliary members have proudly passed on their ALA jewelry to generations of other Auxiliary members in their families. Marquette's words ring true today, just as they did in 1937.

Do you have any ALA jewelry heirlooms in your family?

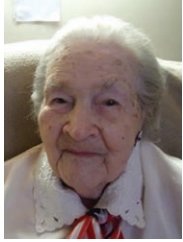
Tell us about it! If selected, your story may be included in future ALA national media. Send us a photo of

the jewelry, plus the basics: Who brought the piece into your family, for how many generations, who has it now, and what the heirloom piece means to you and your family. Contact us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org, (317) 569-4500, or 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

100:
ALA History
Facts
Did you
know?

ALA MEMBERS' MAJOR MILESTONES

As the American Legion Auxiliary continues its centennial celebration, ALA members are reaching major milestones of their own every day. Occasionally during the remainder of this ALA administrative year, Auxiliary magazine will showcase a few of our current members who either have reached an age of 100 years or older, or who have had an ALA membership anniversary of 75 or more continuous years.



Joan Krukowski

American Legion Auxiliary member Joan Krukowski often dressed up in a banana costume when distributing fresh fruit to veterans, just to make those military heroes smile.

But this is only part of her appeal. Krukowski, of ALA Unit 150 in Wausauke, Wis., has spent decades bringing cheer and tribute to veterans — with and without her fun, homemade, sometimes holiday-themed costumes. But she was almost always with her husband Erv, a Legionnaire and U.S. Army World War II veteran. She has 76 years of continuous ALA membership.

“The veterans have lifted our spirits and brought sunshine to our lives just as we hope we did for them,” said Krukowski, who was a volunteer at the Oscar G. Johnson Department

of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility in Iron Mountain, Mich., for 29 years, logging more than 7,300 volunteer hours there.

More impressive than her thousands of volunteer hours at the Johnson facility is all that she has done for veterans there. A few of Krukowski's efforts include participating in summertime carnivals for the veterans, visiting them nearly every holiday to host bingo games, and baking 12 pies every Thanksgiving until homemade food was no longer allowed at the facility.

During their visits, especially when the Krukowskis hosted bingo every Tuesday, Erv would frequently play the concertina while Joan would sing and dance along with the veterans.

“Every Tuesday, we looked forward to our visits knowing that we were able to serve our veterans in any way needed. We brought smiles to their faces and saw them clap their hands, tap their feet, or sing whenever Erv played the concertina,” she said.

In addition to volunteering at the VA facility, Krukowski engaged in many ALA mission-oriented activities. For example, she visited local schools and taught the children proper flag etiquette, and she tried to help revitalize ALA units that were about to disband.

Krukowski served as president of Unit 150 for 20 years, during

the same time her husband was commander of Post 150. Before transferring her membership to Unit 150, Joan belonged to Unit 192 in Franklin, Wis., where she served as president for two years.

After moving into a health care center in 2017, Krukowski has not been as active as she once was. Erv, her husband of 73 years, passed away in February 2020. He was 95. Joan finds joy in recalling the days she and Erv spent as part of the Legion Family, bringing laughter and smiles to veterans.

“We are forever grateful for the opportunity to have done this for our veterans who gave so much for us and this country. God bless them all!” she said, adding that she hopes ALA members today and future generations find time to spend with America's veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

“You don't have to wear a banana suit. But it's a lot of fun, and it makes veterans smile!” Krukowski said.

Krukowski joined the ALA in 1944. Her eligibility is through the service of her father, Charles Willey, a U.S. Calvary World War I veteran.

Krukowski passed away May 31 in an area hospital, according to Krukowski's daughter, ALA member Mary Labunski of Unit 476 in Loomis, Wis. *Auxiliary* magazine had interviewed Krukowski just 10 days prior to her death.

“Thank you again for talking to her and giving her such jubilation,” Labunski said about the interview. ★

By Landa Bagley, Staff Writer



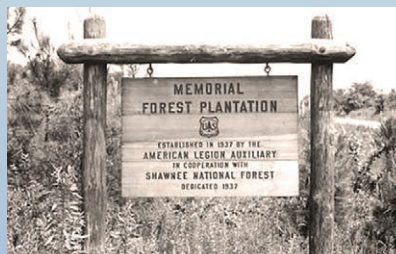
In the early 1960s, water pumps in Ecuador were among the projects funded by the ALA, enabling dozens of communities to have pure water.



Gen. George C. Marshall greets the first candidates for president of ALA Girls Nation in 1947: Mary Gay Woodruff (left) and George Ann Hicks. In the end, Hicks won the election.



In May 1948, National Commander James O'Neil and National President Ruth Hutton are shown broadcasting a special American Legion 29th birthday radio program on ABC.



