



# Dept. Bulletin December 2025

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# From your Department Headquarters.....



- Just a reminder to all that we started using our street address here at the office back in Jan/Feb so please correct any forms/mailings to our office (**1100 Brandywine Blvd. Ste. D, Zanesville Ohio 43701**).
- Membership transmittals have been received in a variety of conditions. Please take the time to fill these out correctly. Your attention to detail will be greatly appreciated.
- Mid-Winter Raffle Requests from Department Chairmen, District Presidents, PDPs are due by December 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Just to keep everyone in the loop, Lori Wickham is no longer with the ALA, Dept. of Ohio. Desi Stoy is serving as Interim Dept. Secretary. Please reach out to the office if you think something may have slipped through the cracks as we strive to improve our customer service.
- Please know in this season of thankfulness, we are indeed grateful for all that our volunteers do, and your Department Office will try to continue to do good work on your behalf.





## Americanism

December Bulk Mailing

The holiday season is upon us, and we hope you have a safe and enjoyable time. Please continue to work on your Americanism programs and record your time and funds spent.

Our Central Division Chairman, Laura Clark, is looking for high resolution Jpeg photos of your unit in action as you working the Americanism mission. Sent any pictures to Kimm and me so we can forward them to Laura and include some of them in the Buckeye Messenger. We hope all members are referencing their Plan of Action and the National website for information and ideas.

We are including the National Americanism Committee's November Newsletter in this mailing as it includes tips on how to become involved in the American Legion Youth Programs.

**America250** is an ongoing event to mark the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The American Legion would like everyone to "celebrate and educate" during this event. Here in Ohio, you can go to [america250-ohio.org](http://america250-ohio.org) to find events in your area, register to receive updates on activities, and connect to other organizations you may want to partner with.

Attached are the Cover Sheet and Rules for the *Americanism Essay Contest*. These documents were changed in October so please be sure to distribute the newer version. Check any essays you receive to see that applicants have followed all of the instructions and completed the cover sheet. All entries must be sent to Chairman Diann Long by April 1, 2026.

Also attached are the forms for the All-American School report. It is never too early to begin recording what is happening at the schools. As noted in the Plan of Action, these reports will go directly to Vice Chairman Kimm Bunch.

Thank you for all you do.

Chairman - Diann Long

Vice Chairman – Kimm Bunch



The 2025-2026 ALL-AMERICAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPORT

Unit Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit # \_\_\_\_\_ District # \_\_\_\_\_  
Unit Chairman \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of School \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Grades Covered \_\_\_\_\_

- Y ( )      N ( )
1. Did the above school display the U.S. Flag in their classrooms and outside the school building? \_\_\_\_\_
- Y ( )      N ( )
2. Has the school certified that they recite the Pledge of Allegiance in each classroom daily? \_\_\_\_\_
- Y ( )      N ( )
3. Did the school participate in the National Americanism Essay Contest? \_\_\_\_\_
- Y ( )      N ( )
4. Did the school have a presentation on any of the following: History and meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance; History of the U.S. Flag; or Flag etiquette? Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Describe how the teachers promoted Americanism in the school \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Describe at least one Community Patriotic Activity that the students participated in. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. In 100 words or less, why does this school warrant receiving the All-American School Award? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please use the back or additional paper if needed. Pictures may be included. This report must be received by April 15, 2026.  
Mail to: Department Americanism Vice Chairman Kimm Bunch, by April 15, 2026.

## THE 2025-2026 ALL-AMERICAN MIDDLE SCHOOL REPORT

Unit Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit # \_\_\_\_\_ District # \_\_\_\_\_  
Unit Chairman \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of School \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Grades Covered \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|
|   | Y ( ) | N ( ) |
| 1. Did the above school display the U.S. Flag in their classrooms and outside the school building?  |       |       |
| 2. Has the school certified that they recite the Pledge of Allegiance in each classroom daily?  | Y ( ) | N ( ) |
| 3. Did the school participate in the National Americanism Essay Contest?  | Y ( ) | N ( ) |
| 4. Did the school have a presentation on any of the following:<br>History and meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance; History of the U.S. Flag; or Flag etiquette? Which ones? | Y ( ) | N ( ) |
| _____   |       |       |
| _____   |       |       |
| 5. Describe how the teachers promoted Americanism in the school   | _____ |       |
| _____   |       |       |
| 6. Describe at least one Community Patriotic Activity that the students participated in.  | _____ |       |
| _____   |       |       |
| _____   |       |       |
| 7. In 100 words or less, why does this school warrant receiving the All-American School Award?  | _____ |       |
| _____   |       |       |
| _____   |       |       |
| _____   |       |       |
| _____   |       |       |

Please use the back or additional paper if needed. Pictures may be included. This report must be received by **April 15, 2026**.  
Mail to: Department Americanism Vice Chairman Kimm Bunch, by **April 15, 2026**.

