

## Americanism Essay Contest

The Americanism Essay Contest was created to teach students the value of patriotism and what it means to be Americans. Thousands of students participate in the program each year and help promote a lifelong respect of our flag and country.

Students in grades 3 to 12 explore the fundamental rights and freedoms we enjoy today. Each year's contest has a different theme; one student in each category per division is awarded a prize. There is a category for students with special needs.

This year's theme is "What does America the Beautiful mean to me (regarding veterans and our military)?"

The Central Division Chairman would like them submitted to her electronically by April 15th, so I would like to have them by April 1, 2025. Electronic submissions would be best, but I understand that some people need to use the mail. My email is [whitney.nolan@missourigirlsstate.org](mailto:whitney.nolan@missourigirlsstate.org) and my address is in the handbook.

Be sure to reach out and share this information with the schools. There are students who would love to participate if we get them the information.



**AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST  
2025 Cover Sheet**

Each year, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) sponsors an Americanism Essay Contest for students in grades 3-12, including students with special needs. Grade levels are divided into six classes. One award in each of the six classes will be presented in each division. Winners will receive \$50 and a \$50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship fund.

**Essay Title:** *"What does America the Beautiful mean to me (regarding veterans and our military)?"*

**Essay Classes:**

Class	Grade Level	Word Requirement*
I	3 and 4	150-250
II	5 and 6	250-300
III	7 and 8	350-400
IV	9 and 10	450-500
V	11 and 12	450-500
VI	Students with special needs	Word count should correspond with student's grade level.

**THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES SHALL BE FINAL.**

**Essay Checklist:**

- ☐ Class competing in \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Sponsoring ALA unit \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Typed or neatly written essay conforming to the word requirement for class
- ☐ Completed essay coversheet as first page of essay
- ☐ Word count of essay \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Due date for student to return to ALA unit \_\_\_\_\_

**To Be Completed by the Student/Parent:**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Street, City, State, Zip): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Auxiliary Use Only (Must be completed for entry to be considered.):**

Sponsoring Unit Name/Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Unit Americanism Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit winner due to Department on: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Department Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

*Department winner due to National Americanism Division Chairman by April 15, 2025*

The purpose of the Children and Youth is to work collaboratively with The American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans.

- The Children and Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.
- To recognize and reward the positive actions of our children and youth, the American Legion Auxiliary has two special national awards bestowed to youth nominated by units: the Youth Hero Award and the Good Deed Award.
- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2) is an initiative honoring military children who may be experiencing a separation from one or both parents, whether deployed to a war zone, having a short tour or on an extended temporary duty assignment.
- The American Legion Auxiliary Children and Youth programs to support and promote the Children and Youth program of The American Legion.

With Halloween on soon, you can download the Halloween coloring book from the national website, hold a party, be part of a Trunk or Treat, or have a pumpkin carving contest. Along with the POW/MIA table, you can also have a "Military Child's Table Ceremony." This could be something you can share on Veterans Day. As always, be on the lookout for children and youth who can be nominated for the Youth Hero Award and the Good Deed Award. There does not need to be a special day to recognize our children and youth in our communities.

I have included what I have done for Veterans Day. It has a four year rotation. I also included Military Child's Table Ceremony from the National website and one that I had already.

There is a report form to be filled out and awards will be given at the Department Convention.

Children and Youth 2024-2025 Reporting Form

Please return to Catherine Auffert ([cjauffert@hotmail.com](mailto:cjauffert@hotmail.com))

35911 State Highway NN, Parnell, MO 64475

Did you nominate anyone for the Youth Hero Award?

Did you nominate anyone for the Good Deed Award?

Did you have any activities for Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (is an initiative honoring military children who may be experiencing a separation from one or both parents, whether deployed to a war zone, having a short tour or on an extended temporary duty assignment)?

Describe activities you may have completed for Halloween for children and youth?

Describe activities you may have completed for Thanksgiving for children and youth?

Describe activities you may have completed for Christmas for children and youth?

Describe activities you may have completed for St. Valentine's Day for children and youth?

Children and Youth 2024-2025 Reporting Form

Please return to Catherine Auffert ([cjauffert@hotmail.com](mailto:cjauffert@hotmail.com))

35911 State Highway NN, Parnell, MO 64475

Describe activities you may have completed for Easter for children and youth?

Describe activities you may have completed for children and youth during the summer?

How many Auxiliary members were involved? How much money was spent?

## Military Child's Table Setting Ceremony

As we honor our veterans we must remember to honor those at home. The sacrifice the children make when a family member is deployed.

In 1986 Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberg recognized the importance of military-connected children and their role in military families when he established the "Month of the Military Child," underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community.

When an Air Force officer was asked what he needed while deployed his request was simple, "Please don't send cookies, care packages, or socks. Just help take care of our children."

In honor of the children we present to you the Military Child's Table Setting. This table is inspired by our POW/MIA ceremony to honor the sacrifices and contributions of our military children.

- The **Potted Flowering Plant** symbolizes that the children of our deployed may flower and flourish where they are planted.
- The **Hand Spade** recognizes that the military children may be transplanted to a new location, any place at a moment's notice. They must acclimate themselves to a new school, new friends, possibly a new culture. (insert in pot)
- The **Birthday Cake and Unlit Candles** symbolize birthday's and special events that their deployed loved one will miss while they are away.
- The **Baseball Glove and Ball** represent the games they have without the cheering from their deployed loved one.
- The **Ballet Slippers** signify the that there are many special occasions that go without the deployed loved one sharing in the joys of that day, in person.
- The **Family Photo** depicting a child or children with their uniformed parents represent the foundation of our country's strength of families united in their commitment to national service and willing to make any sacrifice, both at home and abroad to ensure that our flag continues to fly free.

