

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY DEPT. OF NY SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

1580 COLUMBIA TURNPIKE, BLDG. 1, SUITE 3
CASTLETON-ON-HUDSON, NY 12033
518-463-1162

WWW.DEPTNY.ORG



DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
LORA ROWE

Greetings to New York American Legion Auxiliary Members!

How excited and honored I am to begin my year as your Department President for 2026-27. I look forward to sharing my year with all of you as I travel around this beautiful state and visit each of your counties.

My theme this year, portraying my gratefulness, is "Sing Praises to Veterans."

My project is Veterans Creative Arts. The Creative Arts is a healing therapy and has helped veterans recover from physical and emotional disabilities. Many veterans have expressed that they are here with us today because of Creative Arts, which also coincides with Be the One. All money raised for Veterans Creative Arts will remain in New York State and will be divided amongst those VAs with art therapy programs or Creative Arts festivals to provide the needed materials and supplies.

I encourage you to thoroughly look through the Plan of Action which is found on the Department website www.deptny.org. This year there will be two reporting periods, November 1 and April 1. Please be sure you use the forms in this year's Plan of Action to ensure the correct Department Chairman receives the information. Also, please adhere to deadline dates!

Dr. Coral May Grout is our National President this year from our own Eastern Division, State of Massachusetts, and her theme this year is "Be a Beacon for Veterans."

We have an exciting year ahead of working together with new ideas, making new memories, and most importantly enriching the lives of our veterans.

And...always remember to BE KIND to each other.

Congratulations to all our National Award Winners

Children and Youth–Best overall Department (Eastern Division): Julianne Barton

Legislative– Best overall Department (Eastern Division): Dena Restaino

Leadership– Best overall Department (Eastern Division): Lucille Mozzillo

Membership: 85% by March 15, 2026, 95% by June 10th

Poppy: Best overall Department (Eastern Division)-Kathy Soule

Best Unit in the Eastern Division: Unit 1524 (Herkimer County, 5th District)

Public Relations– Best overall Department (Eastern Division): Pat Murphy

VA&R–Best overall Department (Eastern Division): Yvonne Brunner

Best Unit in the Eastern Division: Unit 574 Julie Montello (Washington County, 4th District)

Perfect Attendance- 2026 :NY- Albany VAMC-Deputy Judy Benner. Montrose

VAMC-Deputy Rosana Santangelo and Deputy Patrice Cortelli

Poppy Posters: Class IV- Gabriella Michelle Oliveira, Class V- Brooke Muto, Class VII- Hallie Carney

Best overall for the Eastern Division- Brooke Mut

Americanism Essay Winners: Eastern Division-Class IV Julie Essell, Yorktown Heights, NY,

Eastern Division – Class V James Cavagnaro, Staten Island, NY, Unit 1365

VA&R / SERVICE TO VETERANS
JULIANNE BARTON

I hope everyone had a fantastic summer full of family and friends!! VAR never takes a break. I hope everyone kept track of all the activities that they participated in, noting their hours, dollars, and miles! Please, please, make sure you are reporting EVERYTHING from May through the present. It is so easy to forget the wonderful things you do for the Veterans in your life.

The Department of New York won several awards on the National Level. Best overall Department (Eastern Division) - Yvonne Brunner; Best overall Unit (Eastern Division) - Unit 574, Julie Montello , Washington County, 4 th District. GREAT JOB, LADIES!!!!

Awards were also received for VAVS Perfect Attendance 2026 - Albany VAMC - Deputy Judy Benner; Montrose VAMC- Deputy Rosana Santangelo and Deputy Patrice Cortelli. THANK YOU for all you do for our Veterans!!

Our mission is to enhance the lives of our active military, veterans, and their families. There are many ways that can be accomplished. Plan a special activity at your Post home, visit a local assisted living facility and spend some time with the Veterans that reside there; Plan a dinner and invite the local military families. If there is a VMAC in your area, plan to spend some time volunteering there.

Make sure to review the Plan of Action (POA) to keep up to date on some of the activities that you could participate in like Honor Flight, Wreaths Across America, and the Creative Arts Festival, President Lora's project. Please plan on making a generous donation to this worth while project. More will follow....