## THE 2025-2026 ALL-AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Unit Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit # \_\_\_\_\_ District # \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Grades Covered \_\_\_\_\_

- Y ( )                      N ( )
1. Did the above school display the U.S. Flag in their classrooms and outside the school building?
2. Has the school certified that they recite the Pledge of Allegiance in each classroom daily?                      Y ( )                      N ( )
3. Did the school participate in the National Americanism Essay Contest?                      Y ( )                      N ( )
4. Did the school have a presentation on any of the following:                      Y ( )                      N ( )  
History and meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance; History of the U.S. Flag; or Flag etiquette?  
Which ones?

5. Describe how the teachers promoted Americanism in the school.

6. Describe at least one Community Patriotic Activity that the students participated in.

7. In 100 words or less, why does this school warrant receiving the All-American School Award?

The American Legion Auxiliary's Americanism Essay Contest is for students in grades 3-12, including students with special needs, divided into six classes. One award in each class will be presented in each division. Winners will receive a \$50 check, and a \$50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund.

**Essay Title:**  
***"Celebrating America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday and the  
Veterans Who Fought for Our Freedom"***

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

1. The Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet must be filled out legibly and completely. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.
2. Departments (states) will determine the deadline for the local unit contests.
3. Essays will be due from the state department chairs to the Americanism Division chairs by April 15.
4. Essays received after the contest deadline will not be accepted.
5. Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of an essay, contestants and their legal guardians grant non-exclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and writing published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.
6. The essay shall be the work of only one individual.
7. Use of AI in writing essays is not allowed. Essays will be checked for use of AI. Any essay determined to be 30% or more AI written will be disqualified.
8. Essays will be scored using the following rubric:
  - Word Count: 5pts.
  - Cover Sheet: 5pts.
  - Topic/Theme — Does the Essay Answer the Topic Question?: 25pts.
  - Content — Original Thought: 25pts.
  - Grammar: 10pts.
  - Clarity/Coherence: 10pts.
  - Organization — Introduction, Body, and Conclusion: 10pts.
  - Correct Word Usage: 10pts.

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



## AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST 2026 Cover Sheet

The American Legion Auxiliary's Americanism Essay Contest is for students in grades 3-12, including students with special needs, divided into six classes. One award in each class will be presented in each division. Winners will receive a \$50 check, and a \$50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund.

### Essay Title:

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### 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 cover sheet as first page of essay
- Word count of essay \_\_\_\_\_
- Due date for student to return to ALA unit \_\_\_\_\_

#### To be completed by the student and parent/guardian:

\* Please write legibly in ink.

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

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

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

Student or Parent/Guardian Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Parent/Guardian Name and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Signature of Unit Americanism Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Winner Due to Department on: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

*Department Winner Due to National Americanism Division Chair by April 15, 2026*

# Buckeye Girls State



Holiday Greetings to All:

Listed below are a few points for request of BGS applications:

- **Do not send payment with application requests.**
- **Payment is due with the completed delegate application after selection.**
- **You will be sent a fillable delegate and alternate application after you have selected your delegates and alternates—they must email the completed applications back to you and you will send them to [buckeyegirlststate@alaohio.org](mailto:buckeyegirlststate@alaohio.org) and then send your payment to Department Headquarters by February 15-2026**
- **All applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis and the applications WILL NOT BE numbered. They will be numbered once they are received in Department Headquarters.**
- **When you are requesting applications, please make sure you list the schools you are requesting applications for such as:**
  - Wallie High School (4)

I hope this answers some of the questions we have been receiving. If you have any questions either email [buckeyegirlsstate@alaohio.org](mailto:buckeyegirlsstate@alaohio.org) or contact Gwen Schroeder-Zulch at 419-494-7366

On another note, we are also looking for volunteers for a weeklong lifetime experience at Buckeye Girls State which will be held Saturday June 6-Saturday June 13 at Bowling Green State University. We are especially looking for City Counselors and City Government Advisors. You can email [buckeyegirlsstate@alaohio.org](mailto:buckeyegirlsstate@alaohio.org) and request an application. The listings require a weeklong commitment. We will also be looking for volunteers for registration on Sunday June 7, 2026, starting at 9:30am.