In 1937, in cooperation with the Shawnee National Forest, the ALA established a Memorial Forest Plantation.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund: Members helping members in a time of need



The COVID-19 pandemic has taught all of us that our lives can change in a moment. Life changes quickly, unexpectedly, and we can't stop it.

Imagine...

The feeling of your heart sinking when you hear the word "cancer."

The defeat when your employer says, "Your position has been eliminated."

The anxiety when weather forecasters say a hurricane is headed your way.

The disbelief when your home is destroyed by a tornado.

These are just a few examples of how the unexpected can turn our lives upside down. Most will feel at a loss on how they are going to survive this setback financially. Thanks to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF), some of those financial worries can be lessened.

Since 1969, Auxiliary members have been helping each other get through tough times thanks to the AEF.

The fund was created with a bequest from the estate of American Legion Auxiliary member Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wis.

These grants of up to \$2,400 are awarded by the AEF grant committee on a case-by-case basis. They may be used for shelter and utilities. They may not be used for medical expenses or debt such as credit cards. Members of the American Legion Auxiliary whose dues are current and who have maintained membership for three consecutive years (the current year and immediate past two years) are eligible to apply.

Qualifying events are defined as financial crisis that leaves a member without resources for shelter or utilities, and no other source of aid is readily available. A natural disaster or weather emergency leaves a member without shelter or food. In extreme circumstances, educational training is needed by a member lacking the necessary skills for employment.

In 2017, several members of ALA

Unit 33 in Beaumont, Texas, received AEF grants after their homes were flooded during Hurricane Harvey. One of those recipients was Judy Lackey.

Lackey and her husband, Ron, were on vacation when they heard Hurricane Harvey was approaching Texas. This vacation was a special one for the couple — it was a celebration of Ron finishing chemotherapy treatments. Their celebration was dampened by the fear their home could be in danger.

As the Lackeys attempted to return home, they were met with several obstacles. Because of the storm, they could not get a flight. They rented a car, but still couldn't get home because of flooded roads. It was more than a week before they could return and assess the damage.

When they finally arrived, the water had receded, but many of their belongings were destroyed, and mold was found throughout the house. At one point, the water in their home was 53 inches deep. As damages were repaired, the Lackeys were displaced for eight months.

**Help your fellow members by making a donation to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.
Go to www.ALForVeterans.org/donate.**

The thought of applying for an AEF grant hadn't crossed Judy Lackey's mind. She was aware of the grant but didn't know there was an expedited form for those in immediate need. A fellow ALA member had heard about the damage to the Lackeys' home and told her she was eligible to apply. Lackey quickly filled out the application. "It was a blessing," she said. "It helped out tremendously. We are greatly appreciative."

Lackey shows her appreciation by paying it forward. She makes quilts and donates them to her unit to be raffled as a fundraiser for the AEF.

Spreading the word about the AEF is an important way to support fellow ALA members. You never know when someone will face a crisis. If you know of a member who could use help, let them know about the fund.

Sharon Atkins of Alabama sprang into action to help tornado victims in Cookeville, Tenn., earlier this year in March. "The stories coming across the news were heartbreaking. I called our department president and asked if she could reach out to the Department of Tennessee's Auxiliary president to see what the Department of Alabama could do to help," said Atkins. "At that time, I started making calls to units across Alabama to see if any were interested in helping the people of Tennessee."

Members of The American Legion Family in Alabama eagerly joined in. They began collecting financial donations to help out with immediate needs. They coordinated their efforts with Legionnaire Richard Buford of Cookeville, Tenn. Buford chartered a bus for members of both Alabama and Tennessee to tour the area and talk with members whose homes were destroyed or damaged.

"We not only talked with them, we hugged them and offered them support, we cried with them as we heard their stories, and we prayed with them," recalled Atkins. "Also, the coordination between all the various organizations that descended upon Cookeville to help

was amazing to witness."

As Atkins toured the area, she shared expedited AEF forms with members of Unit 46 in Cookeville. She found that many Auxiliary members knew about the AEF but did not know an expedited form existed. "This was a humbling, yet gratifying experience," said Atkins. "It felt good to help a neighboring department in their time of need."

Receiving help is a positive memory from a troubled time in a person's life. Tennessee ALA member Peggy Monroe and her family lost their home in 1991 to a fire. As they were dealing with the loss, her unit president recommended she apply for an AEF grant. Monroe was awarded \$1,500. "It paid rent for six months while we rebuilt our house," Monroe recalled.