Flag  
Remember the children.



# American Legion Auxiliary

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

## Military Child's Table Setting Ceremony

C&Y chair: (or Youth #1)	<p>"We will begin today with a ceremony to honor our military children."</p> <p>"Our United States military members answer the call to service every day as they defend freedom around the world. That service often comes at a great personal sacrifice, not only for the service member, but also for their family, their children.</p> <p>"When an Air Force officer was asked what he needed in Iraq, he said, 'Please don't send cookies, care packages, or socks. Just help take care of our children.' Our country has always supported its military in times of war through community efforts. We have a great capacity to care for the home front. Now is the time for a new Victory garden. In this garden, we can tend to the needs of the military child.</p> <p>"Today we would like to present to you the Military Child's Table Setting, inspired by the POW/MIA ceremony to honor the sacrifices and contributions of our military children.</p> <p>"The Potted Flowering Plant symbolizes that they may flower and flourish where planted.</p>
Youth #2	<i>Enters carrying Potted Flowering Plant and sets on table</i>
C&Y chair: (or Youth #1)	<p>"The Hand Spade recognizes that they may be transplanted to a new location any place in the world at a moment's notice, where they become fully immersed in the culture, make new friends and acclimate themselves to a new school.</p>
Youth #3	<i>Enters carrying Hand Spade and sets on table</i>



# American Legion Auxiliary

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

C&Y chair: (or Youth #1)	<p>"The Birthday Cake and Unlit Candles...</p> <p>"Baseball Glove and Ball...</p> <p>"and Ballet Slippers represent the fact that sometimes special occasions are missed by one or both parents while serving their country.</p>
Youth #4, 5 & 6	<p><i>Enter carrying Birthday Cake and Unlit Candles...</i></p> <p><i>Baseball Glove and Ball...</i></p> <p><i>and Ballet Slippers and set on table</i></p>
C&Y chair: (or Youth #1)	<p>"The Family Photo depicting a child or children with their uniformed parent represents the foundation of our country's strength...</p>
Youth #7	<p><i>Enters carrying Family Photo and sets on table</i></p>
C&Y chair: (or Youth #1)	<p>"families united in their commitment to national service and willing to make any sacrifice, both at home and abroad...</p> <p>"to ensure that our flag continues to fly free."</p>
Youth #8	<p><i>Enters carrying US Flag and sets on table</i></p>
ALL	<p><i>Amen.</i></p>



## Veterans Day Program Ideas/Rotation used by Catherine Auffert

### Every Year

- Welcome
- National Anthem
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Band plays a song
- Usually an essay or song from elementary student and from high school student
- Choir will sing a song
- Sometimes there is a song from the Elementary students
- Introduce Veterans present and had them stand up
- Small reception after program for Veterans and their student(s)

### Year 1

- Difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day
- Folding of the Flag
- POW/MIA Table - have read "America's White Table"
- Children's Table - Elementary Student Council put items on table

### If needed:

- Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
- Honor Flight
- Blue Star Banner - passed out small Blue Star Banners to students and staff who had active military

### Year 2

- Information about flags and songs - had the flags and band played the songs
  - Marines
  - Army
  - Coast Guard
  - Air Force
  - Navy
  - Merchant Marines
  - Space Force
  - POW/MIA
- History of Taps and playing of it

### Year 3

- Story of the Poppies - read the poems and the response, also passed out poppies to everyone there
- Fallen Soldier - done by a Post in the area

### Year 4

- History of American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders
- History of Post 288 Glen Ulmer and Unit 288 Auxiliary - this is the Post and Unit in our town
- Slide Show of Veterans pictures collected. Had their picture, name, when served, service they served in, and if related to students in our school, had patriotic songs playing during slide show
- Four Chaplains - I printed off the pictures and framed them, had students read

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT REPORT

Department Fall Conference – October, 2024

Hosting a County Government event in your community serves many purposes and meets many of the goals of the American Legion Auxiliary.

A County Government Day acquaints the youth in your community with their local government and makes them aware of how the work done there affects their lives now and in the future. Few of them know about the services available through their County Government and are surprised to learn how important those services are to their daily lives. Very soon, they will be the property owners, business owners, parents, and voters in the county. A County Government Day now will educate them on the services available to them and how best to use these services.

A County Government Day contributes to the American Legion Auxiliary goals of Americanism, patriotism, education, community service, children and youth, legislation, and civic responsibility. It is never too soon to begin establishing these goals in our future citizens.

A County Government Day, when done yearly, will impact all the youth in your community. When the program is offered to a designated grade level each year, eventually all the students will be given the opportunity to participate. The cost to a unit or district to host a County Government Day are very small – usually just the cost of a sack lunch for each student.

Here's something to consider. We strongly support the Girls State program and are proud of the young women who participate. However, this program (1) benefits a few elite students from each community, (2) it teaches them about government on the state and national levels which very few will actually become involved with in the future, and (3) it is at a cost of \$500 per student.

A County Government program (1) will benefit all the students in your community, (2) will educate them about local government which will be a part of the future lives of all of them, and (3) can be produced at a very small price per student.

We do not advocate an either/or approach to these programs. Rather, we advocate the value of both! We hope you will consider the benefits to your community in hosting a County Government Day.

Joan Vanfossan  
County Government Chair

## SERVICE THROUGH MEMBERSHIP:

### JUNIORS UNDER AGE 18

ALA Junior members volunteer with other girls in their age group in many engaging activities:

- Learning about patriotism and how to show respect for the American flag



- Helping military families in practical ways such as mowing yards and helping military kids become acclimated at a new school
- Distributing poppies and raising awareness, especially on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, so our veterans know we care about them

Memorial Day and Veterans Day, so our veterans know we care about them

- Practicing leadership by organizing service projects
- Earning service patches while learning about ALA programs
- Demonstrating responsibility for future scholarship, college, or military service applications

If you are a female ALA member 17 years of age or younger and love our country, imagine attending a regional or national meeting focused on Junior Activities with a hundred girls who could become your lifelong friends!

