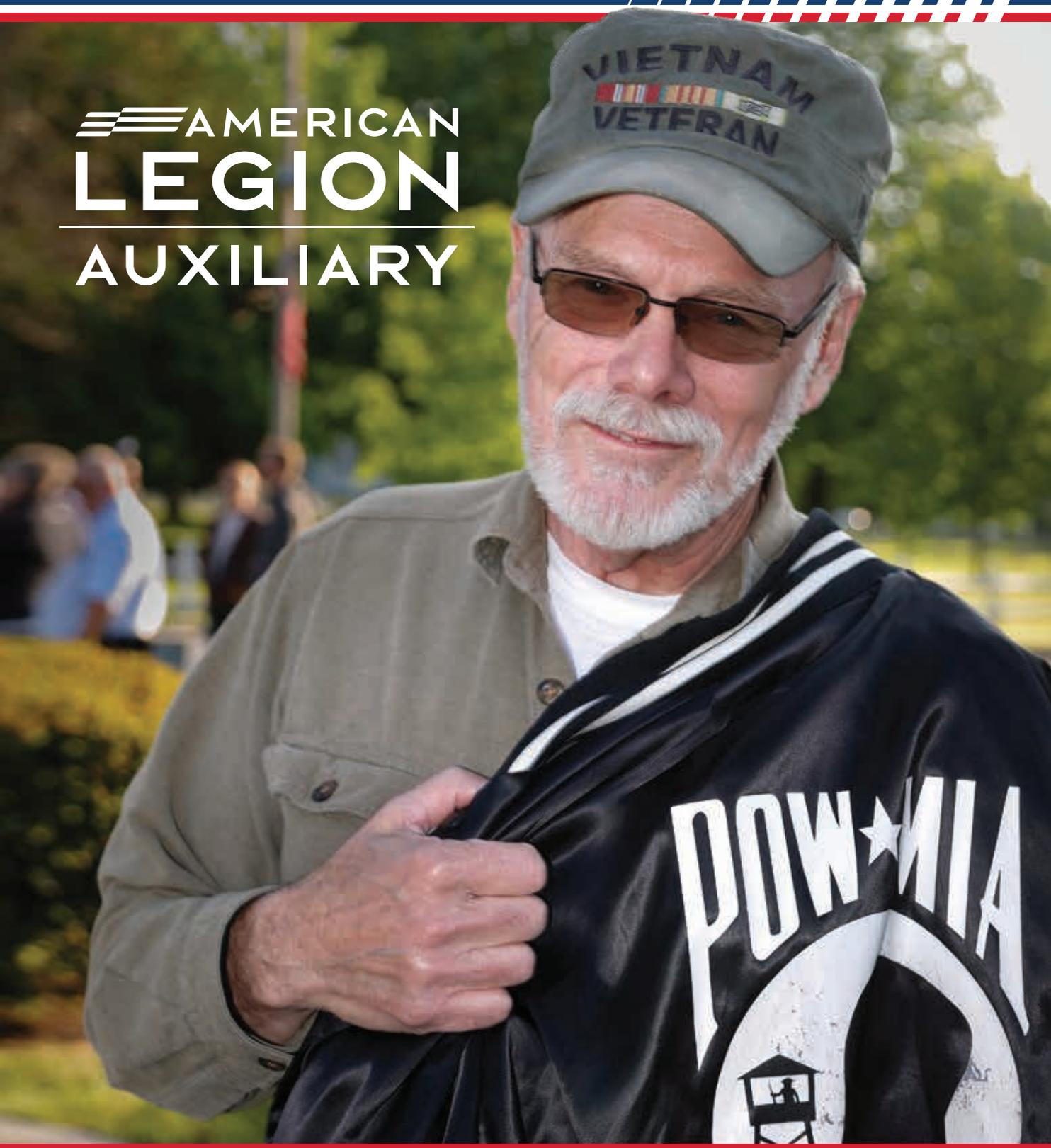


www.ALAforVeterans.org

 AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY



2023 ALA ANNUAL REPORT



*Change
the Future
by Honoring
the Past*

#GI ING TUESDAY

#GivingTuesday, a global day of philanthropy, is November 28, 2023. Commemorate your military hero this year on #GivingTuesday with a gift in their honor to the American Legion Auxiliary Mission Endowment Fund. Your gift will change the future and honor the past.

You can make a gift today by scanning the QR code, texting HONOR to 1-844-940-3450, mailing a check to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation at 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268, or by visiting us online at: donate.legion-aux.org/GivingTuesday.

Scan here
to make
a gift today:



 AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY
FOUNDATION

Contents

Annual Impact Report	6	Report: Southern Division	22
Focusing on Our Veterans, Focusing on Our Future	8	Report: Western Division	22
Report: National President	14	Committee: Americanism	23
Report: National Vice President	14	Committee: Children & Youth	23
Report: National Secretary	15	Committee: Community Service	24
Report: National Treasurer	15	Committee: Education	24
Report: National Chaplain	16	Committee: ALA Girls Nation	25
Report: National Historian	16	Committee: Junior Activities	25
Report: Executive Director	17	Committee: Legislative	26
Committee: Risk & Compliance	17	Committee: National Security	26
Report: Finance Committee	18	Committee: Poppy	27
Report: American Legion Auxiliary Foundation	18	Committee: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	27
Report: Financial Statement	19	Committee: Auxiliary Emergency Fund	28
Report: Central Division	20	Committee: Constitution & Bylaws	29
Report: Eastern Division	21	Committee: Leadership	29
Report: Northwestern Division	21	Committee: Membership	30
		Committee: Public Relations	30



Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary

For God and country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

- To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;*
 - to maintain law and order;*
 - to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;*
 - to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;*
- to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation;*
 - to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;*
 - to make right the master of might;*
 - to promote peace and goodwill on Earth;*
- to safeguard and transmit to posterity, the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy;*
 - to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion;*
- to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.*



What an amazing year for the American Legion Auxiliary! Our members continued working the mission and serving our veterans, military, and their families through all of our programs.

I enjoyed visiting many departments and units throughout the country to see members giving back to their communities. You are the backbone of this organization, and you keep us going.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all who gave to the national focus this administrative year: companions of veterans. As they registered for the 2023 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival and found out their meals, flights, and/or hotel rooms were paid for, they were so grateful to the ALA for the gift. It really brought the spirits up for those veterans to have their companions there to help with any emotional, mental, or physical needs. Because of your generosity, companions of veterans will be able to attend the Festival for years to come.

It was humbling to participate in POW/MIA ceremonies with units and posts. It's important for us to always remember that not all are home. I appreciate everyone who raised awareness about servicemembers who are still missing. We placed an extra emphasis on them for the 2022–2023 administrative year, and I hope you all continue to keep our POW/MIA in your hearts and minds.

Thank you to all members for all your work in recruiting, renewing, and rejoining members to the ALA. It's been exciting to see membership numbers grow from this time last year. This is a great sign for the organization!

I'm grateful to all of our members who worked the mission and demonstrated the *Service Not Self* mindset our organization has maintained for over 100 years and counting. As we enter the next administrative year, may we all continue to put the mission first.

Vickie Koutz
National President
American Legion Auxiliary

The logo for the American Legion, featuring a stylized American flag with three horizontal stripes to the left of the text "AMERICAN LEGION" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

The saying goes that you can choose your friends but not your family. I, for one, am glad to consider the American Legion Auxiliary to be both. Not only has the American Legion Auxiliary been a vital part of The American Legion Family since 1919, your tireless support for our programs and your advocacy for veterans are constant reminders of our enduring friendship.

Congress passed the PACT Act last year. It impacts the lives of millions of friends and their families. The American Legion was among the leading advocates for this law, but we knew we were not alone in our fight for its passage. The American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion were with us every step of the way. Thanks to our collective efforts, the president signed the most comprehensive health care legislation dealing with military toxic exposures in history.

Priority one for The American Legion Family is to save veterans' lives. Our Be The One message to prevent veteran suicide is making a difference. VA is now required by law to conduct an annual buddy check week to encourage peer support and outreach to vulnerable veterans. If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, I implore you to call 988, the national crisis line.

We are a stronger family because of the American Legion Auxiliary. Thank you for all that you do.

Vincent "Jim" Troiola
National Commander
The American Legion

The logo for the Sons of the American Legion, featuring the text "SONS OF THE" above a horizontal line, followed by a stylized American flag with three horizontal stripes to the left of the text "AMERICAN LEGION" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

It was an amazing experience to serve alongside the American Legion Auxiliary — the true workhorse of The American Legion Family.

This amazing year was marked with trailblazing milestones for the Sons of The American Legion; most, if not all of them, would not have been possible without the unchanging support of the American Legion Auxiliary.

The Sons of The American Legion was able achieve over 100% of our membership goal. There is a good chance that our membership growth had a significant impact on both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

This year's commander's project was to bring awareness to Be The One and support the Veterans & Children Foundation (V&CF). Support to Be The One and V&CF by each department was amazing. The Auxiliary was instrumental in providing support to their respective departments.

From all of the squadrons throughout this great nation, thank you for your services to this incredible organization. We are The American Legion Family.