Nearly 30 years after the fire, Monroe still tells others how thankful she is for the assistance she received and shares the importance of the fund whenever she has the opportunity. "Pride doesn't get in my way because I feel like it motivated me to enjoy what I've been doing all these years for the American Legion Auxiliary," Monroe said. "It's my heart, and I just continue to try to help other members and veterans."

Monroe now helps other members by donating to the AEF. "I'd like to encourage more people to donate to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund because we need to increase that fund," Monroe added.

To continue providing these grants, fundraising is important. Consider hosting fundraisers or donating to the national fund. There are several fundraisers your unit can host. West Virginia ALA Unit 137 in Capon Bridge has had success with painting parties. The ALA Department of Texas raised money for the AEF by asking those who attended the department's mid-winter convention to donate 100 rolled dimes. The possibilities are endless. ★

By Jennifer Donovan, Staff Writer

How to apply for an AEF grant:

- Request an application from your unit or your department headquarters, or download it from www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Submit the completed applications to an officer of the ALA unit you belong to.
- The unit portion will be completed and forwarded to ALA National Headquarters for the national AEF Grant Committee to review and approve.

Your family may also be eligible for help through American Legion financial assistance:

National Emergency Fund (NEF)

- Provides grants up to \$3,000 for eligible American Legion and Sons of The American Legion members, and up to \$10,000 for Legion posts affected by natural disasters.
- www.Legion.org/NEF

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)

- Awards cash grants up to \$1,500 to current active-duty servicemembers or American Legion members with minor children at home.
- Helps families in need meet the cost of shelter, food, utilities, and health expenses.
- www.Legion.org/FinancialAssistance



HELPING OTHERS (at left and above): American Legion Family members from Alabama and Tennessee visit the area of Cookeville, Tenn., following a tornado in March (photos: Sharon Atkins and Blair Miles).

Building ALA brand loyalty



TIPS ON USING LOCAL MEDIA TO SPREAD THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY'S MESSAGE

American Legion Auxiliary members work the mission every day across the country in different ways: ranging from assisting veterans, to park cleanups, to providing scholarships, to local youth.

Our members excel at helping our nation's veterans, military, and their families. But many people outside the Auxiliary still don't know who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Sure, there are newspaper articles published, radio spots utilized, and television newscasts streamed, but not enough compared to all the great work being done. The Auxiliary is making a difference across the country, but many people still don't know who we are. It's time to share!

Benefits of working with media

Sometimes, local media outlets are able to come to your event. But many times, they are strapped for staff and resources and can't make it to everything going on in your small town or large city. That's OK! Lucky for you, they often rely on reader/viewer/listener-submitted content to

help fill the gaps in coverage.

Use this opportunity of submitting content to build a relationship with your local media personnel so they turn to you as a resource for veteran-related events and news. They will appreciate you taking the time to send your information and photos so their audience still learns about your unit and/or event, even when the media outlet wasn't able to send their own crew.

Be ALA branded

Always be sure to be branded in ALA attire for photo/video opportunities. Show your pride for the organization! Being branded can include a range of items such as shirts, hats, table banners, car decals, jewelry, and more. Be creative — think outside the box on how you can use branding to advertise the American Legion Auxiliary. Be sure to check out American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales for branded items, which keeps the proceeds within The American Legion Family.

Being branded will come in handy for visual elements that are necessary to include with media outreach.

It will make your story more appealing and more likely to be used. Remember: Space is often limited, whether it's a print or a TV story, so everyone participating should be decked out in ALA emblems. Only one photo may be used, so you want to make sure that whatever photo it is, the Auxiliary is clearly represented. This goes for video footage as well.

Adapting to the times

If events aren't able to happen in person, you can still work the ALA mission in different and unique ways and still submit that story to media in order to build that brand loyalty as the go-to veterans support organization for information.

Ideas include making face masks, dropping off groceries for those who aren't able to leave their homes, volunteering to complete yardwork for seniors, and more. Working the mission is a bit different in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, but you can still let the public know about the Auxiliary and all the positive work we do in our nation's communities.

Help is a click away

Did you host a recent event or simply want to share general information about your Auxiliary unit with the media, but you're not sure what they are looking for? Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org and download the Public Relations Toolkit.

Whether you're trying to obtain media coverage for a big event, announce a special occasion, recruit new volunteers, or promote our cause, it's important to have the right tools for the job and to know how to use them. The toolkit does just that by providing a wide range of sources, including sample news releases and media alerts.

This will help you get started working with your local media and develop that relationship so you can get the word out about the American Legion Auxiliary and all that we do.



ALL IN THE FAMILY

The American Legion Auxiliary Branding Game has been revised to be Family-focused, now including the Legion as well as the Sons. Be sure to visit www.ALAforVeterans.org today to download the documents to play!