Veterans' Day will be here before you realize. Please start making plans to make this day special for all the Veterans in your area. Breakfasts, luncheons, and dinners are sure to be planned and make sure you INVITE the Veterans. They can't show up if they don't know about the activity. Try to provide transportation if possible (and a necessity) and see if there are any homebound Veterans that may enjoy a meal.

Please remember if you have a Veteran in need, regardless if they are a Legionnaire, check out the WFA program. It is included in the POA and everybody can use a helping hand some time.

REMEMBER:

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." *President John F Kennedy*

MEMBERSHIP
YVONNE BRUNNER

As we begin a new membership year, let's build on the incredible momentum we created last year. We nearly reached 98% of our membership goal—an achievement made possible by the dedication of our members throughout the Department of New York.

At the 2026 American Legion National Convention, delegates adopted new membership eligibility language for the American Legion Auxiliary — expanding eligibility and allowing more family members to join the ALA.

The Legion has authority over the ALA's membership eligibility; this language change allows more people into our organization — strengthening our ability to better serve our veterans, military, and their families.

Following is the updated text from The American Legion that reflects the updated eligibility provisions for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary:

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:

Section 2. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to:

(1) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of members of The American Legion; and

(2) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and any time after December 7, 1941, who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;

(3) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941, who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility period and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and

(4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.

The revisions to the ALA's eligibility mentioned above allow individuals the potential to be members of both the Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. The Legion's national judge advocate has confirmed that this dual membership does not constitute a conflict of interest with The American Legion.

The eligibility changes are effective immediately. Updated membership applications, brochures, and additional membership resources are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

For any questions related to this eligibility change, please email ALA National Headquarters' Membership Division at membership@ALAforVeterans.org.

Secondly, on Wednesday, June 13, 2026, the NEC (National Executive Committee) voted on a change to the Standing Rule XI Units: the Standing Rule is now as follows:

Section 6. Membership eligibility through the service of a living veteran may be established by presentation of a current The American Legion membership card. Membership eligibility through the service of a deceased veteran may be established by certification of the deceased veteran's proof of military service by the post adjutant or other post officer or by the unit secretary or other unit officer. Joining online requires an affidavit of eligibility; the Unit may request a copy of the veteran's proof of military service.

What does this change mean?

The Unit Secretary or other Unit Officer may verify the eligibility of a potential member and sign the application. By expanding the options for those who may review and sign membership applications, we are removing barriers and allowing the processing of membership to be more efficient.

Note: It is not a requirement that the unit review eligibility, if a unit wishes to continue working with the Legion Post, they may do so.

When seeking members remember that service does not always look the same for everyone. Not every member has the same amount of time, physical ability, resources, or experience. We should create opportunities that allow members to participate at a level that works for them. Make volunteering easier, sometimes members want to help but hesitate because the commitment seems too much for them.

Consider offering: Short-term opportunities with flexible hours to accommodate their schedule or see if a member can drive a veteran to an appointment.

Members bring different experiences, talents, and perspectives. When someone suggests a different way of doing something, listen before saying, "That's not how we've always done it."

Recognize every contribution. Do not measure a member's value by the number of hours they volunteer. The member who gives one hour deserves appreciation just as much as the member who gives an entire day. Always say thank you, mention someone's contribution at a meeting or recognize volunteers in a newsletter. Let members know specifically how their contribution helped.

Engagement begins with our mission. Promote our American Legion Auxiliary programs, include program education at unit meetings and offer meaningful opportunities to serve our veterans, military families and communities. Every member should feel welcomed, appreciated and valued.

Renew. Rejoin. Recruit. Engage.

Membership Is Everyone's Responsibility!

CHILDREN AND YOUTH
PATTIE GALLEY

Welcome Back!!

This program is to help the American Legion to promote care and support to our children and youth, especially those of our military and veteran children.

"Your dreams are seeds, plant them with courage, water them with effort and watch them grow."

Be the One or Buddy check to see how they are doing. No one left behind. Mentor them. We are the foundation, comfort zone or recognizing them for their bravery too.

"Bravery isn't about having no fear, it's about moving forward even when you do."