We are currently working on the BGS website which will include Buckeye Girls State delegate and alternate information and packets only. The American Legion Auxiliary Buckeye Girls State website will include information for the units on Buckeye Girls State. This is a work in progress and please be patient as we have a lot of material to cover.

Lastly this is our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Buckeye Girls State and we hope to have a few surprises in store for this event. Be sure to visit our Basket Lottery table at Midwinter Conference for a chance to win lottery tickets.

Happy Holidays from BGS 2026 Dream Team!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



# CHAPLAIN

## December 2025



We have washed the Thanksgiving dishes and eaten the last turkey sandwich; it is time to prepare for Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. Send cards to your unit and legion shut ins, reminding they are still an intricate part of our legion family. If you have an afternoon, take another unit or Legion member with you to visit one or two of these wonderful ladies and gentlemen. You don't have to know them to visit—as we all have a few members we haven't seen in some time. Remember to offer prayer when you leave. You will receive such a blessing for your afternoon. Share your experience with your unit at your next meeting.

Is your unit seeing holiday cookies to our troops? Remember to add a small devotional note or prayer along with your pocket flags in the boxes. Let them know you keep them and their families in your prayers as they protect us.

You should also add a nice prayer to your holiday food baskets your unit distributes.

This is the prayer my unit added to our Thanksgiving boxes.

*Heavenly Father,*

*Pour your peace over this veteran and his family. Let his home be filled with harmony, love, understanding and patience. Calm every storm they face and let your presence guide their thoughts, decisions and relationships.*

*Bless them with joy that lasts, hope that grows and peace that endures for eternity. Father, we give you thanks for the service of our veteran and pray this meal blesses his family.*

*All this we pray in your most holy name. Amen*

OK, you are now ready to light the menorah, trim the tree and drink some eggnog. Please know my heart reaches out to each and everyone of you this blessed holiday season. For me, it is Christmas—my family will celebrate the birth of our Savior with great vigor while singing and feasting. For my Jewish Auxiliary sisters in the chaplaincy, you will be celebrating the re-dedication of the temple in Jerusalem with great brilliant lights. For my Kwanzaa sisters—light your candles to celebrate our ancestors and families. HALLELUJAH!

I pray your holidays are filled with lights and love.

Michele N. Sandridge  
1857 Marks Avenue  
Akron, OH 44305  
michelesandridge@yahoo.com  
330-620-3443





## Children and Youth December 2025

Your mission is to support the development and well-being of children and youth, the American Legion Auxiliary in Ohio offers various programs aimed at enabling our community's engagement:

- Provide scholarships for higher education to deserving youth.
- Organize youth leadership opportunities to build skills and confidence.
- Facilitate community service projects to instill a sense of responsibility.
- Promote health and wellness initiatives through educational workshops.
- Support programs that honor and recognize youth achievements.
- Collaborate with local schools to enhance educational opportunities.
- We need to work with our Legion and SAL to create more opportunities for our CHILDREN AND YOUTH.
- Remember Kids **of Deployed are Heroes 2** (KDH2) is an initiative honoring military children who may be experiencing separation from one or both parents, whether deployed to a war zone, having a short tour or on an extended temporary duty assignment.





## CHILDREN *of* WARRIORS



## NATIONAL PRESIDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP

### *Recognize Kids of Active Military*

*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. Recognition buttons or stickers with “I’m a Hero 2” can be distributed to these kids to recognize their sacrifices.*

### *What can you do?*

*Host an event to recognize these military children. Be sure to include the Legion family, especially your Juniors. Have a supply of the “I’m a Hero 2” buttons or stickers ready to hand out. You might also want to have on-hand the “Proud Parent/Grandparent of a Military Child” button.*

### *Consider these ideas:*

- *Coordinate with Family Readiness Groups for button distribution during family days.*
- *Coordinate with Legion Family members on local community days/fairs etc.*
- *Have an activity day/dinner for military families at your post home.*

*KDH2 buttons may be ordered through a commercial vendor or made yourself. You can download a file for KDH2 with instructions [here](#).*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALACHildrenandYouth/>

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



# Education

Jane Ann Brenneman

Check dates for scholarships. due dates will be before you know it. Thus far I have received 6 applications.