Christopher A. Carlton
National Commander
Sons of The American Legion



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

TOTAL IMPACT NUMBERS

Total volunteer hours x \$31.80	\$198,349,034
Dollars raised/spent for veterans, military, and families	\$14,066,097
Dollars raised/spent for youth, scholarships, communities	\$14,732,386
Subtotal	\$227,147,517

ADDITIONAL ASSETS

ALA budget net expenses including gifts in kind/contributed services to ALAF	\$9,938,014
ALA net assets without donor restrictions	\$35,702,780
ALA Foundation budget net expenses less GIK	\$296,888
ALA Foundation net assets with and without donor restrictions	\$2,527,652
Total impact of volunteer service and contributions	\$275,612,851

SERVICE FOR VETERANS/MILITARY/FAMILIES

Number of veterans/active duty/reserve military served	551,825
Number of military families served	183,865
Number of youth served	405,965

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Hours serving veterans/military	2,930,887
Hours serving family support	665,958
Hours serving youth development	447,861
Hours for ALA Girls State	199,395
Hours for community	1,993,290
Total volunteer hours	6,237,391



WHO WE ARE. WHAT WE DO. SEE WHY WE MATTER.

DOLLARS RAISED/SPENT ON YOUTH, SCHOLARSHIPS, COMMUNITY

Youth support	
<i>\$ spent on goods for youth activities</i>	\$1,840,911
<i>\$ direct aid to needy children (cash aid)</i>	\$683,399
<i>All other C&Y expenses</i>	\$641,009
<i>Contributions to other child charities</i>	\$1,562,678
<i>ALA Girls State</i>	\$2,621,471
Scholarships	\$1,274,444
Community	\$6,108,474
Total Youth, Scholarships, and Community	\$14,732,386

DOLLARS RAISED/SPENT ON VETERANS, MILITARY, AND THEIR FAMILIES

Veterans/active duty/reserve	\$8,626,489
In-kind donations	\$1,601,378
Dollars raised from poppies or poppy items distributed	\$2,042,345
Total amount paid to veterans who made poppies	\$211,098
Military families	\$1,584,787
Total dollars raised/spent	\$14,066,097

Due to publishing deadlines, data represents actual numbers received by American Legion Auxiliary departments during the reporting year of April 30, 2022, to May 1, 2023, with reporting from 94% participation of departments.

Focusing on our veterans, focusing on our future

The 2022-2023 American Legion Auxiliary administrative year was full of excitement, remembrance, and a new look. ALA members across the country continued to work the mission and have a *Service Not Self* mindset helping veterans, military, and their families.

Healing through the arts

Detailed artwork, emotional creative writing pieces, and songs sung with passion are all part of the week for veterans who attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF). For the 2022-2023 American Legion Auxiliary administrative year, National President Vickie Koutz's focus was NVCAF veteran companions — whether that was money for a meal plan for the Festival, travel, and/or a separate hotel room if needed for non-family member companions.

Koutz said she appreciated everyone who understood the importance of needing to help NVCAF companions.

It was incredible for ALA members to see companions eating with their veterans at the 2023 Festival because of this initiative — something previously many could never afford to do. At National Convention in late August, Koutz will announce the grand total of

money raised for the project. Follow @ALAforVeterans on social media to stay up to date.



U.S. Navy veteran Kevin Dougherty rehearses for the 2023 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival stage show performance.

Veterans' companions in St. Louis were very appreciative of the assistance. Some, without help from the Auxiliary, would not have been able to attend the event. Many provide physical, mental, and/or emotional support to their veteran.

During the week, companions had the opportunity to get out of the hotel and take a guided trolley ride around St. Louis and learn about the city. Companions could also participate in some of the art workshops offered to the veterans as a way of saying thank-you for supporting their veteran at NVCAF.

The ALA has been involved with the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival since 2000 when then-President Kristine West first initiated a connection.



Years later, the ALA had grown to become a co-presenter of the event, along with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The NVCAF gives our nation's veterans the chance to express themselves through different art mediums, heal from traumatic experiences, and regain a sense of camaraderie that was part of military life.

To help veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities, VA medical centers (VAMCs) use a different form of rehabilitative treatment — creative arts. Local Festivals take place at VAMCs across the country. Through a national judging process, first, second, and third place entries in each category are determined. Only selected first place winners are featured at NVCAF.

The national Festival week culminates in the art and writing exhibitions, and stage show performance. Throughout the week, veterans rehearse, participate in art and writing workshops, and build friendships with fellow attendees.

The Auxiliary's support in volunteer hours and monetary donations make a difference in the NVCAF. ALA members of the national Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee help in a variety of ways — from registration to sewing, ironing, and steaming costumes, to helping with meals — they always put veterans' needs first so they could have an incredible Festival week.

Through this lifechanging experience, many veterans leave the Festival with a newfound sense of purpose, the desire to participate again, a feeling of camaraderie with their fellow veterans, and the shared healing power of the arts.

The 2024 national Festival will be in Denver. Stay tuned for more updates by following @ALAforVeterans on social media.

New for 2023, the Festival debuted an updated logo for the national event. The points of the star represent the five divisions of the competition:

- » Green is for the art division and represents growth, new beginnings, health, and wellness.
- » Blue is for creative writing. Past Festival participants have said that when they are writing, they feel relaxed and calm. The story or poem they shared makes them feel like they have purpose.
- » Purple reflects the dance division. The color inspires passion, creativity, and can kick-start your imagination.
- » Red has been associated with theater for many years. It also represents courage and a sense of energy, awareness, and reflection.
- » Yellow brings it all home with the music division. Yellow brings about feelings of hope, joy, happiness, and positivity — all the feels when you are listening to or singing your favorite song or a tune that makes you smile.



NATIONAL VETERANS
CREATIVE ARTS
F E S T I V A L

Remembering those who are still missing

The empty POW/MIA chair is on display at many American Legion post homes. This solemn symbol is a stark reminder that not all who have served our country are home. The U.S. has thousands of prisoners of war and missing in action from multiple wars and conflicts.

Annually in September, that focus receives a spotlight via National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Established in 1979 through a proclamation signed by President Jimmy Carter, each president since has issued an annual proclamation declaring the third Friday in September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Ceremonies for this day are held across the country — state capitals, schools, and veterans’ facilities — among other locations.

For Vermont American Legion Post and ALA Unit 49, a vigil is held every Thursday for those who are still missing. Some weeks, it is a silent vigil to really emphasize why

the Family does this — such as Memorial Day or Veterans Day — other times, there is sharing and fellowship. At the end, a POW/MIA poem is read, the flag is properly folded, and most leave with a sincere reminder of those who have yet to make it back home after honorably serving their

country. The event is held no matter the weather — winter winds, pelting rain, scorching sun — or any other conditions Mother Nature unleashes.

Vermont’s regularly occurring vigil started in August 1993 and has been held since. It currently lasts 48 minutes — one minute for each year since the Vietnam War ended. Holding the vigil on a weekly basis

helps get the word out to residents and visitors alike, and emphasizes how important this topic still is.

The vigil is a place for veterans to gather and be with each other — a safe haven for them — as they support one another in finding those who are still missing.

“
The vigil is a place for veterans to gather and be with each other as they support one another in finding those who are still missing.
”



Vermont's vigil brings awareness to the community on how POW/MIA is still an ongoing issue. Many people don't realize or have forgotten that our country still has missing servicemembers from several previous wars.

The vigil is held in Veterans Memorial Park, which is across from Fair Haven Town Park — some people witness the vigil just by being in the area.

The POW/MIA flag is displayed the entire time — the black and white image of a gaunt silhouette, a strand of barbed wire, and an ominous watchtower. The national American Legion Auxiliary and other organizations, civilians, and businesses choose to fly this flag every single day. The gesture is done to respect and honor those who were held in captivity and returned, as well as those who have yet to come home. The POW/MIA flag came from efforts of family members during the Vietnam War who wanted to make the public aware of their loved ones who were being held prisoner or declared missing.

In addition to American Legion Family members and other veterans organizations bringing awareness to those still missing, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is responsible for determining the fate of our missing, and, where possible, recovering and identifying those who made the ultimate sacrifice. DPAA's mission is to provide the fullest accounting for our nation's missing personnel to their families and the nation.

More than 81,500 Americans currently remain missing from World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Cold War, and the Gulf War/other conflicts. According to the DPAA, 75 percent of those losses are in the Indo-Pacific with over 41,000 presumed lost at sea. On Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam in Hawaii, the DPAA has the largest and most diverse skeletal

identification laboratory in the world with more than 30 anthropologists, archaeologists, and forensic odontologists on staff.

The DPAA hosts briefings across the country and through livestreams to keep families updated. During these meetings, updates are shared on the latest information available on the U.S. government's worldwide search.

They hear from senior officials, scientists, and experts about the mission.

The hardest part of accounting for missing servicemembers is not having the necessary DNA family reference samples to make an identification. For descendants of missing servicemembers, contact your service casualty officer about a DNA sample by visiting www.DPAA.mil/Families/Contact-Information.

For the 2022–2023 ALA administrative year, Koutz worked to raise awareness of our country's POWs and MIAs. Her husband, Jim, returned to Vietnam years after serving overseas to help dig for remains. Listening to Jim talk about his experiences made Koutz realize

how important POW/MIA awareness still is today, leading her to place a special administrative year emphasis on the topic during her term as ALA national president. Koutz spoke about POW/MIAs during her ALA visits to units and departments.