Please take the time and read your Plan of Action. There is a lot of information about resources and collaborations of what your unit or county could provide for them. Remember no chairperson, do the program as a team. Mentor on another. Also the 1st reporting date is Nov. 1st.

I remind you to keep feeding Penelope and her grandson Leon that is provided to you at the fall conference to help raise monies for the Child Welfare Foundation. Please donate.

Remember April is the month of the Military Children and April 15th is Purple Up ! Day for the Military Children. Let us all plan a special celebration in April in honor of Children and Youth Month and the month of Military Child.

I look forward to hearing from you!!!!

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY COLLEGE
DEBBY HERRMANN

The 2027 session of the Legion Family College is still planned to be held at SUNY Morrisville during the first weekend in June which is June 4, 2027 through June 6, 2027. The fee as I know right now will remain @ \$325.00. We have gained much more interest within the American Legion Auxiliary throughout the state in 2026, but I would love to see more in 2027.

I want to encourage Auxiliary members who has attended to consider becoming an Instructor. I spoke to a couple members at the Department Convention who were very interested and plan to apply. We will be having another Instructors Training class sometime in April where interested members will be interviewed, given a subject to research, and give a 5 to 10-minute presentation. That gives us an opportunity to see how each one presents themselves.

Please consider joining us in 2027. Only as a united team can we ensure that our great organizations will continue to grow and support our veterans, their families, as well as our children and the communities in which we live. Learning as well as teaching each other about our organizations will only make us stronger.

Look for updates as they become available in the Department Newsletter throughout the upcoming admin year. Also thank you President Laura for allowing me to serve the Department of New York again this year as the College Auxiliary Liaison.

The 2027 session of the Legion Family College is still planned to be held at SUNY Morrisville during the first weekend in June which is June 4, 2027 through June 6, 2027. The fee as I know right now will remain @ \$325.00. We have gained much more interest within the American Legion Auxiliary throughout the state in 2026, but I would love to see more in 2027.

I want to encourage Auxiliary members who has attended to consider becoming an Instructor. I spoke to a couple members at the Department Convention who were very interested and plan to apply. We will be having another Instructors Training class sometime in April where interested members will be interviewed, given a subject to research, and give a 5 to 10-minute presentation. That gives us an opportunity to see how each one presents themselves.

Please consider joining us in 2027. Only as a united team can we ensure that our great organizations will continue to grow and support our veterans, their families, as well as our children and the communities in which we live. Learning as well as teaching each other about our organizations will only make us stronger.

Look for updates as they become available in the Department Newsletter throughout the upcoming admin year. Also thank you President Laura for allowing me to serve the Department of New York again this year as the College Auxiliary Liaison.

AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND
MARIE SANTA CROCE

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) is a national grant initiative that provides financial assistance to eligible members of the American Legion Auxiliary who have endured a significant financial setback as the result of an act of nature or another personal crisis. Grants are awarded up to \$3000.

GRANT TYPES & COVERAGE:

Disaster Assistance- Covers home damage, evacuation costs or essential emergency expenses after a natural disaster.

HARDSHIP Assistance – Cover past due primary housing or basic household utility expenses resulting from a personal financial crisis. It does not cover medical or credit card debt.

Disaster application must be received by the AEF Program within 3 months of the disaster's initial occurrence. One grant (disaster or hardship) per grantee will be awarded with a 12-month period. ALA Junior members are NOT eligible to apply.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants must have maintained current and continuous ALA membership annually, by 12/31 for the membership year, for 3 consecutive years (current and immediate past 2 years) according to the ALA national membership database at the time of applying and when the committee renders a decision. Applicants must provide qualifying, eligible documentation for the AEF Review Committee to review and consider for funding.

The Applications can be found on the ALA website at www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF. The Applications on the National Organizations' Website are the ONLY Applications accepted for processing. Applications formerly available through ALA Departments and Units are no longer applicable

WHERE CAN THE MOST UP-TO-DATE AEF ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, GUIDELINES, FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND APPLICATIONS BE FOUND?

www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF

Donations to AEF Are always needed and appreciated. No donation is ever too small.

Donations can be sent to our Department Office along with the **Treasurer Report Form** which can be found on our Department Website or by contacting me, Marie SantaCroce, AEF Chairman.