Item# 369764 (Indicate Quantity & Color Under Size)						Lovely Lace Front Hook Bra					
Size	S (32-34) 212	M (36-38) 213	L (40-42) 214	XL (44-46) 215	2XL (48-50) 216	<input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover@/NOVUS SM Cards Card# _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____ _____ _____					
White 25						Name _____					
Nude 21						Address _____					
Black 101						City _____ ST. _____ Zip _____					
Lovely Lace Front Hook Bra(s) @ \$9.99 ea.						Daytime Phone # _____					
*Add Applicable State/Local Sales Tax						Email _____					
Shipping Add \$4.95 1st bra						TOTAL \$ _____					
FREE SHIPPING when buying 2 or more						Source Code 78587 Thank You For Your Order <small>Please Print Clearly</small> <small>Send check/money order payable to Dream Products</small> <small>412 Dream Lane, P.O. Box 3690, Oshkosh, WI 54903-3690</small>					

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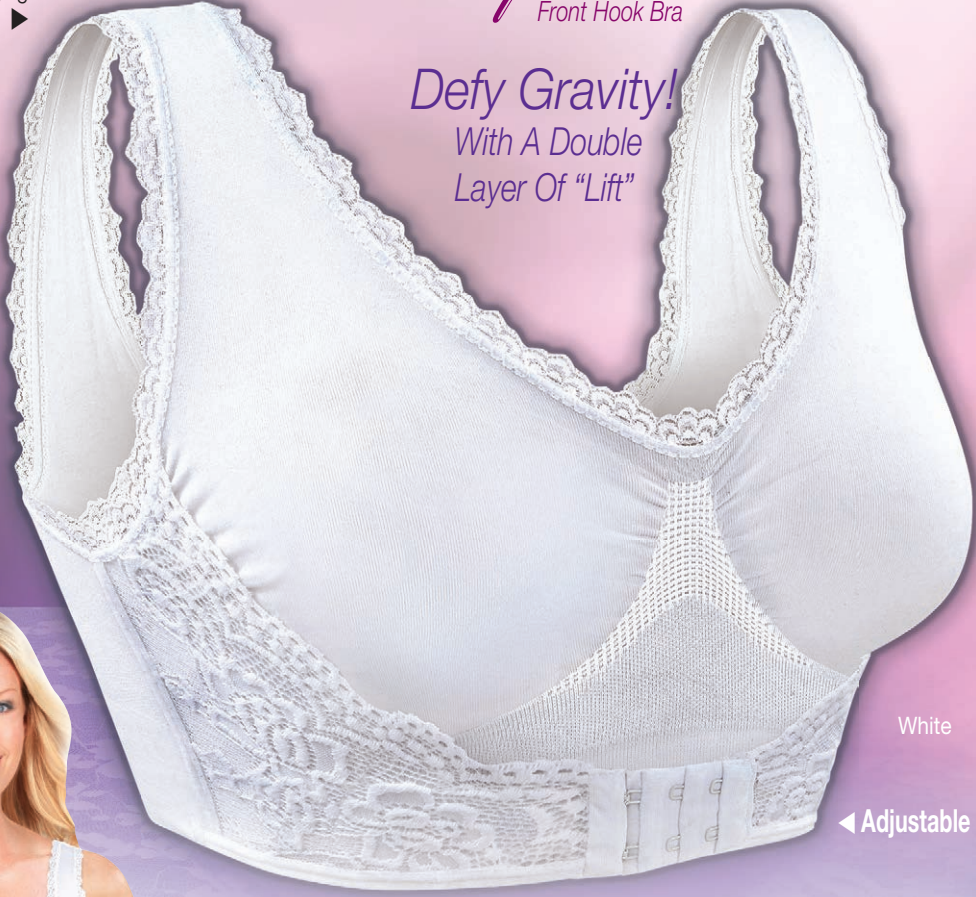
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ALA GIRLS STATE & ALA GIRLS NATION

POPPIES MADE BY WOMEN VETERANS WANTED FOR ALA GIRLS NATION

A visit to Arlington National Cemetery is emotional as respects are paid to those who unselfishly served our country. Even more emotional: laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Each year, a trip to Arlington National Cemetery is a highlight for ALA Girls Nation senators. During the visit, a wreath is placed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The night before the visit, senators learn about the meaning and importance of the red poppy. Every senator is then involved by placing traditional crepe paper poppies on the wreath to honor and remember our veterans and servicemembers.

The 2021 wreath will have even more significance — the poppies will be made by female veterans. The project, Her Poppy Tribute, was created by Arizona ALA member Marge Christianson, who is serving as the ALA Girls Nation poppy chair in 2021.