The American Legion Auxiliary encourages young women to lead the way in continuing its legacy of serving veterans, the military, and their families. For more information about Junior Activities, visit [www.ALAForVeterans.org](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org) or follow us on Facebook at American Legion Auxiliary Juniors.

*Millions of hours of Auxiliary outreach service are volunteered annually for veterans and military families. Will you step up and join us?*

Read more about the American Legion Auxiliary at [www.ALAForVeterans.org](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org).

Email your questions or comments to [alafhq@ALAForVeterans.org](mailto:alafhq@ALAForVeterans.org).



Your Local American Legion Auxiliary Contact:



American Legion Auxiliary  
National Headquarters  
3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268  
P: (317) 569-4500 | F: (317) 569-4502  
[www.ALAForVeterans.org](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org)  
[www.ALAFoundation.org](http://www.ALAFoundation.org)

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Junior Member Activities  
ALA Girls Nation / ALA Girls State  
Children & Youth  
Education and Scholarships



# Youth Programs

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

## PERPETUATING OUR VALUES

For more than a century, The American Legion Family, which includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion,



has been steadfast in support of our nation's military. Our members promote patriotism, responsible citizenship, and national security while educating youth and advocating for veterans' rights.

While members of The American Legion Family are individually unique, collectively we are a multimillion-member powerhouse of caring advocates dedicated to service.



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.

## ALA GIRLS STATE

American Legion Auxiliary units in all 50 states proudly host ALA Girls State, an amazing week of learning focused on responsible citizenship, leadership, and love for God and country.



Female high school students who have completed their junior year are competitively selected and sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary units for this program, where they learn about the political process by electing officials for all levels of state government and actively running a mock government. The girls are assigned to mock cities and either the "Federalist Party" or "Nationalist Party." Assistance from dedicated ALA volunteers ensures the program's

nonpartisan governmental, patriotic, and civic objectives are carried out through interactive learning. Though the week is filled with many learning opportunities, there is always time for fun and the formation of long-term friendships. The art of civil debate is one of the main skills learned at this premier program, hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary since 1937. Many ALA Girls State participants have gone on to a lifetime of service to our country in the military, civil service, or advocacy. Candidates should be keenly interested in government and current events, have high moral character, and show strong leadership abilities. Because the structure of state and local government varies, ALA Girls State

programs may vary in content and method of procedure, but each adheres to the same basic core values.

Two outstanding girls are selected from each ALA Girls State program to attend ALA Girls Nation. These "senators" meet for a week in Washington, D.C., where they run for political office, campaign and debate for the passage of legislation, and meet with their real-life counterparts on Capitol Hill. Capping off the week of ALA Girls Nation is a possible meeting at the White House with the President of the United States.



Local businesses and community organizations ensure maximum participation by contributing to the ALA Girls State program, ultimately benefiting their communities and ensuring educated leaders for future generations. [www.ALAforVeterans.org/ALA-Girls-State](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/ALA-Girls-State)

## AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR YOUTH

The American Legion Auxiliary offers thousands of dollars in scholarships at the national level, including:

- Fifteen \$5,000 Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarships for direct descendants of U.S. wartime veterans.
- Five \$5,000 Spirit of Youth Scholarships for Junior members of the ALA. Learn more about eligibility and other scholarship opportunities: [www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships)

Additional scholarships are offered in each ALA department (state) and through many community ALA



units and Legion posts. Please contact your local American Legion Auxiliary unit for more information. Also available:

- The James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship, awarded to a student who has volunteered at least 100 hours at a Veterans Affairs medical center.

[www.volunteer.va.gov/ParkeScholarship.asp](http://www.volunteer.va.gov/ParkeScholarship.asp).

- The Samsung American Legion Scholarship, awarded to ALA Girls State and American Legion Boys State participants who are direct descendants of wartime veterans. [www.legion.org/scholarships/Samsung](http://www.legion.org/scholarships/Samsung)

## ALA OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITIES

**BEYOND OUR LEGION FAMILY**  
To recognize and reward the positive actions of our youth, the American Legion Auxiliary has two special national awards which are presented locally to deserving youth who are under age 18:

- The **Youth Hero Award** recognizes youth who perform a heroic act of physical bravery. The **Good Deed Award** is for youth who contribute in a special way to society through community service. **More information:**

[Children&Youth@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Children&Youth@ALAforVeterans.org)

**ALA Americanism Essay Contest** (grades 3 to 12): Students explore the fundamental rights and freedoms we enjoy today. Each year's contest has a different theme; one student in each category per division is awarded a prize.

There is a category for students with special needs. **More information:** [Americanism@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Americanism@ALAforVeterans.org)

**National Poppy Poster Contest** (grades 3 to 12): Students showcase their artistic talents on an 11"x14" poster board using the poppy.



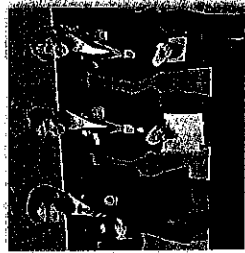
One student in each category per division will be selected as a winner. Students' artwork will be showcased on the ALA's national website. **More information:** [Poppy@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Poppy@ALAforVeterans.org)

**The American Legion Oratorical Contest** encourages deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students under age 20. Over \$200,000 in scholarships may be awarded each year to participants by The American Legion National Organization. **More information:** [Americanism@Legion.org](mailto:Americanism@Legion.org)

**American Legion Baseball** instills in the nation's youth a sincere desire to develop within themselves a feeling of citizenship, sportsmanship, loyalty, and team spirit. **More information:** [www.Legion.org/Baseball](http://www.Legion.org/Baseball)

**The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports** is a gun safety education and marksmanship program for male and female high school students. **More information:** [Americanism@Legion.org](mailto:Americanism@Legion.org)

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## Education Report

Dr. Katy Schwartz Drowns, Chairwoman

The purpose of the education program is to promote quality education for children—especially for military children—and adults, working our mission to “educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.”