Please make checks payable to: American Legion Auxiliary, Dept. of NY. In the **Memo** write **AEF**.

**CHAPLAIN
SHERRY WILSON**

Prayer helps us through so many facets of our life. I would like for all our Chaplains, or any member, to send me a copy of your prayers that you have recited at your meetings and functions or a prayer that you would just like to share. These prayers that that you send will be used to make a Prayer book for President Lora that I will be creating to give her at convention, which I know is a long way away, but it's never too soon to start sending them in!

Please remember to send me your death notices so that a condolence card can be sent to the family from the department, my information is at the end of this article and in the Plan of Action. Please send them in a timely manner. Also, remember to send the member data form into department. Both of these forms can be found in your Plan of Action.

In closing I'd like to share the following that was sent to me from one of our Past Department Presidents (thank you Cathe MacInnes), this was sent to her from our new National Chaplain Jeanne Haas and is a good guidance for our chaplains and all our members.

Compassion
Heavenly Leadership
Awareness of others
Providing guidance
Listening to all
Acknowledge others
Igniting a spark
Nurturing concerns

**COMMUNITY SERVICE
SUZANNE WESLEY**

Community Service is a big part of every Auxiliary Unit's Mission, promoting the ALA's commitment to making our communities better places to live. Community Service comes in so many different ways. Volunteering with community organizations, helping Veterans and their families, and working with other Legion Family members in projects are just a very few of the ways. There are so many community service activities that go unreported simply because they are so much a part of our regular routine. The first reporting period is November 1ST. and I am looking forward to reading all about the various ways units are supporting our communities. There is a Department of New York Award offered each year in the area of Community Service. It is the JANET P MAHONEY AWARD. There are also several National awards. Check them out. Your Units deserve recognition for their hard work. Fall is a time to reflect on last year's projects and plan for new ones.

**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
KAREN ST. HILAIRE**

Constitution and Bylaws are the governing documents of the American Legion Auxiliary. These fundamental rules of the organization state how our members agree on how it accepts new members, how we choose our leaders, when we hold our meetings and other policies that explain the policies of the administration of the organization, that are specific to the unit, county, district, and department. As well as the National American Legion Auxiliary.

Each level should review their Constitution and Bylaws on a yearly basis. You should update your documents if your members vote to make any changes. Examples of changes could include but are not limited to how you accept new members? Do you vote on members or does one member (usually the membership chairman) or an appointed committee have authority to accept members. Another example would include changing when and where you hold your meetings. Did you change the day or time or your meeting? If so you need to update your documents.

You should make sure that every member has a copy of your current copy of the Constitution and Bylaws (this applies to all levels).

There are fillable copies of the Constitution and Bylaws on the Department website under the C&Bylaw committee. (please note to fill in the blanks you must first download a copy from the website)

Please note, the Department Constitution and Bylaw does not have the right to approve or disapprove of your Unit, County or District documents. You may send them to the chairman to review your documents to ensure they do not contradict National rules. I suggest you send an email them for review, because of the high cost of postage. Also, you do need to send me a copy of your old documents.

My goal this year is to update Unit, County and District documents. (we updated the Department C&Bylaws at Department Convention in July).

EDUCATION
CHARLENE MAYVILLE

Fall is in the air! School has resumed and students are beginning a new educational year. This is the time to start connecting with your local school districts to make them aware of the many scholarships available for senior students at both the Department and National levels. And don't forget the Samsung Scholarship for those attending Empire Girls State! There are also many other ways your Unit can promote and support quality education, especially for military children and adults. These include participating in Give 10 to Education, American Education Week (Nov. 16 – 20, 2026), Teachers Appreciation Week (May 3 – 7, 2027), Purple Up! Day for Military Children, inviting veterans to speak in school classrooms, and supporting legislation that establishes new scholarship opportunities. Please see the Plan of Action for more ideas! The first Unit reports are due November 1, with County reports due November 10. Looking forward to seeing how ALA members are assisting our citizens to become more educated and a beacon for the future!