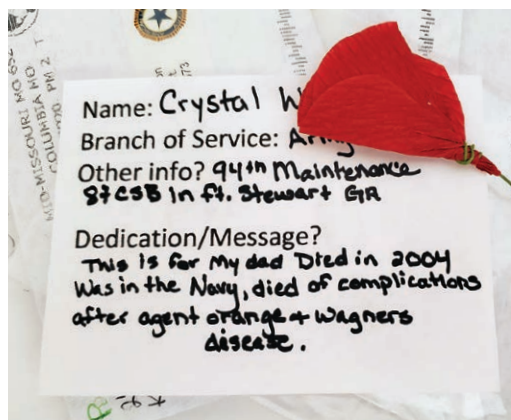
“I brought some poppy materials

to a women veteran art wellness program and asked if anyone would be interested in making a poppy for the wreath. Every single woman came forward to make a poppy — many with tears in their eyes,” said Christianson. “It was then that the idea of a national effort took hold.”

Christianson sends do-it-yourself poppy kits to those interested in helping with the project. In addition to the materials needed to make a poppy, an

information sheet is included for the veteran to complete. She has already received a poppy from a female veteran in every military branch. Christianson would like to receive 500 poppies.

Kits are being distributed to volunteers across the country who are asking women veterans to create a poppy. If you are interested in receiving and/or distributing a poppy kit, contact Christianson at ALAunit62AZ@gmail.com.



ALA GIRLS STATE CALIFORNIA ALUMNA USES LEGION SCHOLARSHIP TOWARD CAREER



Rosa Valdes

Rosa Valdes, a 2010 California ALA Girls State alumna, is pursuing her education with the help of The American Legion Legacy Scholarship, which is awarded to children of post-9/11 veterans who died while on active duty or who have a combined VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater.

Valdes received her undergraduate degree in public health at the University of California Berkeley. She is now using her scholarship to attend a 16-month accelerated nursing program at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy

and Health Sciences.

Upon completion of this program, Valdes plans to continue her education by attending graduate school to earn either a master's or doctorate degree. She hopes to one day become a Certified Nurse Midwife.

Valdes has ties with The American Legion Family. Her father, Albert Valdes, is a member of American Legion Post 31 in Salinas, Calif. She also assisted with events at a local post as part of her Junior ROTC program.

How has ALA Girls State influenced/impacted your life?

After an interview process that felt quite intense at the time, I remember being so excited and proud to be selected to attend ALA Girls State in 2010. It was one of my biggest accomplishments from high school. I felt like it gave me valuable experience which helped

not only in applying to colleges but moving on in life directly after high school.

What stands out to you most about attending ALA Girls State?

I remember feeling incredibly inspired being around girls from all across California who were talented and doing amazing things in their communities.

Why do you think girls should attend ALA Girls State?

ALA Girls State was an incredible once-in-a-lifetime experience. I remember learning about different levels of government (and even became mayor of my “city”) and remember having a blast during the whole experience. Not only do you get to spend an entire week in a new place, which is an experience in itself, but you get to meet so many incredible people and build connections that can help throughout college, your career, and life.

ALA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

'ARMY BRAT' CHILDHOOD BRINGS PERSPECTIVE ON BIG PICTURE

Jake Nikkila spends his days working at the U.S. Department of Defense, studying how chemicals in the body of servicemembers respond to high stress situations, in an effort to better the rehabilitation process for veterans.

Nikkila serves American heroes in a unique and instrumental way, and he had no shortage of inspiration in doing so.

His grandfather served in the U.S. Navy, and his father, still active duty, served most of Nikkila's childhood. Though moving every few years could be seen as an obstacle for many people, Nikkila credits it with helping him become more social and adaptable, as well as teaching him important life lessons.

"I think being an Army brat really gives you a lot of perspective on life and the big picture," Nikkila said. "Being able to learn what's important, it's not just about yourself but helping society and the world."

But one obstacle Nikkila didn't expect to face as a result of his military upbringing was paying out-of-state tuition for college. Having just moved, he didn't qualify for in-state tuition anywhere, meaning any college he chose would be thousands of dollars more than if he had lived in the state for two years before attending.

Though this gave Nikkila more freedom in his choice of school, he knew it would come with a major



A MILITARY FAMILY: Jake Nikkila (left) celebrates graduating with an undergraduate degree in biochemical engineering from Clemson University; Nikkila honoring his father Colin's promotion to colonel with his mother, Deb, and sister, Mikaela.

price tag — that's why he went looking for scholarships. Luckily, he had attended American Legion Boys State in high school and was given a list of scholarships for which he could apply.