With Veteran’s Day rapidly approaching, I’d like to encourage Units to be involved in their local schools. I’ve attached a document with ideas about activities that will benefit students in your area. Some other ideas include backpack filling for military children and for children in need, sponsor young athletes who can't afford program fees or needed equipment, or sponsor a recognition event for all teachers/staff at local post home with ALA unit providing refreshments. A Legion Post in my community organized a flag etiquette lesson for all third graders in our school, and now my son can’t wait to be in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade so he can meet the “special visitors.”

ALA scholarship applications are now open. They can be found online at <https://www.legion-aux.org/scholarships> Scholarship applications are due March 1, 2025 and I know we have great candidates here in Missouri! Let’s try to represent well!

Please reach out with any questions or concerns. [katyschwartzdrowns@yahoo.com](mailto:katyschwartzdrowns@yahoo.com)



## How to Organize a Veterans in Community Schools Event

### **Committee:**

Education

**Contact Information for Questions:** [education@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:education@ALAforVeterans.org)

### **Background Information on *Veterans in Community Schools*:**

Veterans in Community Schools is an activity endorsed by The American Legion that brings history to life by connecting military veterans with students in classrooms or at school assemblies in conjunction with history lessons about World War II, The Korean War, The Vietnam War or Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom. The ever-decreasing numbers of healthy veterans from World War II points to the fleeting nature of the opportunity to pass on these important lessons.

Veterans are important pieces of American history. The American Legion Family believes accounts of their experiences while in uniform and as a result of their military service should be preserved and shared with others. Veterans have witnessed monumental events in history. They can help students learn from and appreciate the sacrifices individuals and their families have made.

In addition to sharing their experiences, veterans may also discuss a wide range of topics including how to help a family who has a deployed military service member, how to show support for the troops, proper respect for the flag, or why The American Legion Family was formed and what it stands for. Also, veterans' sharing of their military experience with an appreciative audience can help them heal psychological wounds from combat, deployment or family separation. Veterans who have spoken to students generally describe the experience as a rewarding and personally satisfying experience.

### **Steps for Organizing a Veterans in Community Schools Activity:**

Participation in The American Legion's Veterans in Community Schools program is a suggested activity in the American Legion Auxiliary's Education Programs Action Plan. It can be reported for either the Education or VA&R program. Please only report each program one time.

Follow these steps to organize a Veterans in Community Schools event at a school(s) in your community.

**1. Identify and Contact School (s)**

- Contact a school or schools in your local community and offer to organize a Veterans in Community Schools event for a classroom, grade level, or student-body assembly. Reach out to the school principal first, either by an in-person visit, telephone or email. You may choose to select an elementary, middle or high school; you can alter your activities to accommodate a wide range of age groups. The most effective way is to have someone connected to the school (a parent or friend of a teacher,) make the approach.

**2. Propose an Activity Plan**

- The school official may refer you to a classroom teacher or to a department chair. If so, work with the teacher or chair to develop the activity into an educational program for students. Discuss with them how veterans can contribute to the students' understanding of military service and/or U.S. history. Provide additional resources (found below) for teachers, as they may want to introduce key concepts to students in their lesson plans in preparation for the activity.
- Work with the school to identify the most suitable time, venue, and format of the activity. You could host the event in a classroom, cafeteria, auditorium, or gymnasium. The size of the venue will depend on the number of veterans and the size of the audience.
- Propose to hold the Veterans in Community Schools activity on or around Veterans Day (November 11 each year) or Memorial Day, but do not limit yourself to those time periods if that time frame does not suit the school calendar.
- Depending on the average age of the audience, you may want to develop a set of guidelines for the event. In addition to hearing about veteran experiences, different age groups may be interested in other information as well. Elementary/middle school students may be interested in flag education and citizenship; high school students may be interested in the role of the military in today's society, a more in-depth exploration of the veteran's experience, the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress, and volunteer service opportunities that are offered by the Legion Family.
- Offer to create handouts or supplemental materials about veterans for students to take home for themselves and their family members. Note that the school official will likely need to review and approve the materials being proposed for distribution to students or family members. Materials can contain information about the Legion Family (such as a web address), but should not overtly promote membership since that is not the purpose of this activity.

- Identify and assign roles to participants, such as greeter, ALA or Legion representative and moderator. While servicemembers don't necessarily expect civilians to address them by their military title, it is a nice courtesy to know the proper address.

### **3. Identify Veterans for Speaking Roles**

- Once the possible dates have been selected with the school, identify one veteran or group of veterans from the appropriate war era who would be willing to speak about their experiences, or other topics suggested by the school. Note that some veterans may prefer to speak to older or younger audiences depending on how the activity is structured.
- There are many ways to find veterans who may be willing to participate. First, ask the family member(s) of those who belong to the American Legion Auxiliary. Second, contact the commander or a commission chairman of the Legion post. Third, ask the school if a staff member is a veteran and wishes to speak, or if they are aware of a parent or family member with military experience.
- Try to connect specific historical incidents with those veterans who may have served in that theater or at that time in history.
- Try to invite veterans from more than one branch of the armed forces and different periods of conflict. A wide array of speakers will give students an opportunity to hear many kinds of experiences.