In November 2022, Koutz and American Legion National Security Director Mario Marquez spent time in Oregon with Team Long Road — U.S. Marine Corps veterans Justin “JD” LeHew, Coleman “Rocky” Kinzer, and Ray Shinohara — who hiked through 12 states and 3,365 miles to bring awareness to our POWs/MIAs, and that search efforts need to continue. The decision to walk U.S. Highway 20 was significant for several reasons. The highway is known as America’s longest road, which relates to the long road to bring our POW/MIAs



Members of the Fair Haven, Vt., community attend a POW/MIA vigil conducted by Post/Unit 49.

home, the War in Afghanistan and Iraq is America’s longest war and began 20 years ago, portions of the road are known as the POW/MIA Highway, and it’s designated as the Medal of Honor Highway.

Though these Marines are retired from the military, they continue to serve by working to make sure all who served are returned home.

Hearing their stories, Koutz learned The American Legion Family could help by continuing to spread awareness on the topic.

A new look while continuing tradition

Ch-ch-changes! During the 2022–2023 administrative year, we ushered in a new generation of marketing resources with updated logos courtesy of The American Legion.

The American Legion Auxiliary is a go-to support for veterans, military, and their families — and has been for more than a century — but now with a different look.

Because the blue star emblem is as much of a legacy as the American Legion Auxiliary itself, it didn’t go away ... it is simply being used in specific applications. Since the new branding options’ debut in late 2022, the refreshed look and feel has helped ALA members in recruiting efforts and publicizing our mission outreach to an audience we haven’t touched yet.

As mentioned in the *ALA Branding Guide*, our brand is our identity. It’s our reputation, our promise. It’s how the public recognizes us. It defines who we are — a

community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.

In essence, branding means showing off your organization or company in the form of logos on apparel, signs, hats, business cards, coffee mugs, tablecloths — the possibilities are endless.

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

Proper branding lets people know who’s in charge of an event, who’s running the show, and who’s responsible for it. If someone has a question, they’ll come up to you and see your organization.



National POW/MIA Recognition Day

- » National POW/MIA Recognition Day was established in 1979 through a proclamation signed by President Jimmy Carter.
- » Since Carter, each subsequent president has issued an annual proclamation commemorating the third Friday in September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day.
- » In 1997, a law was enacted that further strengthened the importance of the day by officially designating it as one of six days per year that the POW/MIA flag is required to be flown at designated federal government locations.
- » The official U.S. POW/MIA flag resulted from the efforts of family members to display a suitable symbol that made the public aware of their loved ones who were held prisoner or declared missing during the Vietnam War.
- » The flag was flown over the White House for the first time in September 1982, making it the only flag other than the U.S. flag to be displayed there.
- » In 2019, the National POW/MIA Flag Act was signed into law, requiring the flag to be displayed whenever the American flag is displayed on prominent federal properties.

Source: DPAA.mil

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

In September 2022, the Legion — which owns the ALA's trademark name and emblem — obtained the final trademark on a new set of Legion Family logos that included the Auxiliary. National Headquarters was notified a few months prior about forthcoming branding updates, and the final logo versions were approved for trademark in the fall.

It's important to note that the new marks have not replaced the ALA's traditional blue star emblem. Instead, the emblem and new logos alike should be used in specific applications. In a nutshell, the emblem is internally facing, meaning to our Legion Family members. The new logo options are used most often in an externally facing format — to the general public — and yes, to potential new members.

When to use the updated branding: marketing, recruiting, and external-reaching activities:

- » Advertising
- » Apparel
- » Business cards, letterhead, email signatures
- » Press releases
- » Digital (apps, web, social media, PowerPoint presentations)
- » Promotional communications (flyers, handouts, etc.)
- » Events (signs, backdrops, tents, tablecloths, swag/giveaways)

The ALA emblem is designated for official, legal, and historical uses:

- » Uniform caps
- » Financial documents
- » History books
- » Flags
- » Legal affairs
- » Internal manuals and guides
- » Reports and resolutions



Report: National President

Vickie Koutz, National President

It's hard to believe this administrative year has come to a close. It seems I just set off on my first department visit and yet here we are, down to the end. It was humbling to meet so many grassroots Auxiliary members. You worked tirelessly to move this organization forward and put our veterans, military, and their families first. It was inspiring to see you work the mission in various ways throughout the country. I saw some ideas to borrow!

I appreciate the love and support you gave to our National Veterans Creative Arts Festival companions. It was wonderful to see so many

of them able to attend the 2023 Festival to support their veteran in person! Seeing companions at registration before the event began, it was clear that choosing companions

"It was humbling to meet so many grassroots Auxiliary members. You worked tirelessly to move this organization forward and put our veterans, military, and their families first."

for the 2022–2023 ALA administrative year focus was the right choice.

Bringing awareness to POWs/MIAs has been a personal mission (passion) of mine since my husband, Jim, first traveled back overseas to help dig for remains.

It continued to impact me and is a solemn reminder that not all who served are home. It meant a lot to see more units and posts this year participating in ceremonies and focusing on this very important issue. Be sure to check out Vermont Unit 49's story on previous pages in this publication.

Thank you for a wonderful year focused on our NVCAF companions, POW/MIA awareness, and honoring our veterans, military, and their families every day. I'm looking forward to being back home again in Indiana! Thank you to all American Legion Auxiliary members for a wonderful term as national president.

Report: National Vice President

Lisa Williamson, National Vice President

After serving as a national chairman of several committees over the years, I thought the 2022–2023 term as national vice president would be quiet. Boy, was I wrong! It was a year of planning. I attended many meetings, made decisions, and was able to do some traveling.

Thanks to all of you, as you had our National President Vickie Koutz traveling across our country with very little down time. And huge thanks to her for allowing me to represent the ALA when a last-minute invitation was extended by Wreaths Across America (WAA) for their annual caravan bringing wreaths from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery.

What is now touted as "the world's largest veterans parade," flags were waving with chants of "USA, USA, USA!" It epitomizes how important it is to remember our



fallen veterans, honor our military, and teach our children, paralleling the ALA's mission of supporting our veterans, military, and their families. Many American Legion Family members participated and shared how our mutual commitment mobilized membership year-round.

Truckers across the country vie

to be a part of the WAA convoy. Of the 12 tractor-trailers that carried the very special loads, one promoted The American Legion's centennial, and two displayed the POW/MIA banner, falling in line with National President Vickie's focus.

I was amazed the way Gold Star Families were remembered at all the ceremonies. Traveling with American Gold Star Mothers National President Sarah Taylor afforded me a lifelong friend.

Nearly 40,000 volunteers signed up to help place wreaths in Arlington, though estimates say there were 70,000! Our fallen were also honored at more than 3,700 additional locations across all 50 U.S. states, at sea, and abroad.

Report: National Secretary

Dr. Coral May Grout, National Secretary

It has been my extreme pleasure to serve as your national secretary. The process which began last year resulted in a completed job description for the national secretary. Everything is now written down for future national secretaries to use. Special thanks to Marybeth Revoir, Tamara Shumate, and Sara Riegel who worked with me to build the description.

Our National Headquarters staff members are an amazing group of people! I had firsthand experience seeing the evidence of them working on their own time for evening Zoom meetings, re-

searching and developing reports, and checking emails on weekends, evenings, and holidays. They truly deserve our appreciation.

In early April, the national American Legion staff provided training for those of us working with the ALA emblem. They provided samples of emblem requests that were not approved and to use the emblem once again. The emblem is our banner, and its protection against inappropriate use is imperative.

I enjoyed participating as a designated director on the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation through my role as national secretary. The work of this board

has supported so many projects to benefit veterans. The quality of projects has continued to surpass the wonderful expectations that came with the original development of the Foundation.

In addition, I served as a non-voting member of the national Finance Committee and Risk & Compliance Committee, both valuable teams that ensure our organization continues to deliver our mission responsibly.

These two groups of dedicated members always put the ALA first. They are committed to preserving our organization and what it stands for, with the fiscal and risk-related oversight that all nonprofits need.

Report: National Treasurer

Marybeth Revoir, National Treasurer

In January 1927, the American Legion Auxiliary published the first *American Legion Auxiliary Bulletin*. On the cover page, National President Mrs. Adalin W. McCauley's message stated, "We at National Headquarters can only guide, and we realize full well that the departments can be no greater than the achievements of the units — that the national organization can be no greater than the achievements of the departments." Who knew that her analysis of this core principle that guides our organization would last forever?

Yes, the national organization gives us guidance, but there is so much more! All divisions within National Headquarters are funda-

mental to our overall success. As national treasurer, I am privileged to collaborate with them.

The Finance Division has the main fiscal responsibility by processing of contribution, payment of expenditures, and scrutinizing our investment portfolio. Development is a close working partner that reaches out to find resources to help solidify our bottom line and further our purpose. Programs and meetings are tasked with directing our mission through events and educational activities. They plan, staff, and coordinate ALA Mission Trainings, national meetings, and the annual National Convention, among a myriad of additional daily tasks. Communications keeps members informed and the world acquainted with who we

are and what we do. Last but not least, our Executive Offices/Administration Division keeps the train on track and moving forward in the most proficient and resourceful manner. This is just a brief overview of what the national organization accomplishes.

The American Legion Auxiliary has multiple strengths. Our members are the most important strength we have. The belief in our core principles of service will always set us apart from others. The people who staff our National Headquarters are the cog in the center of the wheel that is the American Legion Auxiliary!

It is truly an unbelievable honor for me to serve as your national treasurer. I am blessed to have been given this opportunity.

Report: National Chaplain

Karen Peel, National Chaplain

This national chaplain was honored to serve with the most resolute department chaplains this year. The honor and respect for which they performed their duties was an inspiration.