He applied for and received the American Legion Auxiliary Children of Warriors National Presidents' scholarship in 2015. It was the largest scholarship he received and made a sizable dent in his first year of tuition at Clemson University.

"It was such an honor to receive this scholarship," Nikkila said. "I thought it was a long shot, but the money upfront really helped me get through."

Nikkila graduated in December 2019 debt-free with a degree in biochemical engineering, concentrating in biomaterials and minoring in physics.

Over the years, Nikkila and his family members have received lots of support from The American Legion Family. He credits scholarships like

those offered through the American Legion Auxiliary for helping him be able to follow his dreams.

"I just want to say 'thank you' to those who donated; that means the world to me," Nikkila said. "It was four years of making ends meet, but I got through it, and I hope to eventually give back when I am able."

For now, he plans to give back to our nation's heroes through his career.

"While I didn't choose the military route, I still chose a route in bioengineering that I can use in some way to give back to the world through research and innovation," Nikkila said. "Scholarships like this make that happen."

Support incredible military youth like Jake Nikkila by donating to ALA National Scholarships. You can donate online at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Donate or mail a check to ALA National Headquarters, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 and put "ALA Scholarships" in the memo line.

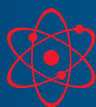
National Scholarships offered by the American Legion Auxiliary:



Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship
Fifteen \$5,000 scholarships are awarded annually (three per geographic division), to direct descendants of veterans who served in the Armed Forces during eligibility dates for membership in The American Legion.



Spirit of Youth Scholarship
Five \$5,000 scholarships (one per geographic division) are awarded each year to ALA Junior members.



Non-Traditional Student Scholarship
Five \$2,000 scholarships are awarded (one per geographic division) to a member of the Legion Family returning to school after a break in studies.



Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship
Ten \$2,500 scholarships (two per geographic division) are awarded to current college students who retained their ALA Junior membership into adulthood.

Learn more and start your application for an ALA scholarship at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships.

A wise PERSON SAID



For much of her life, American Legion Auxiliary member Lettie Irons Connell has been guided by her moral compass which directs her to ways she can help

others. Connell successfully pursued a career as a police officer. She spent 17 years on the force in Los Angeles County, Calif., during the Vietnam War era, working her way up to the rank of sergeant.

Coming from a family filled with military veterans and being married to Robert, a Vietnam-era U.S. Navy veteran, she later joined ALA Unit 25 in Cottonwood, Ariz., the same time her husband

joined American Legion Post 25 there. Today, they belong to Post and Unit 93 in Camp Verde, Ariz., where the couple lives.

Even in retirement, Connell helps others. She aids veterans and their families by volunteering her time and talents as Post 93's veteran service officer. This position helps veterans determine what benefits they are eligible for, and assists them in their pursuit of those benefits. Connell is also a claims agent accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, meaning she can work with any U.S. military veteran who asks for help or is referred to her for assistance.

LETTIE IRONS CONNELL

Why are you so committed to being a service officer/accredited claims agent?

It's in my blood to help people by doing paperwork and investigating to assist those who have kept us in the United States free. I learned everything I could about laws, codes, and forms. I took all the exams required to become the best advocate I could. It's wonderful to see the faces of people when I have taken a big strain off them and they become able to help their loved ones. Veterans need to have someone to listen to them, and I am someone who cares.

Was there pushback from anyone about you, a woman and non-veteran, becoming a service officer/accredited claims agent?

Yes, and it was hard to take. But being the second woman on the police force where I worked, in 1969,

wasn't easy either. In both cases, I proved I could do the job well. You have to believe in yourself. Never let someone else's negative words stop you.

What do you get from being an ALA member?

I experience comradery. Plus, I have the honor of meeting Blue and Gold Star parents and letting them know I care. Also, I get to help with projects that can lead to a better life for our veterans, their families, and communities. I'm able to work with others who care about our veterans and this country as much as I do.

You feel strongly about honoring and helping our nation's veterans, and about your culture. Give an example of how those values have intersected in your life.

I am American Indian of the Lakota Sioux Tribe. My sister Victoria Irons Graves and I had a nonprofit organization, through

which we escorted children from several American Indian reservations to Washington, D.C., to a cultural event held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. While in D.C., we met up with some military veterans to pay tribute at the World War II Monument, Korean War Monument, and Vietnam War. This was an amazing learning event for our children, who are brought up to honor our veterans. Another example: As a veteran service officer/claims agent, I also work with veterans from the Navajo, Hopi, and Yavapai Apache reservations in Arizona.

What is the biggest life lesson you've learned?

We are but a nanosecond in the scheme of things in this world. Do what you can to be part of it while enjoying every moment, being true to yourself by following your moral compass, and knowing that you matter.