Did you have your schools take the government test, again, in some cases scholarship money may be awarded.

Have you started getting letters of interest for BGS. **Remember the unit interviews the girls and decide who is sent, not the schools.**

If a unit doesn't have the funds to send girls, units can ask for sponsorships from other organizations, school booster clubs, check with other units, maybe they can sponsor a girl who wants to attend or hold fundraisers.

I hope with Veterans day recently occurring, units were able to get into school to hold a program or distribute information.



# FINANCE

“REMINDERS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS”



Financial Reports:

Treasurers, make sure your monthly reports are written.

All financial reports should be written and filed for Audit.



Audit Committee should audit unit records annually before installation of new officers.



District Presidents & Chairman Expense Reports:

Must be submitted within 60 days from date of occurrence.

Mileage is determined as stated in the Financial Recommendations

Chairman: Alice Teynor [ateynor@gmail.com](mailto:ateynor@gmail.com)

2nd Member: Leeann Stan [leeannstan@gmail.com](mailto:leeannstan@gmail.com)

3rd Member: Christie Peeper [christiepeeper@yahoo.com](mailto:christiepeeper@yahoo.com)



# History

Patti Watson

All you Ohio Gnomies please remember to send me pictures of events that Renee, Mindi, or Rebecca attend.

You may also share them on Renee's Department President Facebook page.

Any activities you host that supports President Renee's special project, I would love to have you submit pictures and a short story about it.

Lastly, remember to keep track of things your Unit does for Americanism, Education, Children and Youth, National Security and VA&R. These are core items to include in your history also.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Patti Watson

[pattiwatson77@gmail.com](mailto:pattiwatson77@gmail.com)



# Junior Activities

Michelle D. Bolin



## MID-WINTER CONFERENCE WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

The Juniors will be putting together HATS FOR HEROES during Mid-Winter. They will be filling knit hats with everyday essentials like toothpaste, combs, handwarmers, etc. We are asking districts and units to donate items for this project. We are hoping to put together 125 hats total (the Auxiliary of Unit 627 has generously donated the hats). A wish list has been put together on Amazon to make it a bit easier on everyone. If you think of something else you'd like to provide, that's awesome too!!! I've printed the Amazon link below, but I am more than happy to email it to you. If you prefer to shop, please bring your donations with you to Mid-Winter. Once we've filled the hats they will be divided amongst the districts of Juniors in attendance to be distributed to the VA, veterans in their community or homeless shelters. If you are able to provide some items let me know what they are so that I can take those off the list. Again, please reach out with any questions.

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3TYD86QRP6G0I?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3TYD86QRP6G0I?ref=wl_share)



# Leadership

Deb Meyer, chairman

Learning anything new is a process. If you are a new officer or chairman, no one expects you to know everything. Mentoring is a huge factor in how we can move our organization forward in the future. Educating ourselves and learning the programs only makes us a stronger organization. So, what does mentoring look like? Mentoring is developing a relationship and mutual respect with the members and the willingness to teach. It's leading by example and maintaining a positive attitude. It inspires others to be motivated and feel supported. What it is not, talking down others or demanding it must be done a certain way. Bullying is not mentoring. We don't say one thing and do the opposite or withhold information about the office or chairmanship.

Mentoring is ensuring that officers and chairmen understand the duties and expectations of the position they hold.

It really helps to pair the officer or chairman with the person who last held the office or another knowledgeable member. When I was first elected as my unit's president, I was given a flash drive with all the information I might need, from the past agendas to a yearly outline of what the unit did each month. It held any information I might need plus the past president was willing and made herself available to answer any question I might have. That was very important to me as I had only been a member for a year or two. There should be some sort of information for the new officers and chairmen. Keeping a flash drive, notebook or binder to pass onto the next generation of officers is vital to keeping your unit on track. After each meeting, add to the notebook the agenda, the minutes of the meeting, treasure's report, events or projects and outline of the committees and how the events were planned. It should include special dates and activities specific to your unit. This information can be passed to the newly elected the following year. Besides that, you will have started a scrapbook of your unit and information for reporting in the spring. We need to work at mentoring new leadership instead of letting them feel like we have "hang out to dry." Through mentoring our new leaders, we can help guide them and keep them from making the same mistake we might have made.