ALA EMPIRE GIRLS STATE
MOLLY MCLAUGHLIN, SARAH MURPHY, LUCILLE MOZILLO

A huge thank you is in order for everyone involved in putting on the 85th session of Empire Girls State this July. We are so very thankful for the support from the county and unit chairs, our volunteers, those who donate, and staff. We cannot do any of this without you all, thank you so much!

After our successful 2026, we are so happy to begin working on our 2027 ALA Empire Girls State Session! Our new 2027 administration team will be attending the annual Girls State Conference in Indianapolis at the American Legion Auxiliary Nation Headquarters. This conference provides invaluable collaborative opportunities to not only the New York state program, but all the Girls State programs throughout the country.

Our administration team will be holding an Overview for Unit and County ALA EGS Chairman Meeting via Zoom, as we have done that past two years. This meeting is incredibly important for those new to the position to receive the most up to date information about the program. For those who have held this position for a while, we appreciate any tips you can share with our newer chairpeople! We will be hosting a virtual session on Friday, November 13th, 2027 at 7pm. This session will be recorded and can be sent out to anyone unable to make it. Details on our 2027 session will be sent out in October and will also be on our website (www.empiregirlsstate.org). Please reach out to the chairperson email, empiregirlsstate@gmail.com with your information if you would like to be included! The presentation is made for Unit and County ALA EGS Chairpeople, but any Auxiliary member is welcome to join to learn more about our program!

Here are some details for the 2027 ALA EGS Session:

- ALA EGS will take place at SUNY Brockport from Sunday, June 27th through Friday, July 2nd
- We have shortened our program this year by one day
- Tuition for the sponsoring Unit or Post is \$450.00 per citizen
- Each citizen (not alternate) will pay a \$50.00 Non-Refundable Registration Fee. We please ask that the Unit or Post not pay that fee except when a family has financial hardship. Girls compare notes after they arrive and don't understand why some citizens attend "free" and some had to "pay" the registration fee. We suggest that the Unit could consider returning the \$50.00 application fee to the family after they attend if they feel strongly about covering the fee. Please contact us if you have any questions!

- Interviews should take place as soon as you schedule them, but no later than February 22nd. Citizens and alternates must be selected by March 1st.
- ALA Empire Girls State utilizes an online Registration Form and will upload all necessary forms. Candidates will complete all paperwork by March 31st.
- **All paperwork and payment must be received at the Department level by March 1st. Due to time constraints, we will no longer be accepting late submissions.**
- All Citizens and Alternates are required to attend a virtual ALA EGS Orientation via Zoom in May/June. Parents, sponsoring ALA Units and TAL Posts are encouraged to attend the virtual meeting.
- Parents, Units and Posts are encouraged to attend our **State of the State Ceremony** (culmination of the program) on **Friday, July 2nd at 1:00 PM at SUNY Brockport** (tentative, pending program date confirmation with the college).
- **Citizens will be checking out immediately after the State of the State ceremony at the SERC building on the SUNY Brockport campus, check out is set, tentatively, Friday, July 2nd, 2:30pm-5:30pm** Citizens may not leave before the State of the State ceremony.
- Citizens that finish the program are eligible for the Samsung Scholarship. Consider helping your candidates with the process starting in March!
- Citizens that finish the program are also eligible to enroll in a Leadership Course for College Credit from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs for college credit at a greatly reduced tuition price.
- If any American Legion Family group would like to support the program, other than by sponsoring a Citizen (\$450), consider paying for a Booster Ad or as a Booster Supporter in our State of the State Program (\$1 - \$50). We also have an ALA EGS Store. Consider providing citizens with money to buy apparel, stickers, and other merchandise throughout the week!
- **Please check the 2026-2027 Plan of Action. Share those pages with your Unit and County ALA EGS Teams.**
- All of our information is on our ALA EGS Website: empiregirlsstate.org
- There is a tab, “**ALA Resources**”. The password is: **GirlsState** You will be able to access resources and copies of any forms.
- Within the website, there is also a link to **join our ALA Empire Girls State team!** Please review the job descriptions and requirements and consider joining our team! Applications are due January 1, 2027! Once selected, our Team meets via Zoom approximately 4 times throughout the Spring to get to know each other and to cover some initial training. In-person Staff Orientation/Training takes place at SUNY Brockport Friday, June 25th - Saturday June 26th, 2027, prior to our 2027 ALA EGS Session. It is such a rewarding experience, we know that if you join us one year, you too, will catch the “Girls State bug” like each of us have!