Learn more about becoming a service officer and/or a VA-accredited claims agent, by visiting www.legion.org/training/service-officer and va.gov.



THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY STEPS UP IN RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS

Members and volunteers of The American Legion Family are resilient, and that has been proven many times over during the COVID-19 global pandemic. As communities were impacted by coronavirus, members stepped up and found ways to continue serving their communities, even if it was at a distance. Legion Family members across the country helped by hosting blood drives, providing meals, making food deliveries, sewing protective masks for health care workers, and more.

American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford remained connected with members while social distancing at his home in North Carolina. Oxford posted regular updates to keep members informed of the latest developments as they related to The American Legion, resources that members may need, and inspiring stories of the Legion Family doing great work across the country. Oxford also made several media appearances from his home to discuss the Legion's response to the pandemic on radio, television, and in newspapers.

Oxford continued to encourage posts to reach out to veterans and their families through the Buddy Check



CARING FOR OTHERS: Members of The American Legion in Rosedale, Queens, fed hundreds of residents left unemployed or hard pressed to buy food for their families. Veteran Tim Turane distributes food (photo: Todd Maisel).

program. Legionnaires connected by phone, email, and social media. Buddy Checks helped make isolated veterans feel more connected and provided help, such as a run to the store, prescription pickups, or meal delivery. A celebrity also joined in on Buddy Checks — country music singer Gary LeVox of Rascal Flatts encouraged Buddy Checks in a video posted on the Rascal Flatts Facebook page.

The American Legion National Headquarters created a centralized webpage for all things related to COVID-19. Check it out at

www.Legion.org/coronavirus.

The American Legion also launched a biweekly COVID-19 impact survey to track the impact of the pandemic on veterans and their families. It allows the Legion to analyze changes across the country and address how to best use resources. The survey is anonymous, but participants who need assistance are connected to a representative from The American Legion.

There are a variety of ways The American Legion and members stepped up. You can read their stories at www.Legion.org.

LONGTIME NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE PASSES



Philip B. Onderdonk Jr.
(Photo: Clay Lomneth/TAL)

Philip B. Onderdonk Jr., who served 35 years as American Legion national judge advocate, passed away June 1 after a valiant

battle with cancer. He was 77.

The U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War and member of American Legion Post 183 in Parkville, Md., retired in 2018 from the national office he had held since

1983. He was the eighth national judge advocate in the organization's history and the longest-serving constitutional officer.

As chief legal counsel for The American Legion, Onderdonk Jr. ensured that the organization's National Constitution and Bylaws were upheld; the American Legion emblem was protected; national meetings were properly conducted; contracts and media releases were reviewed for legal compliance; and friend-of-the-court — amicus curiae — briefs were filed in support of positions, policies and resolutions from the nation's largest

organization of wartime veterans.

Onderdonk Jr.'s work to protect military and veterans memorials and monuments that contain religious symbols was nationally recognized in 2015.

During his tenure, Onderdonk Jr. was also deeply involved with legislation that created the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals in 1988, giving veterans judicial recourse to dispute VA disability claims decisions.

U.S. Navy veteran Kevin J. Bartlett was appointed national judge advocate on Jan. 1, 2018, to succeed Onderdonk Jr.

FOCUS ON THE MISSION, NOT THE CANDIDATE

HOW YOUR POLITICAL COMMENTS CAN AFFECT MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



ALA MEETS U.S. PRESIDENTS (top left, clockwise): Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1954; Harry S. Truman in 1945; Jimmy Carter in 1978; Ronald Reagan in 1983; John F. Kennedy in 1963; George H. W. Bush in 1991.

A Mission Matters guest column contributed by Marri Krupco, department vice commander, The American Legion Department of Kansas, and ALA member of Unit 0279

With elections coming up in a couple of months, let's touch on a topic that relates to membership, but not directly. I'm sure most of you are aware that The American Legion is a nonpartisan organization, meaning we do not side with a political party or take a stand on anything political that is not related to one of our four pillars. We also do not endorse candidates for government offices; however, we do pay attention to which politicians are supportive of our causes. The American Legion Auxiliary, as part of the Legion Family, also stands by this nonpartisanship.

With that being said, members need to be more conscientious of what we post on social media, the emails we send, and the words we speak. I'm not saying we shouldn't have an opinion; what I am saying is we do need to be able to recognize when it isn't appropriate to share those opinions.

At no point ever will all of us agree on everything, but we all can still work toward common goals.