We all should be identifying and mentoring our junior members who show or are willing to develop leadership skills. Pairing with a senior officer or chairman is a great place to start but we need to recognize they will have new ideas for change. The younger generation uses social media and online resources which many of the seasoned members do not know how to use but it is a very good way to get information to the public for their support.

We also need to make sure we mentor new members. So many times, we use acronyms and a new member will not know what VA&R means. It was probably a year before someone told me what it meant. For example, at our April meeting we were asking for members to make cookies to take to school for the teachers. We all knew why but the new member asked why we were taking cookies for the teachers. The unit has always taken cookies for Teacher Appreciation Week, but she did not know that. Making sure new members have important information such as our governing documents and programs is part of the process of learning and helping to get them involved in our organization. Please teach and do not reprimand. I was called out for breaking colors when I did not even know what that meant. It is also important not to throw too much information all at once to a new member as she/he might feel overwhelmed. And don't expect new members to be an officer or chairman until they "get their feet wet" and feel comfortable.



All generations need to realize we all have something to give our organization. In the past I have used the analogy of Thanksgiving dressing. To make good dressing you need to use old bread so it can soak up the flavors from the vegetables and stock, but it also takes fresh eggs, herbs, and vegetables to make tasty dressing. Our seasoned members have “soaked” up a lot of valuable information, but we also need to take a fresh look at the next generation.

I continue to encourage unit members to work through the ALA Academy. The ALA Academy has a training session on mentoring and mentoring juniors. That would be a good place to start if you are not sure how to mentor. Another good session for new members is ALA 101. There are sessions on communication skills and conflict management if there are problems in your unit. It would be great if you have the resources to do ALA Academy courses at your unit meeting.

I also want to suggest attending the Mission training in Indianapolis on January 31, 2026. You will receive a multitude of information. One of our members who attended with me several years ago said it was the best overall workshop in which she has participated, and I will second that.

We all need to work at making sure the unit’s officers and chairmen get the Bulk Mailing if they do not have access to a computer. The articles in the Bulk Mailing will help guide them through their program. Also, attending the Department conferences such as Mid-Winter, members will hear presentations and have answers to questions from the Department Chairmen. Besides that, it is a great place to meet other members from across the department and do some networking.

As a reminder for new leadership, and maybe all leadership, there are a couple deadlines of items needed for the unit to receive the Citation of Merit. The unit poppy orders must be received at the Department along with your Bonding Fee by December 31, 2025. Other programs that need attention at this time are the scholarships, the essay contests, and Buckeye Girls State. It is time to get into your schools and talk to the junior girls, teachers, and guidance counselors to get the ball rolling. For more information, there are sessions on the scholarships in the ALA Academy

At the school’s Veterans Day program, one of our unit’s essay winners read her essay. One line caught my attention. “In America, you can work hard to achieve your dream through education.” So how does that translate for us in the auxiliary? Educating ourselves and knowing the fundamentals of our organization are vital. When we put in hard work and work together as a team, we can accomplish anything for our veterans, active military, and communities.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season with family and friends and hope to see many of you at the Mid-Winter conference.



# Membership

Mindi Rue, 1st Vice President

Chairman

[mindi1036@gmail.com](mailto:mindi1036@gmail.com)

## ALAMIS TIPS AND TRICKS

ALAMIS is a magical word for membership because it is fast, efficient, and cost-effective. Welcome to the American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System (ALAMIS) used by units, departments and leadership. One of the most important tips for ALAMIS is to gain full access to the system. Full access allows units to manage membership information and pay dues electronically. Access is determined by CALENDAR YEAR.

- Obtain Approval: Contact your department office to request full access to ALAMIS.
- Complete training: National membership staff will provide online self-paced training.
- ALAMIS Payments: Payments processed with Full Access, using Visa & MasterCard debit or credit card only.

## Benefits of using ALAMIS

- Pay dues electronically: Units with full access can pay membership dues directly and immediately and see members paid in the database. This avoids mail delays, postage, and processing errors.
- Process membership: You can join new members, rejoin members last paid in your unit and edit member information.
- Generate reports: You can use the system to generate mailing labels from your unit roster.