Thousands of cards were sent to our members, veterans, military, and families for holidays, thinking of you, sympathy, birthdays, and get well. Departments included Juniors in the creating of cards for all occasions. Visits were made to shut-ins, nursing homes, and VAMC facilities.

The Department of Colorado held a chaplains retreat, “Blessed Are the Peacemakers.” The retreat included inspirational speakers

and chaplains. A table of goodies to assist chaplains with their duties was available for all the attendees to choose from. Each participant received a “Pray for Our Heroes” to put their goodies in. I hope other departments will think about holding a retreat. The Department of Wyoming held a chaplains workshop at their school of instruction.

Department of Arizona Chaplain Marge Christianson stated that the impact for God and country was overwhelming in Arizona. To serve as department chaplain was a humbling experience. I am sure all department chaplains feel the same way.

Prayer is so powerful. Some departments have chaplain Facebook

pages or prayer chains. What a wonderful way to tend to the needs of our members and their families, our veterans, and our military. I have encouraged our members to pray for someone every day. It does not matter if you personally know them — just pray.

Thank you for all that you did for our members, veterans, military, and their families. You blessed so many this year. Being the spiritual leader of your unit or department is a humbling and rewarding experience.

“We are here to be witnesses of love to celebrate life, because life has been created in the image of God. Life is to love and be loved.”

— Mother Teresa

Report: National Historian

Laura “Susie” Clyde, National Historian

I have to say that being the national historian is truly an experience and memory that will never be forgotten.

When I decided to run for national historian, I knew everything I wanted to include in the history of this wonderful organization, and how I wanted to do it. It never dawned on me that so many of the department historians — as special as every one of them are — would be at a complete loss as to what they needed to do to write the history of their department. So, for future department historians, I would like to enlighten you.

Communication with everyone is the key to getting information to put in your history book. This means you need to contact your officers, district presidents, chairmen, and all units. Let them know that anything

“History is a wonderful thing, and if it doesn’t get documented, no one will know all of the wonderful things our members, units, and leaders have done to make this organization what it is.”

they do that they think is worthy of being recorded needs to be sent to you. This can be done through newsletters, department mailings, Facebook pages, or any other means of getting the word out. If you don’t let the members know what you

want, they won’t send you anything.

The national website has all the information for what you need to put your history book together and how it will be scored at the national level. Go to www.ALAforVeterans.org/Member/Resources/History, and start searching through what is there.

History is a wonderful thing, but if it doesn’t get documented, no one will know all of the wonderful things our members, units, and leaders have done to make this organization what it is, or what we do for veterans, military, their families, our communities, state, and nation. We do great things, and generations to come need to know.

Report: Executive Director

Sara T. Riegel, Executive Director

Behind every success is a great team. This saying needs to be displayed on a banner at National Headquarters.

And it's not all attributed to staff. We work alongside volunteers of all levels to build up collaboratory relationships and eliminate silos. With the surge in ways people communicate — email, phone, virtual meetings, Microsoft Teams, texts, and more — it's safe to say we've got information coming at us from all angles. So when we're all on the same page, we all know what's going on. This helps support not only our mission of serving veterans, military, and their families, but customer service too.

Here are a few successes from the 2022-2023 administrative year:

You've likely seen the new logo on our National Headquarters corporate identity pieces, and lots of you have already purchased clothing items with the new branding we received from The American Legion for our next era of service. The Legion — which owns our trademark name and emblem — obtained the final trademark last fall on a new set of Legion Family logos that included the Auxiliary.

In May 2023, with National President Vickie, we signed a memorandum of understanding with Bergmann & Moore, the same law firm The American Legion has partnered

with, to engage and inform ALA members on predatory law firms attached to the Camp Lejeune water contamination situation. We stand ready to serve our veterans in any way we can. Stay tuned to ALA media to learn more about this partnership.

And last but not least, we recently completed a tech upgrade to the Hobart Room at National Headquarters. The enhancement is not limited to our building in Indianapolis — it means we now have a strengthened capability in hosting more nationwide virtual and hybrid meetings like the National Executive Committee meetings, becoming friendlier to everyone's schedules and reaching more people.

Committee: Risk & Compliance

Carol Westergren, National Chairman

Risk & Compliance is a committee that serves in an oversight capacity to anticipate, identify, and remediate threats that can affect the operation and security of both the American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

We ensure compliance with the necessary legal and regulatory requirements while monitoring the validity of financial statements and related disclosures. We serve to advise the NEC on the processes, procedures, and regulations that maintain the integrity of our operation. Finally, our five-member committee provides the financial credibility and

long-term viability expected by our members, donors, and the public.

The committee met throughout the year with our external auditors, ALA National Headquarters staff,

"The audit was clean and the tax returns and 990s were filed in a timely manner."

and management both by Zoom and in person to approve the audit, income statement, and the 990s. I am happy to report the audit was clean and the tax returns and 990s were filed in a timely manner.

This year, we contracted with Crowe LLP to conduct the first external audit of the information technology systems maintained and

utilized by National Headquarters. I am excited to announce that no high-risk issues were identified. The 14 moderate risk items identified were addressed and resolved by our staff at Headquarters.

I want to thank National Headquarters staff for all of their hard work during the audits and helping us stay in compliance, and just being there to answer our questions.

In December 2022, we lost Jeri Greenwell, our committee chair of several years. Jeri loved the American Legion Auxiliary and served with an unmatched intensity on the Risk & Compliance Committee. The committee appreciated all of your cards, texts, and prayers.

Report: Finance Committee

Sharon Conatser, National Chairman

The national Finance Committee continued to be strong advocates for good fiscal planning. With our ever-changing needs, it is important to meet the needs of today, as well as future fiduciary requirements.

The Finance Committee is represented on the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board of Directors and the Risk & Compliance Committee.

We need to remember the why of our mission and purpose with strong support for the ALA programs we love. Remember that no donation given is too small. What is your why for joining our ALA?

The Finance Committee reviewed the draft budget, made any adjustments that may have been necessary to reflect new or changing goals, and recommended a budget for the National Execu-

“We need to remember the why of our mission and purpose with strong support for the ALA programs we love. Remember that no donation given is too small.”

tive Committee consideration and adoption. Also, in carrying out the role of fiduciary stewards, the ALA national Finance Committee was responsible for investment planning, reviewing financial statements, monitoring member ben-

efits and fundraising campaigns, and for NEC action to ensure the ALA national organization met nonprofit benchmarks and governmental requirements.

We feel ALA Mission Training and the ALA national Junior meetings are very important to the education and support of our unit members. We are excited to continue these into the new administrative year, and we encourage everyone to spread the word and increase our attendance.

Members need to step up their responsibility and help retain and recruit members. Another way to help is by supporting the fundraisers sent to your mailbox.

Report: American Legion Auxiliary Foundation

Cathe F. MacInnes, ALA Foundation Board of Directors President

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation benefited ALA programs during the 2022-2023 year. The ALA Foundation supported the American Legion Auxiliary’s sponsorship of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, provided funds for ALA Girls Nation, and awarded 30 grants totaling \$108,012 to support unit and department initiatives.

Veteran Projects Fund grants enabled units and districts to provide blanket warming cabinets for the Indiana Veterans Home, tablets and accessories for the Maine Veterans Home, a courtyard canopy

at the Chippewa Veterans Home in Wisconsin, additions to the North Strand Housing Shelter in South Carolina, beds at Haven for Heroes in Minnesota, a reflection area for the Golden Isles Veterans Village in Georgia, handmade quilts for veterans hospitals and a Fisher House in North Carolina, a wheelchair bicycle for the New York State Veterans Home at Oxford, and kayaks, canoes, paddles, and life vests for the Magnus Veterans Foundation water therapy program in Minnesota.

Three Veterans Creative Arts Festival grants were awarded to support local Veterans Creative Arts Festivals at the Indiana U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical

Center, the Syracuse VA Medical Center, and the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany, N.Y.

Mission in Action grants helped 18 ALA units and departments become recognized for their good works as they used branded pop-up tents, banners, table runners, and more throughout their communities.

Since July 2022, subgrants provided over \$61,000 to support ALA programs and other unit and department initiatives.

None of this would have been possible without our more than 6,000 donations totaling \$278,338. The ALA Foundation is proud to serve the ALA and its members.