### **4. Prepare the Veteran(s) and Audience**

- Ask each veteran if there are topics they wish to discuss or not discuss. Work with the teachers to develop guidelines for students to respect the veterans' wishes.
- It is common for young people to want to ask a military service member if they have killed anyone. Teachers should discuss this in advance, requesting that students refrain from asking this question out of respect for the servicemember.
- Below is a list of potential questions and talking points to review with your veteran(s) in advance. It may even be helpful to assign questions to students at the event.
  - When and where did you serve?
  - Why did you join the service? What branch?
  - Why did you pick the branch that you were in?
  - What did it feel like to be in the service?
  - Would you demonstrate a proper salute?
  - What was boot camp like?



- What were your job assignments?
- What are some of your memorable experiences?
- What did you do for entertainment?
- Where did you travel during service?
- Any humorous or unusual events?
- What did you do in the days and weeks after you returned?
- Did you form any close friendships, and do you still stay in touch?
- Are you a part of any veterans' organizations?
- Did your military experience influence your views on today's military and war?
- How did the service affect your life?
- What values did you learn from your experience?

## **5. Implement the Activity Plan**

- Follow the agenda you have laid out through careful planning and consultation with the school official and staff.
- If time, space and resources allow, consider hosting a small reception for the veterans, school officials, key faculty, and a representative or a few of the student body to continue their conversations and exchange information.

### **▪ Sample Agenda**

1. Assemble the students and veterans.
2. Welcome students and veterans to the activity. Give a brief overview of the project's purpose and introduce the veterans.
3. Say the Pledge of Allegiance and/or have a local ROTC display the U.S. flag.
4. Allow for a few remarks from any distinguished or notable guests you may have invited (e.g. Mayor, member of Congress, etc.)
5. Allow the veterans to introduce themselves. After they have given brief introductory remarks, begin the Q&A session.
6. Thank each veteran for participating and allow for individual remarks if they have any. If you wish to present each veteran with a gift, now would be the best time to do so.

7. Consider saying the Pledge of Allegiance again to see if you hear the words differently in light of the presentation.
8. Close out the project or event with a culminating 'Thank You' to all participants.

**6. Follow-up with Veteran(s) and School(s)**

- Send thank-you notes to the school leader and faculty. Ask if they would like to continue with the program in the future.
- Provide the school leader with information about the Legion Family and Legion Family programs and resources for veterans, veteran and military families, and the general community, so that he/she may make referrals of students and their families to Legion Family programs and services.
- Send thank-you notes to veteran speakers. Ask the veterans if they would be willing to be added to a list of willing speakers for future Veterans in Community Schools activities.

**Promote ALA and Report Your Impact:**

The ALA encourages members to identify themselves as such. When interacting with teachers, parents and veterans, however, it is important that members not push ALA membership aggressively, as that is not the primary purpose of this activity. Please, do feel free to wear ALA apparel and mention why you value association with The American Legion Family. Please also be sure to report your volunteer activities and hours to your unit's Education or VA&R committee chairman.

**Additional Ideas:**

Assign a unit member to take pictures or video during the activity, provided the school and the veterans consent to this documentation.

- Assign a unit member to prepare an article or blog post of the event for the unit and post publications.
- Gather publicity generated by students and schools themselves, such as news articles in the school newspaper or online postings, student essays written for class assignments, or thank you notes from students. Re-publicize this material, with the authors' permissions, in your unit or department communications.
- Be sure to report your Veterans in Community Schools activities in your individual or unit impact report to the unit's Education or VA&R Committee chairman.

**Resources:**

- **America's Veterans Teacher Guide, *The American Legion*** <http://www.legion.org/documents/pdf/veterans.pdf>

- **Promoting Historic Preservation in Community Schools, *The History Channel*** [http://www.history.com/images/media/interactives/promote\\_historic\\_preservation.pdf](http://www.history.com/images/media/interactives/promote_historic_preservation.pdf)
- **Our Veterans: Sharing Their Stories, *The History Channel*** <https://images.history.com/images/media/pdf/OurVeteransOurStories.pdf>
- **Veterans History Project, *U.S. Library of Congress*** <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

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**Leadership Report**  
**Fall Conference**  
**October 19, 2024**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Leadership Committee is to better equip members to serve in leadership positions with confidence and skill.

**Participate in ALA leadership development opportunities.**

- Attend American Legion Auxiliary Mission Training: -  
Nashville – November 16      Denver – November 16  
Des Moines – January 25      Las Vegas – February 1      Boston – February 1
- Attend leadership conferences/workshops within your district/department.
- Participate in ALA Academy courses.
- Be aware of ALA leadership opportunities in your community:
- ALA Unit Member of the Year Award:
  - Nominate a fellow unit member for Unit Member of the Year.
  - Open to senior members who are not currently, nor have ever been, in an elected or appointed leadership role higher than a unit president.
  - Follow your department's procedures for submitting nominations.
- **Unit Member of the Year Award Form Link:** <https://www.legion-aux.org/Unit-Member-of-the-Year-Award-Form>
- Leadership Certificate Program:
  - Members complete requirements and a project and receive a Certificate of Completion. Check the [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org) website for updated instructions.
- **Promote participation in the ALA Academy.**
  - Log into the MyAuxiliary member portal at <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/memberprofile>.
  - Go to the [ALA Academy](#).
  - A catalog lists a wide variety of topics that are available to members online to view. A great place to find answers to questions about Wreaths Across America, Month of Military Child, Junior Patch Program, Use of Poppy Funds, Junior Mentor Series, Creative Arts Festival, Foundation Grants, and others.
- **Enhance knowledge about ALA history, programs, and organization.**
- Send a narrative report to District Leadership Chairman and the District President. We won't know what you did or why it mattered if you don't report.
- Department and Unit Member of the Year Award Nomination Form Completed and Submitted: **June 1.**

**National Security Report  
Fall Conference  
October 19 2024**

National has adjusted the focus of National Security for the first quarter to assisting those who have been affected by the recent hurricane disasters. These storms left widespread loss of lives, shelter, services, supplies, and income. The ALA's Auxiliary Emergency Fund is available to members who have been affected by these disasters, with grant awards up to \$3,000.00. Help make a difference by supporting not only the AEF but also researching other ways to assist these communities.