**Tips for limited access** (If you do not have full access or are new to the system these tips can help you navigate)

- Consult the ALAMIS training manual which provides an overview and login instructions.
- Maintain and update unit members information with “write” access.
- Online resources: If the unit is not yet ready for the tech move, members can still pay online at [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org) or by phone 317-569-4570.

## Best Practices

- Document all transactions: Keep a record of membership applications and dues payments, even when processing through ALAMIS.
- Utilize online resources: The ALA website contains a wealth of information for members.



- Communicate effectively: Always write the unit number, the member’s ID number, and the payment date on the application before sending it to the department office if required by your department. (Check with department for policies and procedures)
- No matter the access the unit possesses, only department can perform transfers, and mark members in ALAMIS as deceased.



# NATIONAL SECURITY

**Pam Brenneman, Chairman**

## OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

“Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) is an officially recognized program of The American Legion Charities Inc., and its purpose is to assist wounded, injured, or ill active-duty military personnel and veterans by providing morale-enhancing gifts to warrior transition units, VA, and DoD medical care facilities, military installations, and 501 (c)(3) and (c)(19) organizations which are part of The American Legion Family or such nonprofit entities sponsored by an American Legion entity.” Cited from The American Legion Website.

“While the care at many military hospitals and warrior transition units is extraordinary, The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors program was created to provide nonessential items that help wounded warriors recover but don't usually show up as a budget line on government spreadsheets.” Cited from TAL Website.

Supporting the health and morale of active service members and Veterans is vital to this program. The American Legion provides aid and comfort through various initiatives, demonstrating ongoing support for those who serve our nation.

Recognizing the importance of family in recovery, event grants allow for family participation. These grants fund outings to amusement parks and outdoor activities, encouraging recipients to take a break from medical challenges and spend quality time with their loved ones.

### How the ALA can help

The American Legion encourages monetary donations since most military and VA medical centers cannot store large care packages. This allows us to quickly purchase and deliver essential items to our wounded warriors and veterans. If your Unit is holding a fundraiser, please consider donating to the OCW (Ongoing Care for Warriors).

Checks may be mailed to: Operation Comfort Warriors, The American Legion, 5745 Lee Road Indianapolis, IN 46216



## Poppy Program

Vicki Monroe  
513-706—0524



Now is the time to be speaking with your schools, church groups, after school programs, Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops to promote the **Poppy Poster Contest**. There are 7 classes for the contest:

Class I	Grades 2 & 3	Class V	Grades 10 & 11
Class II	Grades 4 & 5	Class VI	Grade 12
Class III	Grades 6 & 7	Class VII	Students with Special Needs
Class IV	Grades 8 & 9		

So you can see, the contest is open to all school age children!! There are rules regarding wording, use of the red poppy, size of poster, etc. Please refer to your Plan of Action for the complete list of rules. Meet with your entrants and explain to them the meaning of the poppy and the **Poppy Poster Contest**. Remember, all entries must be received by me by April 15, 2026.



Have you been speaking with your Junior members to submit their entry for the Department Junior Miss Poppy Contest? Do you have a Junior member between the ages of 6 and 12 who has been promoting the Poppy Program all year? In addition to other criteria, the Junior must submit a scrapbook that includes of her adventures promoting the Poppy story, photos and descriptions. For complete rules, please refer to the Poppy Plan of Action. Make sure you make this fun, exciting and educational for your Junior. Entries are due to me by April 15, 2026.



## Department Poppy Usage Contest

The Senior Poppy Usage Contest is all set for Mid-Winter, January 16 & 17. The rules for this contest are in your Poppy Plan of Action. Please have your entries there Friday afternoon, so voting may begin. Remember, all votes are \$1.00 and all of the proceeds go to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Vote often!!!!

## Senior Poppy Corsage Contest

The Senior Poppy Corsage Contest will also be held at Mid-Winter, January 16 & 17. The rules are in your Poppy Plan of Action. Make sure your entry arrives Friday afternoon, if possible. The longer your entry is visible, the more votes you may get. All votes are \$1.00, and all proceeds go to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Promote your corsage and get your fellow members to vote!!!