Report: Financial Statement

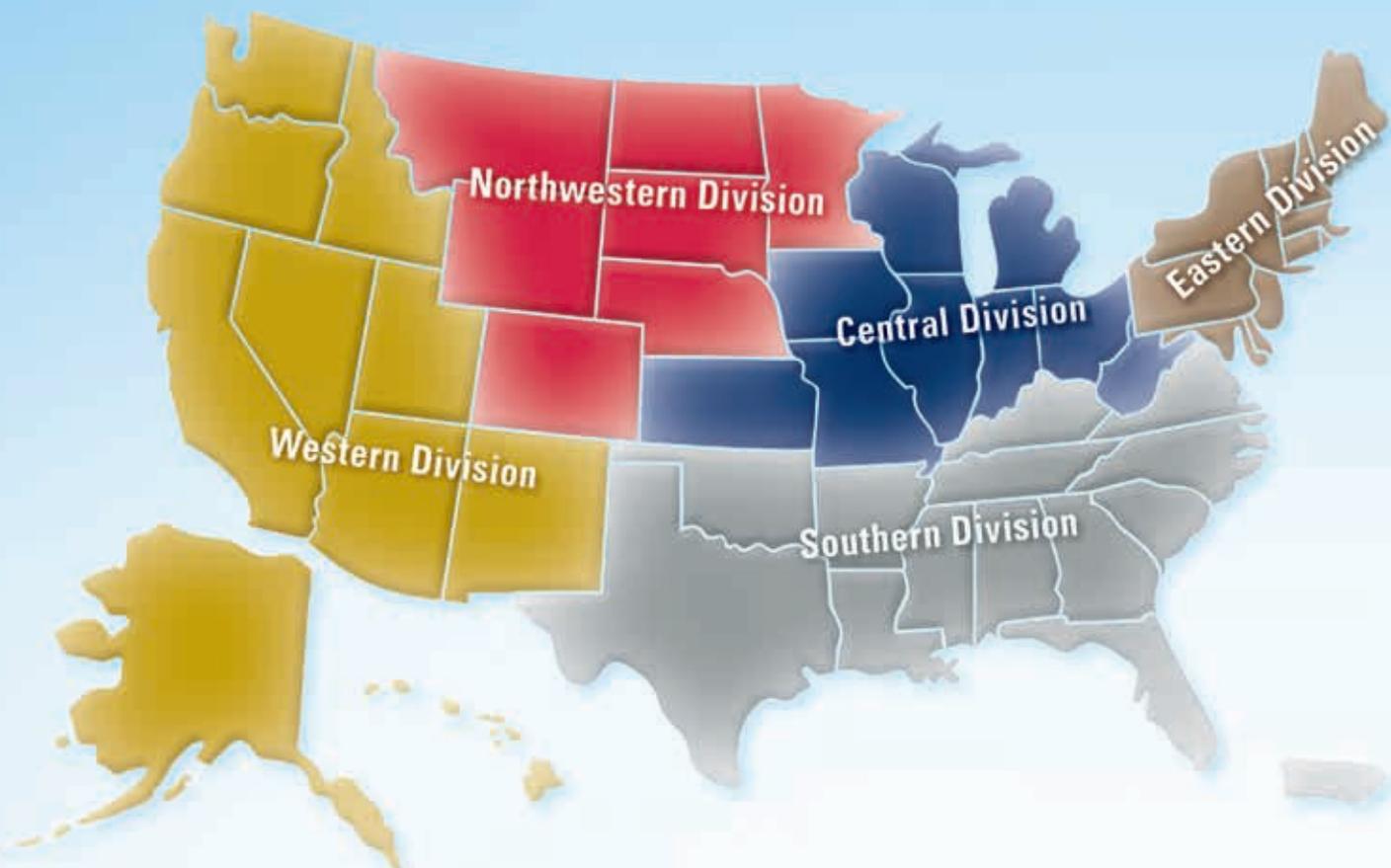
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS FY22

CURRENT ASSETS:	
Cash and cash equivalents	815,012
Investments	37,733,967
Investments, PUFL	3,931,731
Prepaid expenses	71,639
Property & Equipment, net	2,502,668
Other assets	72,488
Total assets	45,127,505
CURRENT LIABILITIES:	
Accounts payable	810,709
Accrued expenses	295,695
Accrued scholarships	147,450
Deferred revenue, dues	2,694,918
Deferred revenue, PUFL	3,946,966
Liability for pension benefits	6,250
Note payable	68,044
Total liabilities	7,970,032
NET ASSETS:	
Without donor restrictions	35,702,780
With donor restrictions	1,454,693
Accumulated other compressive loss	37,157,473
Total liabilities and net assets	45,127,505
SUPPORT & REVENUE:	
Contributions	1,176,719
Membership dues	6,336,491
Advertising	126,166
Other	1,276,886
Total support and revenue	8,916,262
Investment Income, Net of Expenses	(7,334,881)
EXPENSES:	
Program Services:	
Member and department support services	4,083,226
Youth and education services	935,901
Veteran and military families programs	631,317
Supporting Services:	
Management & general	1,965,993
Fundraising	562,728
Total expenses	8,179,165
Pension Plan	748,650
Excess of Support & Revenue over Expenses	(5,849,134)

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FOUNDATION INC. FY22

CURRENT ASSETS:	
Cash	798,731
Investments	1,865,345
Total assets	2,664,076
CURRENT LIABILITIES:	
Accounts payable	136,424
Total liabilities	136,424
NET ASSETS:	
Without donor restrictions	12,236
With donor restrictions	2,515,416
Total net assets	2,527,652
Total liabilities and net assets	2,664,076
SUPPORT & REVENUE:	
Contributions	898,897
Other	10,000
Total support and revenue	908,897
Investment Income, Net of Expenses	(360,089)
EXPENSES:	
Program Services:	
Member and department support services	31,302
Youth and education services	67,573
Veteran and military families programs	210,478
Supporting Services:	
Management & general	88,377
Fundraising	286,997
Total expenses	684,727
Excess of Support & Revenue over Expenses	(135,919)

The above American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Inc. FY22 audited financial information reflects contributions of \$210,882 received from the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters to fund certain organizational and other costs incurred by the ALA Foundation. Our financial statements as of September 30, 2022 and for the year then ended have been audited by Blue & Co. in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America ("U.S. GAAS"). Blue & Co.'s Independent Auditor's Report, dated January 20, 2023, expressed an unmodified opinion on the fair presentation of those financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ("U.S. GAAP"). The condensed financial information presented herein is derived from the audited financial statements. The complete FY22 audit report is available in the American Legion Auxiliary Proceedings of the 2023 Mid-Year NEC Meeting.



Report: Central Division

*Ann Rehbein, Central Division
National Vice President*

Illinois made bears for Eastern Illinois children's advocacy social workers, police, and sheriff departments, and bears were also distributed at the Illinois Special Olympics.

Indiana raised over \$8,000 selling Purple Up! sunglasses for the Star-Spangled Babies project. AEF donations were \$11,826 and Indiana Veterans Home donations totaled \$9,371. Creative arts donations totaled \$8,716.

Iowa's president project was vibro-acoustic chairs for the Iowa Veterans Home. Members volunteered in National Veterans Golden Age Games. They awarded Quilts of Valor and

collected plastic bags that were made into four benches and donated. Junior Camp was held for younger members.

Kansas held a Big Red 1 Turkey Run, which provided Thanksgiving dinner to families of deployed active-duty soldiers at Fort Riley. Operation North Pole was held where one Christmas gift was given to families of deployed servicemembers stationed there.

Michigan's special project, 92 for 22, is a nonprofit that raises awareness of veteran suicide prevention.

Missouri hosted the 2023 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in St. Louis. A special project was the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Districts and units were asked to contact their

state representatives to pass a bill recognizing women veterans on June 12.

Ohio members made goodie bags, sent cards, sewed lap blankets, made bullet bags, and crocheted Quilts of Valor.

West Virginia's special project was Christmas Veteran Gift Shops. Districts followed the Christmas theme all year.

Wisconsin reported over \$24,000 in scholarships awarded. There were 4,700 members who contributed 131,500 hours of Community Service with donations \$189,908.23 and \$60,000 of in-kind donations. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation reported over 29,000 volunteer hours and in-kind donations of \$17,600.

Report: Eastern Division

Veronica Gurney, Eastern Division National Vice President

Maryland held an emotional POW/MIA ceremony. In attendance was a Vietnam War colonel and active-duty Navy personnel. Their programs are flourishing.

In Rhode Island, the veterans home is new and state of the art. They are very engaged in units' revitalization and Children & Youth, having a relationship with Camp Fogarty military families.

Massachusetts formed a women's fast-pitch softball team as a Legion Family program — giving exposure to colleges and increased membership. Leadership mini sessions were planned for units and

diligent promotion of Americanism.

At Christmastime in New Jersey, the Legion Family honored members for accomplishments.

A wings contest in Delaware raised \$20,000 for Home of the Brave, a transitional home for homeless veterans, and held a variety show to support AEF.

Connecticut's Past Presidents Parley annual luncheon raised \$5,980 for scholarships.

In Pennsylvania, I attended senior/Junior conferences. I had the honor of installing department honorary Juniors. The Junior members stuffed 41 bags for less fortunate children with \$800 raised in cash donations.

New York leadership revamped their conference with four breakout sessions. Members were more engaged because they were in a room that held their interest.

District of Columbia members supported holiday programs at the DC VAMC and Legion Family baby shower.

New Hampshire supported "Hero Pups" for military and first responders.

Vermont and Maine supported awareness of veteran suicide and prevention: Vermont supported Josh's House — "at Josh's House, we believe that one suicide a day is too many"; and Maine supported Togus VA hospital Unit 13 raising \$57,485.

Report: Northwestern Division

Marlene Boyer, Northwestern Division National Vice President

I attended three state conventions — four including our own — but it was obvious the ALA was busy. All of the states reporting worked hard on keeping our veteran homes and hospitals supplied with needed items. Veterans especially liked the Gift Shops at Christmas and their rooms decorated for the seasons.

ALA Girls State/American Legion Boys State were reported on, and those reporting saw a slight increase in numbers for ALA Girls State but more of a struggle for Legion Boys State. Ingenuous, talented women were busy making quilts for

the homeless veterans, even figuring out a way to recycle plastic bags and crocheting mats and pillows for veterans to use inside or out.