With changes in the situations around the world occurring daily, we need to keep all our troops and their families in our thoughts and prayers. We must be prepared to step up and help wherever needed in our communities.

**Salute to Servicemembers Award**

Established in 2003, this award has evolved from honoring women veterans to honoring active duty women to honoring all enlisted personnel who are currently serving our country in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, and the National Guard/Reserve.

One enlisted servicemember from each branch of service as well as the National Guard/Reserve will be recognized at the American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Recipients will attend the National Convention as guests of the Auxiliary.

National is challenging every Department to participate by selecting a servicemember from each branch of service and submitting their application for consideration.

**The purpose of the National Security Committee is to promote a strong national defense.**

- Support active-duty military families by working with an installation Family Readiness Group (FRG).
  - Don't forget the military recruiters who live in your community! They can be an excellent resource to help find troops to send CARE packages too.
- Use ShipThrifty –this isn't just another tool — it's a game-changer. The platform simplifies label creation, cuts costs, and eliminates the need for cumbersome manual tracking. Whether you're shipping care packages, business returns, or personal items, ShipThrifty's platform adapts to your needs, saving you time and money. Plus, you can schedule pickups to save even more time.

- **Raise awareness of POW/MIAs and the work being performed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in the search for missing personnel.**
- **Remember to support those families whose servicemembers made the ultimate sacrifice.**
  - Work with like-minded organizations to support the families of servicemembers who died during service to our country:
    - American Gold Star Mothers, American Gold Star Families, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
  - Utilize Military OneSource resources to assist those you know in need.
- **Support and enhance American Legion Family and partner initiatives that strive to improve the Quality of Life (QoL) of our servicemembers and their families through the Base Assessment and Servicemember Experience (BASE) Program.**
  - Find out more information about the BASE program at <https://www.legion.org/publications/259059/base-assessment-and-servicemember-experience-program>.
  - Collaborate with other like-minded organizations that also support servicemembers and their families:
    - ASYMCA -- local Armed Services YMCA food pantries which support servicemembers and their families.
    - Blue Star Families, Blue Star Welcome Week — Supporters
    - USO -- Volunteer with your local USO.
    - Quilts of Valor Foundation--Award a Quilt of Valor -quilts = comfort and healing
    - Taking Care of Our People (defense.gov)

#### Deadlines/Important Dates

- Year-end reports — Please send narrative reports to District chairman and District President. Remember we won't know what you do or why it matters if you don't report it!
- Department and Unit Award Nomination Form Completed and Submitted: June 1.
- Salute to Servicemembers Award – will provide when I receive the deadlines



GREETINGS POPPY CHAIRMAN,

I DID A ZOOM MEETING WITH NATIONAL LAST WEEK AND THE DIFFERENT STATES SHARED IDEAS TO PROMOTE POPPY AWARENESS SO I HAVE LISTED A FEW OF THE IDEAS THAT I THOUGHT WERE COOL:

POPPY POETRY CONTEST

POPPIES FOR PUPPIES FUND RAISER

LITTLE MISS POPPY CONTEST (RULES FOR NATIONAL MISS POPPY ON NATIONAL SITE)

WHEN YOU USE JUNIORS AND SAL MEMBERS (UNDER 18) NATIONAL IS NOW CALLING THEM POPPY AMBASSADORS AND THEY CAN ALSO EARN THE POPPY PATCH. TAKE PICTURES OF THEM HELPING MAKE CENTERPIECES, DISTRIBUTING POPPIES, AND ALWAYS HAVE A POPPY IN THEIR HAND IN THESE PICTURES....

WE WILL BE HAVING ANOTHER POPPY HAT CONTEST THIS YEAR AT STATE CONVENTION AS WELL AS A POPPY CENTERPIECE CONTEST(1 PER UNIT)

TAKE PICTURES AT ALL EVENTS STARTING NOW AND SEND THEM TO ME IN JPEG FORM SO I CAN SEND THEM TO NATIONAL.

YOUR POPPY FUND CAN BE USED FOR:  
SERVICE DOGS STRICTLY FOR VETERANS

CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL (DONATIONS MADE TO DEPARTMENT WHO SENDS  
THEM TO NATIONAL)

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

—Lt. Col. John McCrae

Moina Michael

“In Flanders Fields”

After World War I, the poppy flourished in Europe. Scientists attributed the growth to soils in France and Belgium becoming enriched with lime from the



rubble left by the war. The red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed by those who fought and those who continue to fight for our country following the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem was written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front line in World War I, to honor soldiers killed in battle.

National Poppy Day®

May 23, 2025

Poppy Day is celebrated in countries around the world. The American Legion Family brought National Poppy Day® to the United States by asking Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day, as National Poppy Day.

**On the Friday before Memorial Day, wear a red poppy to honor the fallen and support the living who have worn our nation's uniform.**

The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars. It reminds Americans of the sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms.