An example of how this can affect membership

You're wearing your favorite pro-so-and-so hat and approach someone wearing a U.S. Army shirt and strike up a conversation. You tell them you belong to the local American Legion organization and invite them to come to an event happening over the weekend. They say something about your hat, and you proceed to rant about how much you love so-and-so and how horrible a person their opponent is. As it turns out, this Army veteran actually likes the opponent. They don't tell you that because they just spent the last 10 minutes listening to you tell them how terrible their candidate is, and subsequently they don't ever come by the post to an event. They never become a member because they've been left with the wrong impression of what The American Legion Family is all about.

Be cautious of what you post on social media

More than likely, people aren't going to do their political research on social media. Therefore, that is not the forum to share that kind of information. This is especially important if you have a considerable following on social media that places you as a representative of The American Legion Family. You don't want to accidentally give the impression that what you share is the stance of our organizations. Trust me: Even if you comment that it's your personal opinion, and not that of our Legion Family organizations, they won't notice the comment. You can send this kind of thing in a private message to people who know you and trust your opinion.

Be respectful while representing The American Legion Family

If you are wearing anything that shows The American Legion, the emblem, or even something with another American Legion Family name or emblem on it, then you are representing those organizations. Please be careful what you say, as again you could inadvertently make an eligible member feel uncomfortable or turned off about joining.

Be watchful of your attire when attending Legion Family events


Last, if you are wearing that pro-so-and-so hat or shirt, tread lightly when talking to potential new members, or even current members for that matter. If you are able, I recommend removing your hat or changing that shirt before starting the conversation. If you can't change your shirt and you're asked about it, don't make a big deal. Simply state that "it's just a shirt." Do not get into a political conversation with a new member or one you don't know personally, as this can cause the person to misunderstand the aims and purposes of our American Legion Family organizations.

American Legion Auxiliary social media

Visit our social media at www.ALAFforVeterans.org/social-media    

ALA MEMBERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY SERVED OUR MISSION WHILE MODIFYING THEIR TRADITIONAL NATIONAL POPPY DAY® ACTIVITIES DUE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING RESTRICTIONS.




 **@Patty Moore Sater**
Unit 200 in Hampstead, Maryland hosted a drive-thru poppy table.



SOME ALA GIRLS STATE PROGRAMS OPTED TO HOST A VIRTUAL PROGRAM INSTEAD OF CANCELLING



 **@ALAVGS**
We're so proud to feature a panel of ALA Volunteer Girls State alumnae who are working hard to make a positive impact in Tennessee through their public service roles.

Keep up with the latest news between issues of *Auxiliary* magazine. Follow us on social media @ALAFforVeterans.

Join our growing list of followers on social media:
Facebook: 24,000
Twitter: 2,615
Instagram: 1,925

Auxiliary's Word Scramble answers from page 25:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. CERTAIN | 9. ENERGETIC |
| 2. CHEERFUL | 10. FORWARD |
| 3. CONFIDENCE | 11. CALMNESS |
| 4. STRONG | 12. OPTIMISM |
| 5. GENUINE | 13. UPBEAT |
| 6. ENHANCED | 14. BRIGHT |
| 7. TRUE | 15. VIVACIOUS |
| 8. COOL | |

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THE LAST *word*

“Change your leaves. Keep intact your roots.”

— Victor Hugo, French author



American Legion Auxiliary members, so deeply rooted in U.S. military routines, traditions, and customs, are familiar with the phrase “You are not forgotten,” which honors America’s prisoners of war, those still missing in action, and their families. Held annually on the third Friday of September, National POW/MIA Recognition Day is a major focus for Auxiliary members, whether physically through an event, or in hidden ways, through our hearts.

Above: Airmen participate in the POW/MIA Recognition Day ruck march at Moody Air Force Base in Georgia last September (photo: U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Erick Requadt).



Your Legacy, Their Future

Maybe you're a lifetime member, or maybe you've joined in the past year. Either way, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is near and dear to your heart. You work hard to support veterans, military, and their families through your involvement with the American Legion Auxiliary. Wouldn't it be nice to know that support will continue for years to come?

Leaving a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the American Legion

Auxiliary Foundation will ensure the values and programs you cherish will continue to impact future generations of heroes.

Whether you give through a will, trust, life insurance policy, or retirement plan, your gift of any amount will change a life.

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***A Community of Volunteers
Serving Veterans, Military,
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***Let us be
a bright light
during these
difficult times***

The last few months have been daunting and extraordinary as we've had to adapt to challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From checking in on one another to making masks for our health care professionals on the front lines, YOU have stepped up.

As we all face our own set of unique challenges, we must keep in mind that our fellow American Legion Auxiliary members need us now more than ever because overcoming challenges is what defines us.

Donate to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund to ensure we can be there for our fellow members. We're counting on you to help be a beacon of hope during these dark times.

Give today:
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(317) 569-4500