The military child's table setting was used in some states — a reminder that all sacrifices need to be remembered. Americanism essays and Poppy Poster Contests were reported in all of the states visited. It was fun to meet some of the Junior Auxiliary members and see them participate at meetings. Loved their energy! Plaques and money were given to winners in youth participation.

Two other items were at the top of every state's agenda: Legislative and National Security. We are all aware of low recruitment. The

American Legion is asking the federal government to fully fund national defense and protect U.S. troops from further cuts. All of the states I visited were concerned about the high rate of veteran suicides, and many were wearing the Be The One pins. Buddy Checks were utilized by both the Legion and Auxiliary. Some posts and units worked hard to provide health care and services for our women veterans.

The four pillars were at the top of our priorities — Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth — and were served in every corner of our nation.

Report: Southern Division

Linda Smiley, Southern Division National Vice President

The ALA's Southern Division is the largest of the five with 14 departments.

Alabama reported a monthly service project at a VA nursing home.

Arkansas' service project was to place 150 flags on the Avenue of Flags at Fort Roots.

Florida's president chose Snowball Express, which is part of the Gary Sinise Foundation Florida Chapter.

Georgia's president chose the Fisher House at Fort Gordon as its service project.

Kentucky members packed 100 backpacks for homeless veterans.

The Department of Louisiana

project was "Service Dogs for Veterans," a training program for dogs for veterans at Angola State Prison.

Mississippi's project was "Final Salute," a housing project for homeless women veterans and their children. The second project was "Patriot Paws," which trains service dogs at no charge to veterans.

North Carolina and South Carolina chose to raise funds for their departments' general funds. South Carolina also chose the Big Red Barn, which helps veterans and first responders.

Oklahoma believed there is strength through unity and that by working together as The American Legion Family, we can be effective

in the lives of our veterans and their families.

Tennessee has four VA medical centers with representatives. Units donated \$3,275 to help provide gifts for veterans residing in these facilities.

Texas' project was PTSD Foundation Camp Hope in Houston, which raised \$40,000.

The Department of Virginia's project focused on PTSD. They partnered with MK9s Service Dogs for Veterans to raise awareness and funds for a service dog for a deserving veteran.

National President Vickie Koutz laid a beautiful wreath on two female veterans' graves at the National Cemetery in Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

Report: Western Division

Eva Wallace, Western Division National Vice President

Alaska supported Fisher House, helping veterans and military families. President Ann asked each unit to create a report on being a POW/MIA.

Arizona's project furnished supplies and furniture for the opening of two new veterans homes and raised over \$35,000. They also concentrated on getting units to report their hours, seeing a significant increase in year-end reports.

California was significantly impacted by wildfires and supported the AEF, donating \$5,680. One unit adopted a 100-year-old veteran, helped as a caregiver, and threw him a 100th birthday party. Another

unit read over 1,000 Americanism essays.

Idaho's project raised \$43,000 for Disability Dogs For Idaho Veterans.

New Mexico chartered a new unit and National President Vickie presented the charter and a Youth Hero Award during her visit. Units supplied care packages for the troops, had Mission Training, and raised funds for Fisher House.

Oregon was dedicated to learning about Auxiliary programs and held eight sessions.

Utah hosted a Veterans Gift Shop at their VA hospital with the help of the Legion and Sons. There were gifts for family members and each veteran also received a gift for

themselves as well as other personal items, clothing, and food.

Washington had a rough start with the loss of President Carolyn Wiley-Fraser early in her year. Vice President Catherine Olson stepped forward as interim president. By year-end, \$100,330 was spent assisting 7,178 veterans/military, 28,224 poppies were distributed resulting in \$21,280 donations, and 20 scholarships were awarded.

Nevada started a second Veterans Creative Arts Festival for their veterans that was very successful, in addition to the one they already have.

Hawaii successfully raised funds for ALA Girls State and had 28 delegates attend.

Committee: Americanism

Michele DeGennaro, National Chairman

The American Legion Auxiliary Americanism program promotes patriotism and responsible citizenship — and that is just what our members did — when several units in Minnesota reported starting a program with local kindergarten classes. When a kindergartner successfully learned the Pledge of Allegiance, they received their own small flag. All of the kindergartners who learned the pledge got to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at the school Veterans Day program.

The Department of Maryland was happy to report that Americanism was alive and well in their state. Sixty

units contacted 229 schools, sharing information about the Americanism Essay Contest, with 1,531 essays submitted for judging. Department Chair Marilyn said, “It was heartwarming to be able to give them all an avenue to express their patriotism.”

The Department of Pennsylvania had one unit report they held a contest for a flag display. Unit members nominated homes in the community that proudly and correctly displayed the flag. They awarded a winner every quarter. In the fall, they held a small social after a meeting and presented all winners with a framed picture of their flag display and \$25 cash award.

Unit 69 in New Mexico promot-

ed Americanism every month in their Auxiliary monthly newsletter, promoted flag etiquette, proper flag folding, announcements of national holidays, and notification of half-staff flag days.

District 5 in the Department of Kansas held a trivia contest at a local middle school. It was students against veterans using *Indivisible: The Story of Our Flag* as their guide. They may have declared a winner for this contest, but everyone came away with more knowledge of our flag and a deeper feeling of patriotism.

It was clear in all reports submitted that American Legion Auxiliary members love and respect our country!

Committee: Children & Youth

Pam Ray, National Chairman

Units and departments around the country continued to support our children — everything from Halloween parties, to trunk or treats, to breakfast with Santa. Unit 13 in Tallahassee, Fla., adopted a veteran’s family with three kids, providing gift cards so their Christmas could feel special.

Let’s also give a shout out to Florida Homosassa Unit 166 for “adopting” a 3-year-old boy with cancer for a year. They provided gifts, cards, and gas cards to assist with travel expenses to the hospital and doctor visits.

Unit 60 of Cushing, Okla., supported their community in a big way.

Requests came from their schools for a clothing closet to provide emergency clothing due to severe weather or accidents. They also provided hygiene items for the children.

Unit 3 in Sault St. Marie, Mich., along with VFW Auxiliary 3676, held their first America and Me Boot Camp for youth ages 5-12. The camp taught flag etiquette, marching skills, writing thank-you notes to veterans, and other activities.

Members of Unit 355 in Wisconsin served as counselors at Camp Hometown Heroes, a free weeklong camp for children and siblings of fallen U.S. servicemembers. That is Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 in action. The Department of Texas

distributed over 400 KDH2 buttons as well.

Winchendon, Mass., Unit 193 supported traveling basketball teams for elementary students. Through donations, they assisted with providing a safe place for students to practice and provided buses to their events.

Fairmont Unit 85 in Rhode Island worked for our kids every month. They supported their National Guard unit by donating both funds and time for their events. Synepuxent Unit 166 in Maryland supported many children’s organizations such as Casey Cares, Tomorrow Children’s House by the Sea, and many others.

Committee: Community Service

Melanie Taylor, National Chairman
“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service to others.” — Mahatma Gandhi

The Department of Iowa reported that Oskaloosa Unit 34 served their community by participating in the Suds of Love project. They donated laundry supplies purchased by their members with the assistance of their Junior Auxiliary members.

Lauren Lloyd with the Department of the District of Columbia reported Unit 1 participated in food drives and distribution for Thanksgiving, which fed over 100 families.

The 9/11 National Day of Service found Minnesota units helped

women’s homeless shelters, served meals to homebound veterans, held blood drives, and participated in Adopt a Highway — cleaning ditches along roadways and picking up trash thrown to the side.

GI Joe Unit 244, Department of Kentucky, provided a birthday celebration for a World War II veteran’s 98th birthday.

The Department of Arizona did not forget our fur babies. They contacted their community-minded members and assisted at and made donations to local animal shelters and sanctuaries.

Units reported assisting family members with funeral arrangements and celebrations of life.

Meals were made and delivered to first responders in the field.

Members reported hosting ceremonies for Memorial Day and Veterans Day, partnering with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, donated food, worked at their local food pantries, and volunteered at hospitals and nursing homes.

Units didn’t forget those veterans who struggled with thoughts of suicide by supporting The American Legion’s Be The One veteran suicide awareness campaign.

Our members continued to wear red on Fridays — Remember Everyone Deployed — and let our communities know who we are and what we do.

Committee: Education

Sallie Rossman, National Chairman
The American Legion Auxiliary Education Program promotes providing quality education for children and adults.

The snow slowed down but did not stop one unit from delivering school supplies to a two-room school. For students sitting at tables to learn, one member made chair packs for the students to use to keep supplies organized for better learning.

A kindergarten class received new sneakers thanks to a Skechers store that worked with a unit.

To show appreciation to school staff during National Education Week and Teachers Appreciation Week, members provided sup-

plies, meals, snacks, and gifts with special notes.

Schools supported over 100 Veterans in Community Schools



programs as living history lessons. One school created a veterans wall with a donation from the Auxiliary.

Members actively promoted and judged national, department, and unit scholarships, allowing for \$510,870 in unit and depart-

ment scholarships and \$130,000 in national scholarships.

The American Legion Auxiliary understands the importance of education to the future of our country, as do our communities, with in-kind donations totaling \$91,324 for scholarships, school supplies, and necessities for students in need.

Our Education Program enriched and supported school life, especially for our veterans and military families in their communities, through Auxiliary donations of \$329,748 for school and student supplies, including student necessities, and \$43,791 to celebrate National Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week.