Led by the American Legion Auxiliary, each year members of The American Legion Family distribute poppies with a request that the person receiving the flower make a donation to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

Poppy Program Engagement Program

**Member Site:** <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/poppy>

**Public Site:** <https://www.legion-aux.org/poppy>

**Poppy email address:** [Poppy@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Poppy@ALAforVeterans.org)

### **Poppy Key Resources**

[National Poppy Day](#)[Poppy Program Guide](#)[Poppy Facebook Group](#)[Resources for Poppy Days](#)[Resources for National Poppy Day](#)[Poppy Poster Contest Information and Rules](#)[Little Miss Poppy Contest Information and Rules](#)

### **Promote the Poppy Program and increase revenue.**

- Wear a poppy to promote conversation and interest.
- Educate your community about how funds collected help veterans, servicemembers, and their families.
- Contact local businesses for permission to distribute poppies on their premises. Make sure you have permission for liability purposes; in some instances, permits are required.
- Send a thank you to businesses that allow distribution. Consider using the Poppy Poster thank you cards, available for purchase through Emblem Sales, for your communication.
- Organize a department poppy drive with The American Legion Family. Encourage The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders, and ALA Junior members to join poppy distributions in your community.

### **Educate your community on the meaning and history of the poppy.**

- Using the image and story of the Flanders Field poppy to educate people about the sacrifices of our military servicemembers helps us raise awareness of the Legion Family and connects us to our mission in the eyes of the public.
- Promote the ALA Poppy Poster Contest in your local schools and youth groups.
- Promote the Little Miss Poppy Contest to Juniors in your unit.
- Offer to speak at local civic engagements about the meaning and significance of the poppy and how Poppy Funds help veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

### **Celebrate National Poppy Day®**

- Wear a red poppy all day and tell everyone why.
- Distribute poppies to friends, co-workers and family and tell everyone why.
- Tell the story on social media of who you are wearing your poppy to remember or support on National Poppy Day®. Don't forget to @ALAforVeterans and use these hashtags: #NationalPoppyDay #AmericanLegionAuxiliary.
- Accept a poppy and donate if you see a member of The American Legion Family in your neighborhood distributing poppies.
- Distribute National Poppy Day material and make it available to members.
- Organize a poppy distribution at local Memorial Day Ceremonies. Make sure to wear your Auxiliary branded apparel to help tell everyone who you are.

- Invite a local dignitary to lay a poppy wreath at a memorial in your community and invite unit members to be present. Consider singing patriotic songs or other ways to involve your unit members.
- Contact local legislative offices to announce poppy distribution days, and request proclamations declaring Poppy Days in your community. (Please see Poppy Day Resources above for more information).
- For more information and resources, visit <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/poppy/poppy-days>

THANK YOU

TAMMEY CUMMINS

DEPARTMENT OF MO POPPY CHAIRMAN

E-MAIL: [tammeyC59@gmail.com](mailto:tammeyC59@gmail.com)

April 9<sup>th</sup> Due Date  
Reports

# **Poppy Centerpiece Contest**

## **State Convention**

### **One Centerpiece per Unit**

**Show off your style and creativity!**

**Design and create a Poppy Centerpiece to Present at the state convention. The centerpiece will be judged on its originality, creativity, and use of poppies.**

**To enter:**

- 1. Choose a category.**
- 2. Design and create your Poppy Centerpiece.**
- 3. Bring your Poppy Centerpiece to the state convention.**

**Judging will take place at the Convention.**

**Winners will be announced at the Meeting during State Convention**

**Get creative and have fun!**

**Contact Tammey Cummins at [tcummins23@AOL.com](mailto:tcummins23@AOL.com) or (573)258-9303 for more information.**

## Poppy Poster Contest

Submitted by Vice Chair Jammie Phillips

Have you started promoting the Poppy Poster Contest? If not, now is the perfect time to get started. Units should work with local schools, Junior Auxiliary Members, and other local youth organizations to promote the Poppy Poster Contest. When working with your community, try thinking outside the box. Reach out to your local library and inquire about collaborating with them to sponsor a Poppy Poster Contest, and don't forget to check with local homeschool organizations.

## Poppy Poster Requirements

1. Each poster shall have a fitting slogan not to exceed 10 words. Articles "a", "and," "an", "the" are not to be counted as words. The words "buddy" and "buy" cannot be used.
2. The words "American Legion Auxiliary" must be used in the design of the poster and will not be counted in the 10-word count.
3. Each poster must include a red poppy.
4. The department shall determine the closing date of the unit contest. The poster shall be on 11x14" poster board. (Drawing paper will not be accepted).
5. The United States flag may be used as long as there are no infractions of the flag code.
6. Posters will be judged using the following criteria:
  - 50% - poster appeal (layout, message, originality)
  - 40% - artistic ability (design and color)
  - 10% - neatness
7. Media used shall be watercolors, crayons, powder or oil paint, handmade paper cutouts, ink or textures, acrylics, pencils, and markers.
8. Written in ink on the back of the poster (not attached) shall be the class in which the entry is submitted, the name, address, age, and grade of the contestant and the name of the department.
9. Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of artwork, contestants and their legal guardians grant non-exclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and artwork published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.
10. The poster shall be the work of only one individual.
11. The label "In Memoriam" from the veteran-made poppy may not be used.