## Junior Poppy Corsage Contest

The Junior Poppy Corsage Contest will also be at Mid-Winter, January 16 & 17. The rules are in your Poppy Plan of Action. Make sure your entry arrives Friday afternoon, if possible. The longer your entry is visible, the more votes you may get. All votes are \$1.00, and all proceeds go to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Support your Juniors and vote!!!



# The Toadstool Times

## Public Relations

Rebecca Long

December 2025



Can it really be December? We are at the halfway point, and we are seeing great things taking place at Units throughout the state.

I want to begin by thanking those units that are sharing their events on the ALA PR Facebook page and on Unit and Posts individual social media. This is how we get the word out about what the Auxiliary is all about.

The following are some tips that you can use when using hashtags and bragging on your accomplishments.

### Social Media Hashtags

- Purpose of Hashtags: Boost visibility, connect with like-minded audiences, track engagement.
- Why Should You Use Hashtags? 1. It helps you to reach audience members who have similar interests. 2. It helps those searching for those terms or those following a particular event, etc. 3. Increases visibility 4. Helps you stay relevant and trending 5. If you customize a hashtag, it allows you to track who is sharing or using your #.
- Platform-Specific Tips: **Facebook**: Use sparingly (1–2 max) to avoid spam flags and maintain clarity. **X (formerly Twitter)**: Use sparingly (1–2 max), research trending hashtags **Instagram**: Research trending and relevant hashtags; customize for events and campaigns. Unlimited hashtag use. More hashtags are allowable (1-30 max)
- General Tips: **DO**: PUT YOUR HASHTAG FIRST (meaning your Unit/ Post/Squadron) **DO**: Be consistent. Define your Brand, e.g., #alaohunit123 **DO**: Use letters, numbers, underscores **DO NOT**: Use special characters, leave spaces between words, or hashtag each word



## Humble Bragging Encouraged

- Share accomplishments and stories with the PR team and District Presidents
- Use social media to showcase impact and build community pride, don't forget your hashtags!
- Brag about your members that volunteer for OTHER service organizations, e.g., Honor Flights, USO, Food Pantries, etc. Who do they serve? Why do they serve? This is a terrific opportunity for the community to learn the depth of our membership. Do not forget to take photographs of this member in their volunteer apparel, while they are volunteering (if allowed by the organization) or a candid photograph of them.
- Don't forget to Show Your IMPACT: Did you have an event? How much money did you raise? How many items were donated? If you had a goal, did you meet it? If you did not, what do you need to reach the goal, and how can the community assist? Do not forget to include photographs/video of the event, the results,

Looking forward to a great 2026 and lots of info to be shared.





# VA&R

December 2025 Bulletin

Wow! Here it is December. I hope you received and will receive many more blessings this holiday season. The American Legion Auxiliary is very blessed to have YOU for an active member! Your kindness and caring ways shine brightly like stars.

With this Christmas season, many of us will be busy with making cookies and candy, buying and wrapping presents, and spending time with family and friends attending many events. Through all these busy activities, do not forget our veterans or their widows who may not have someone to share the time or events with. How about taking a veteran for a ride to see the Christmas lights or to attend a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Or take pictures and go to a nursing home to share the pictures with those who cannot go out. What about treat gift bags with small treats and little personal items. Maybe include a page to color or a puzzle page. Whatever you choose to do to brighten a veteran's day will be greatly appreciated.

Please reach out to those who lost a loved one this past year and are spending their first Christmas without their loved one. Letting them know you remember the deceased person will help them with their grief. I read in the mental health newsletter about people navigating holiday grief to remember, "coping isn't about getting over your loss but finding ways to get through this season." Also, in this newsletter there is a section called "[how to relieve holiday stress.](#)"

Some of the suggestions are as follows: move your body, practice kindness, get plenty of sleep, write or journal, watch alcohol and sugar, stay connected, reduce the noise, give yourself permission to feel, and do not forget to just breathe. May this advice help you or others to enjoy this holiday season.

Check with your VA Hospital Representatives to see how you can assist them throughout the holidays and in the new year. Whether you go to volunteer or make donations, your help is appreciated.

Do not forget to "Be The One" and check in with Veterans who live alone throughout this season.

Some days of importance coming up are December 7<sup>th</sup> Peal Harbor Day, December 20<sup>th</sup> Space Force Birthday, and January 19<sup>th</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr Day of Service.

*May all of you enjoy the holidays!*

*Deb Sutterlin and Robyn Cooper*