Committee: ALA Girls Nation

Donna Dillard, National Chairman

It takes many hands and countless hours to prepare for ALA Girls State sessions, and through hard work and perseverance, many programs reported an increase in participants this year. Some even reached pre-pandemic participation numbers again. All ALA Girls State programs reporting in the Eastern Division noted their numbers were up from the prior year.

Today's teenagers' lives are saturated by mobile technology and social media. Program information and social sharing is now done on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Maryland even put a QR code on their Face-

book page that led candidates to the application to attend their program.

Several ALA Girls State programs partnered with The American Legion Boys State program in their state. While the actual programs are still separate, they are conducted during the same time frame and combine presenters and even key staff members to reduce the cost for both programs. Through this collaboration, they initiated some key efforts and enhanced their program. Missouri created a best practices tool, which they are happy to share with other states considering this option.

Delivering our mission and preserving our legacy, the ALA Girls

State staff of Vermont conducted a panel during their session where members sat and talked to delegates about the American Legion Auxiliary and what our organization can do for them and their communities. ALA Kansas Girls State implemented "Auxiliary Moments" where they explain the history of the ALA and services and programs it supports.

Every generation of teens has been shaped by the social, political, and economic events of the day. The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program successfully adapted to the shape of our society and evolved with new ideas and new procedures to accommodate today's teens, all while keeping the focus on our mission.

Committee: Junior Activities

Starr Purnell, National Chairman

Martin Luther King Jr. often said, "Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve." The ALA Junior members of this nation truly showed that *Service Not Self* was the driving force behind their programs and activities.

Five national Junior meetings were held this year where our Juniors were educated on our programs. Juniors had a blast making crafts and decorating bags for companions of veterans attending the National Veterans Creative Art Festival in support of National President Vickie Koutz's 2022-2023 administrative year

focus. Indiana Juniors raised over \$2,500 for the project.

Ohio Juniors collected over \$1,000 in school supplies for schools in undervalued communities. Texas Juniors joined forces

**"Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve."
—Martin Luther King Jr.**

with their Sons of The American Legion youth and stuffed over 500 backpacks for students at Uvalde schools after they suffered a tragedy.

Juniors in Alaska cleaned the headstones of veterans and placed flags in their cemeteries. Min-

nesota Juniors raised over \$13,000 for a veterans home adaptive sports program. Michigan Juniors hosted a dinner for first responders. West Virginia Juniors collected over \$15,000 of personal and comfort items for VA nursing, hospitals, and veterans homes. Maryland Juniors raised over \$5,700 for their special project: Luke's Wings.

From coast to coast, Juniors held POW/MIA ceremonies, Military Child's Table Setting ceremonies, and they participated in Purple Up! for Military Kids in April for Month of the Military Child.

ALA Juniors rock!

Committee: Legislative

Pam Bates, National Chairman

Our Legislative program provides information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion. To use the theme from the Department of Pennsylvania Legislative chairman — Educate, Advocate, and Communicate. That's what units from all states accomplished.

Here are some ways ALA members educated, advocated, and communicated the legislative agenda.

They informed and shared the legislative agenda with their Legion Family members at meetings, communities, veterans groups, city,

county, state, and federal representatives, civic organizations, and schools. Members spoke to these groups about the Legion's legislative agenda for our veterans by inviting them to the post home for special recognition and occasions.

One unit's scholarship winners were asked to write a letter to their member of Congress about veterans issues, and another unit used a QR code to assist members with information and set up information boards at meetings.

In smaller towns, many went door to door with handouts of the legislative agenda. Many handed out pamphlets and other material that can be found on the Legion

and Auxiliary websites. Many signed up and used the VoterVoice Action Alerts as well as phoned, emailed, and wrote letters to their members of Congress.

Members in this program witnessed the impact of their volunteerism with two events — passage of the PACT Act and being able to talk directly to their member of Congress.

The South Dakota department Legislative chair told our story in one sentence: "The American Legion Family continues to serve as a powerful voice for veterans in our nation, but the power of our voice is amplified by the voices of our membership."

Committee: National Security

Barb Washburn, National Chairman

It was "mission in action" all year long, starting with supporting National President Vickie's focus on POW/MIA awareness.

Every department's year-end report included great information about what members were doing: displaying POW/MIA white tables, holding POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies, and sharing information about the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), which provides a wealth of information about our POW/MIAs.

In support of our active-duty military, care packages were sent to over 1,000 servicemembers at an estimated value of \$33,000. Over

95,000 coupons were clipped and shipped, valued at \$5.7 million. A special shout-out to the Department of Florida which reported clipping coupons at a value of \$5.5 million. Coupon clipping was on the upswing compared to previous years.

Twenty-seven departments reported units distributed hundreds of Blue Star Banners to families of military families and displayed them in communities across the country.

The service of first responders was honored by the delivery of snacks, food, and special events highlighting the good works of these groups. Certificates of appreciation were presented to first responders by units in 10 departments.

Emergency preparedness was an important part of the program as 31 departments reported participating in emergency preparedness events, preparing disaster kits, and gathering items for areas hard hit by natural disasters.

Baby showers for expectant military moms and spouses were held by several units, many in conjunction with VA medical centers, Operation Homefront, or the USO. What a fun way to show our military families they are important to us.

Our members supported the ALA National Security program in so many ways, and I thank everyone for their dedication to the program.

Committee: Poppy

Jeanne Haas, National Chairman

American Legion Auxiliary departments reported members served 46,745 hours on the Poppy Program.

Junior members served as Miss Poppy and handed out poppies.

Pennsylvania Unit 791 partnered with Texas Roadhouse and Quaker Steak to hold “Dine to Donate” nights where 10% of the sales went to the poppy fund. Poppies were distributed at the front door.

Members read *The Poppy Lady* to school children and at different community events, with some readers dressing in time period costumes.

With fewer veterans making poppies, units held Poppy Days where members were taught to

make a poppy and then made poppies to distribute.

The Department of Michigan challenged units to think outside



the box, so a unit teamed up with a movie theater for Poppies and Popcorn, and another unit introduced the \$5 challenge where a bag containing poppies, a Flanders Field bookmark, and poppy seeds

were given for the donation.

Units mailed letters to all members with poppy information and several poppies to wear. Some took poppies to assisted living and nursing home facilities.

Units and departments had poppy contests besides the Poppy Poster Contest — centerpieces and wreaths.

More social media was used to increase the visibility of unit activities for the Poppy Program.

Units reported using poppy funds to provide bus passes to veterans traveling to the doctor, needed items for homeless veterans, food and cleaning supplies, and the needs of those in a VA hospital.

Committee: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Trish Ward, National Chairman

Every day is Veterans Day for ALA members.

The opportunity for veterans to express themselves through the arts served to heal and inspire both those who participated and our members who supported and volunteered. After receiving an American Legion Auxiliary Foundation grant, Fort Dodge Soldiers Home in Fort Dodge, Kan., collaborated with local businesses to showcase veterans’ art creations for the community to embrace and enjoy. Across the country, American Legion Auxiliary members offered their services in support of local events by donating supplies, hospitality, and staffing assistance.

Collaboration was key to members’ involvement in activities that directly impacted our veteran community. Leveraging local resources



and businesses that support our mission, units across the country rallied to ensure able veterans had the opportunity to participate in the Honor Flight experience. Making

sure our veterans experienced their memorials was an integral mission-focused activity embraced by members across the ALA landscape.

Although regulations have eased, COVID-19 restrictions at the VA still impacted members’ ability to serve in traditional ways. Ever vigilant and creative, our members found ways to positively impact in support of our mission. Units in southern Arizona packed duffle bags with clothing, socks, and gift cards for distribution at the Tucson VA Medical Center. Christmas baskets in Missouri were assembled and delivered, and members found ways to serve those in need both in person and from afar.

Committee: Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Kelly Elliott, National Chairman

This year, we introduced the new “Members Helping Members” pin. ALA members stepped up and did some amazing fundraising this year. Many held events, passed around baskets/jars at meetings, and held various raffles and auctions.

The Department of Ohio had a unit that passed Emery (short for emergency) around at each meeting by a Junior member to collect donations. Emery is a small plastic pig.

The Department of Iowa even had an online Pampered Chef party on Facebook to reach more people.

Our members faced a lot of adversity this year and have seen

how our American Legion Family is here when they need them most. Many members had financial setbacks, as well as the fact that this was an unusually active



year for weather disasters. Southern states were most affected by hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding that occurred.

The stories from our departments about members who lost

everything but were more worried about their other members were inspiring. We are a family, and that shined through this year — from helping members find items lost in storms, to helping rebuild their Legion buildings, to raising funds to helping others in need.

I think Kate Webber, Department of Illinois, said it best: “Each donation, no matter the amount, adds to the financial hug in a time of need. No one knows when they might be the one who needs that financial hug.”

We continue to keep those who suffered loss or a setback this year in our thoughts and prayers.

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

When we call or text members who regularly renew their dues, as well as those who lapsed in their membership, it shows we care.

A quick phone check-in with unit members makes them feel they really belong to our organization.

Take the time to personally reach out to those who have dedicated their time to the Auxiliary.

Learn how you can connect even further: Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org.

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Committee: Constitution & Bylaws

Diana Sirovina, National Chairman

The Constitution & Bylaws Committee informs and educates members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of having properly written and regularly reviewed and updated governing documents at all levels of the organization.

Our Constitution & Bylaws provide the governance structure for our organization and how it will function. These documents furnish answers to the important questions that arise, such as eligibility, purpose, officers and how we elect them, executive committee, meetings, and how we can amend the documents. Standing Rules provide greater detail about administrative policies and address

specific things that may be unique to a particular unit or department.