## Important Dates and Deadlines

**June 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 Poppy Posters** - Departments should establish a process and deadline. All department entries are due to the division chairman by June 1<sup>st</sup>. For more information on the Poppy Poster Contest visit

[https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/Poppy\\_Poster\\_Contest\\_Rules.pdf](https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/Poppy_Poster_Contest_Rules.pdf)

**October 9<sup>th</sup> 8:00 P.M. Est. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Poppy Committee Meeting**  
Department Chairmen, Department Presidents, and Department Secretary's are all encouraged to attend. Registration link: [https://legion-aux.formstack.com/forms/poppy\\_quarterly\\_meeting\\_registration](https://legion-aux.formstack.com/forms/poppy_quarterly_meeting_registration)

## Resources

**Poppy Program Guide:** The Poppy Program Guide has been updated for 2024 and is available for download from the National Website. [https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Guides/ALA\\_Poppy\\_Guide.pdf](https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Guides/ALA_Poppy_Guide.pdf)

**National Poppy Facebook Group:** Join us on Social Media for additional information and ideas.

**Don't forget to answer the questions!**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy>

**Templates:** Consider using some of the flyers and templates available on the National Website. This one would be ideal for promoting the Poppy Poster Contest! [https://member.legion-aux.org/CMSDesk/ALA/media/PDF/Templates/ALA\\_Flyer\\_Temp-05.pdf](https://member.legion-aux.org/CMSDesk/ALA/media/PDF/Templates/ALA_Flyer_Temp-05.pdf)

## Women's Veteran report October 2024

As you have seen the membership goals for units are to add at least one new member to their units. Why not make your new member a Women Veteran. In 2012 Kansas City said there were 6000 women veterans in the area.

Members of the Armed Forces are made up of one percent of the population of America. For each 100 recruits less than 4 will be women. since women make up a small percentage of our Armed Forces sometimes their requirement for basic needs have not been met by the military.

In past generation women were for the most part not front line warriors as they were in the first Gulf War. The military supply chain had not made provisions for women monthly need. Women don't usually carry around a years worth monthly needs. These warriors adapted and overcame and did this country proud. These are the women we need in the American Legion Auxiliary. Most of these women are in their 40's and may have an interest in joining the Auxiliary.

I have a few suggestions in order to find and recruit these women:

The military training year starts Oct 1 each year. This is the time to contact the military units in your Districts ask them to included you in their training schedule. Their training schedules are usually made three months out but there is always flexibility in the

training schedule.

Most Reserve units and National Guard units have a family day in the fall or their December drill. Yearly briefing are held at this time which would be a great time to be on the training schedule.

A short history of what the American Legion Family has worked to get for Veterans: Example VA system- There was no where for Veterans to receive follow up care after being discharged before the American

American Legion took on this situation in 1919.

Families took on the health care and expenses for the discharged

soldier.

GI Bill- WWII soldiers came back to America were able to go to college and every honorable discharge veteran

has that opportunity since.

Agent Orange and burn pits are recent benefit for veterans but it took 30 years and 20 years for those benefits

Families being paid a salary to care for their injured veterans is benefit your families have today that have not been

available till the last few years.

These are a few of over 100 project the American Legion Family have worked for since 1919 to make our veterans lives better.

When giving your presentation you might ask the soldiers to stand up if they are a member of the American Legion Family. I



would be surprised if any stand up then ask if any are a member of the VFW or DAV, again I will be surprised if there are very many.

three reason I think this is 1. The cost of membership... Most soldiers are under 30 they are in low paying job, starting families, paying for

school to get better jobs and paying off loans if they have just gotten out of school. We all remember our

20 after we left our parents homes and started paying our own way.

2 Time.

Between school, job one or more and family commitment's and military obligation they may only

have 6 day a month where the family is together all day so that time is precious to them. If they or their

spouse work week-end and their children are in school they may not have any day.

These two reason are very real and need to be work on at the unit level. Maybe a sliding scale for membership.

If the whole family is involved in the American Legion Family activates then they would be able to spend that time with their whole family and create memories. Since we are a family we need to show we have programs for their entire family.

The third reason is one that fall squarely on us. Have they been asked to join our Legion Family, I bet not. If we do not ask and explain why they should join our family they won't. People want to be asked to join, they want to feel needed and they want their needs to be met. If we can explain we need their input in



order to find a way to meet the need they and other veterans have we will be able to recruit and keep new members. This is a one on one, unit solution.

How do we find women veterans? The easiest way is to go to the military units in our districts. Ask to talk to the unit members at an opening formation usually 7:00 AM or at a family day put up a display, or if they have Yearly Briefing ask to give a presentation. On a briefing day plan at least 4 hours as the squad will rotate thru the different stations. If you are going to the unit this would be a good time to ask for women to give you their contact information. If you are having a women veteran event this would be the time to tell them about it even if it is 3-6 months out.

If you see a woman in uniform talk to her. As an ice breaker ask her what she does in the military, how long has she been in, or where she is from. If you have an activity coming up invite her to drop by. If she is rushed and you have an event ask her for her contact information and send her an invite.

With Veteran day coming up go to the Veteran program at schools and invite the women veterans to your meetings. Again ask for their contact information so you can invite them to a women veteran event in the future.

Unit 163 in Neosho has had for the last 10 years a Women Veterans tea each spring. It is held on a Sunday afternoon. the first time I attended there were about 20 women this past year there were 60. I think only 4 or 5 were members of the Legion family. Neosho add a couple to their Legion family. This is the only Women Veteran event I have ever been invited to.

Unit <sup>210 4<sup>th</sup></sup> ~~11077~~ <sup>St Louis</sup> in Independence had a tent outside at a homecoming event so women veterans could get needs met with out going in to the building. again ask for their contact information to invite them to other women veteran events

If you are having a Women's Veteran event tell the Department, and your local paper or news station before the event to advertise.

And they may send a reporter to the event as they did this year in Neosho.

Other idea are maybe a spa day/evening where the veteran women could have a little pampering

a painting/ craft day/evening

Scrapbooking day/evening

If you make these yearly events as Neosho has they are looked forward to, because of Neosho tea Fayetteville AK will have their second tea this spring Neosho Lead the way

I would like to see more active duty Women Veterans in the Auxiliary as they know what would help veterans and their family lives easier today as they defend our freedoms.

I am challenging each unit this year to add one women veteran to your units. Units that are able to do this will find that these new members with be an asset to your units as they have the leadership, energy and motivation to show us the way to Remember Our Why.