The key to keeping our organization healthy and productive is to make sure our governing documents are reviewed and updated regularly. Units, counties, districts, and departments all over the country were very busy this year doing just that! The Department of Kansas successfully secured the expertise of Professional Registered Parliamentarian Chris Dickey in the silent auction at last year's convention to assist them in revising their governing documents.

Many departments — including Virginia, Indiana, and Michigan — held Constitution & Bylaws and document workshops at their Fall Confer-

ences and leadership workshops to help their members become more familiar with the important elements of well-written, properly organized documents.

Department chairmen wrote articles and sent newsletters to help their units with the vital process of reviewing and updating their governing documents. Several chairmen created templates for bylaws and standing rules so units would have a good basis for drafting their documents. Other chairmen created fill-in-the-blank games and quizzes to help members understand the importance of well written documents.

Make an annual review of your documents part of your regular activities.

Committee: Leadership

Nancy Magginnis, National Chairman

ALA leadership comes in many forms and may be modeled for others in a variety of ways. Units, districts, and departments are encouraged to look outside the box for ways to share leadership skills with members.

Wisconsin Department President Linda Coppock emphasized leadership with her personal style. At many events, she encouraged members by saying, "Members, remember to believe YOU make a difference, because YOU have a value, believe in YOU because I DO!" What a great message. By these words, Coppock instilled confidence and encouraged ALA members.

The Department of Florida used a leadership Facebook page as a great teaching tool. The page passed on information and answered questions about the ALA. Mary Kelly-Perkins, the department Leadership chair, featured Mentoring Monday where she shared a different topic to teach members about officer duties, how to write narratives, and much more. If you want to join their group to continue learning, simply ask the Department of Florida to join.

The Department of Ohio developed a *Leadership Guide to Success* reference book. This is an accumulation of national, department, and Leadership Chair Pam Bates prepared materials since 1976.

The American Legion College is another way to learn more about our organization as a Family. Many ALA departments are part of their state's training program. To learn more, contact your department American Legion.

Some ALA members prefer hands-on training which allows an opportunity to network and gain friendships. Several departments and the national organization have online training or use Zoom meetings to share information. Whatever your style, please make the commitment to learn more about the American Legion Auxiliary and our many programs serving veterans and their families.

Committee: Membership

Linda Tome, National Chairman

Thank you, everyone, for your hard work in recruiting, renewing, and rejoining members this year! As you know, each of us is part of this membership team, and I can't thank you more for hitting some pretty high percentages again this year.

Southern Division started the year out in first place between the five divisions! What a race it was as Western Division jockeyed back and forth with Southern Division for first place when this report was written. Although Eastern, Central, and Northwestern Division all had a taste of first place this year, Southern Division was determined to stay out in front, as of press time. Great

job to everyone for working the challenge of reaching 100% for your division.

The Department of Arizona reached 100% in April and attributed that in part to a unit that holds monthly events, ranging from dinners with a comedian, to a magic show to bingo, and encouraged members to bring a different guest every time. The unit president introduced herself and asked about possible eligibility. Other units held Independence Day, Labor Day, and Veterans Day membership drives. And of course, they attributed ALAMIS to helping them keep their membership accurate and up to date.

Department of Indiana members held a March Madness race where units scored different points for every renewal, a new member, rejoins, and if they created a mascot and did a short video promoting ALA membership that was posted to social media and/or reaching 100% of goal. Mooresville Unit 103 was the only unit that made a three-pointer with a new member and posted the video to TikTok. How creative!

These were just a couple of ways our members re-energized their units and brought in new members to help move our mission forward in support of veterans, military, and their families.

Committee: Public Relations

Norma Tramm, National Chairman

New American Legion Auxiliary branding was introduced in 2022-2023. Created as a new marketing tool, the refreshed branding gives a clear statement of who we are — the American Legion Auxiliary — because the new logo is easy to read. Our traditional emblem has not gone away. It will continue to be used for official documents and communication. The new branding will be used for all marketing communication applications.

All departments used technology to share information about ALA programs and our mission. Wisconsin's Unit 494 President Crystal Shaw made business cards that had

contact information and a QR code to their Facebook page. North Carolina's Department PR Chair Dolly Fisher reported that many units found it a huge advantage to join local community apps like Nextdoor and Facebook Marketplace. It made a difference in bringing attention to many events such as blood drives and stand downs.

Branding ourselves makes a difference every day. South Dakota's department PR Chair Jill Larmer challenged units to participate in a "Spread the Word" contest. All units were encouraged to participate in submitting a narrative describing "the who, the what, and the why" we matter. Reports included

newspaper articles and photos of members wearing or displaying the ALA emblem or new logo while volunteering at an event.

Through public relations, we share the mission of the ALA. Many units spend time in booths at their county fairs and various community events. In Idaho, 32 out of 55 units brought in new members because of their public relations work. The Poppy chair for Massachusetts Unit 121 was interviewed by a local television station. By using public relations, we generate greater participation and donations for our programs. If we do public relations correctly, we will enhance all of our other programs.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Help more heroes enjoy the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

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

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

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

Make your gift in service of this incredible program online today at donate.legion-aux.org/NVCAFCompanions.

Or you can mail a check to:

American Legion Auxiliary

3450 Founders Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46268

Write 22-23 NP Project in the memo line

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AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Need ideas on executing ALA programs?

Log in to the MyAuxiliary member portal to learn how you can serve our mission!

www.ALAforVeterans.org/committees

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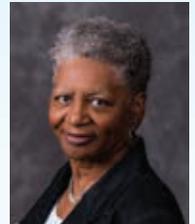
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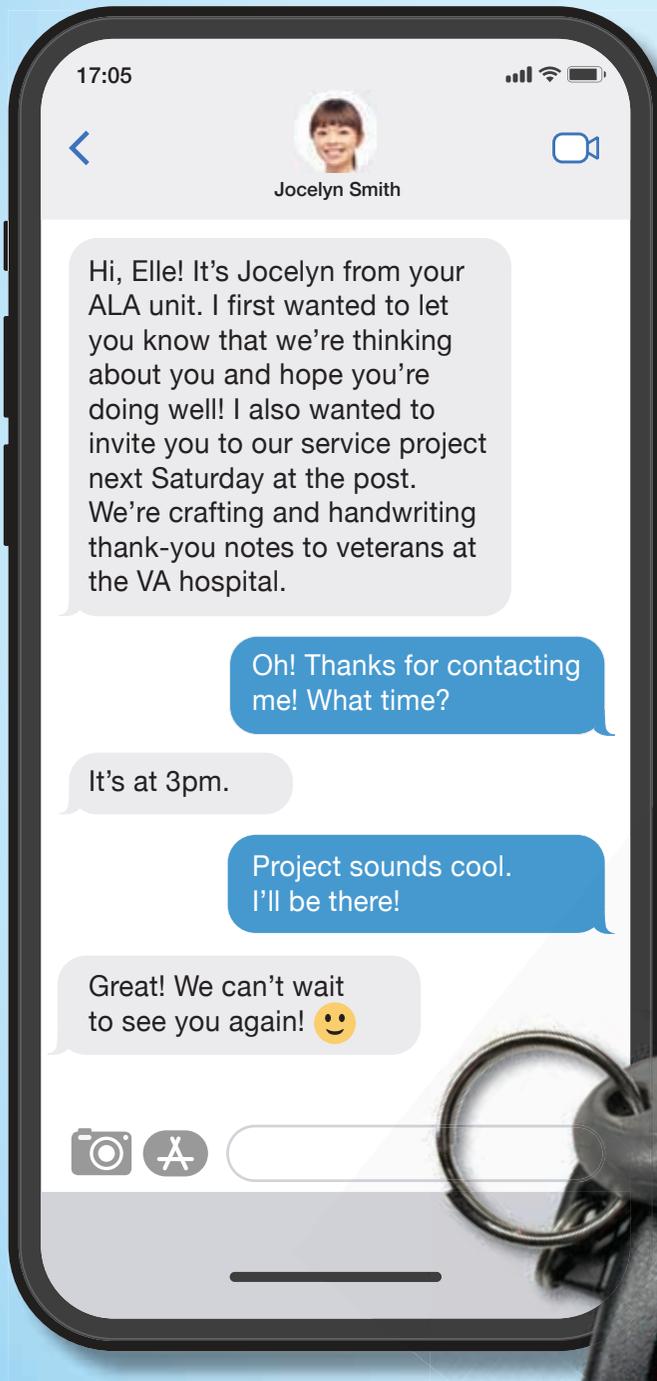


Bonnie Jakubczyk,
Wisconsin



Vicki Paddock,
Wyoming

Everyone plays a part in membership renewals



How do you keep unit members engaged? Are you in regular communication with them? When was the last time you checked in with someone who's been inactive for a while?

Member retention is critical. Consider gathering active members in your unit to devise a plan on re-engaging people you haven't heard from in months ... or even years. You'll help the ALA and our mission of serving veterans, military, and their families.



In the spirit of Service Not Self,
the mission of the American
Legion Auxiliary is to support The
American Legion and honor the
sacrifice of those who serve by
enhancing the lives of our veterans,
military, and their families, both
at home and abroad. For God and
country, we advocate for veterans,
educate our citizens, mentor youth,
and promote patriotism, good
citizenship, peace, and security.