Please don't forget to review your 2027 ALA EGS County Quota form! This information is in the Plan of Action and requires your county's immediate attention! The Quota Form needs to be returned to Sarah Murphy, ALA EGS 1st Vice Chairman by November 1, 2026, so that plans can be made to accommodate each and every county! We are excited for everything that this upcoming year holds for our program! Please reach out to any of us with any questions!



Being treasurer is more than just receiving funds and writing checks. The Treasurer has the fiduciary responsibility, the legal obligation, to act in the best interest of the members and to protect their unit/county assets by operating on a budget, keeping records, reporting to the membership and having the books/ ledgers available for review at every County/Unit/District meeting, or when necessary. Although the responsibility of keeping accurate books/ledgers falls on the Treasurer's shoulders, they are not the personal property of the Treasurer, They belong to your Unit/County membership. All members have an obligation to protect their Unit/County assets by reviewing the books, listening to the Finance reports and voting on financial issues, whether it be to adopt a proposed budget or additional expenses not covered in the budget.

It is important to plan and develop a budget. You're off to a good start if you have one in place, if you don't then now is the time to develop it. A good budget represents anticipated revenue and expenses and will enable your Unit/County to run more efficiently. Gather all references of past and future income and expenditures (i.e. budgets, ledgers, check books, standing rules, minutes) and use them as a tool to help develop an operating budget for your organization. Present it to the membership, for input and approval.

What is Bonding and Day Fund? Bonding is a type of insurance that provides financial protection against fraud, theft or mis-management of finances. Day Fund is a contingency fund, a reserve set aside to handle unexpected finances that are outside of the range of the usual operating budget. Counties will receive a bill from Department for the mandatory Bonding fee of \$6.00 and Day Fund of \$14.00 for each of the units within their County. It is the responsibility of the County to collect these amounts from their individual units, but Do-not hold up payment waiting for the units to reimburse your County. This bill must first be paid in full, to the Department, by the due date on the bill.

Please consider supporting the Department's only fund raiser. Each County received a few of the Department Calendars to offer for sale at \$25.00 each. The proceeds are used to enhance various programs of the American Legion Auxiliary. The calendar's winning numbers are based on the NYS nightly 3-digit lottery drawing. You can be a winner but you need to be in it to win it. They also make great gifts!

We are excited to be your Department Finance Committee. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us. We are a team working together for you.

HISTORIAN
ANNE BAGLIO

Hello auxiliary members, for those of you that are your Unit/County Historians, you have a great responsibility. It is up to you to keep records, pictures, flyers, etc. of the year of your chairmanship. So, in 25, 50 or even 100 years later the next generation of members will look back at what the Unit has done using your historian records that will tell them what happened. My Unit has been an existence for 105 years and we read our minute book every meeting from the 1920's-1930's. It is very interesting what they did back then. So, if you think historian is not important, it is very important.

In the POA (Plan of Action) under Historian it explains about being a historian and the awards that are given. There is also information on the Dept of NY ALA website and the National website under historian. You do a lot of work as historian throughout the year and it is always nice to be recognized for it. Please put in for the awards. I challenge all Units to do this as I will be putting in for the Department Award to National. If you have any questions please ask. I don't want anyone to be frustrated over this.

If anyone is taking pictures of the Dept. President Lora at any of your conferences or visitations, please send them to me via department email with a small caption of when, where, who and time of what is occurring. Thank you for your help since I can't be with Pres. Lora every time. It will be nice to give her a book of memories at the end of the year.

"The function of the historian is...to master and understand [the past] as the key to the understanding of the present."
By Edward Hallett Carr

Let's Get Our Juniors Involved!

It's time to get creative! ☺ US Our Juniors are an important part of the American Legion Family, and I am looking forward to working with our Juniors this year! I can't wait to see them having fun, making friends, learning new things, and making a difference!

There are SO many ways to get our Juniors involved! Have a patriotic craft day, make cards for veterans, play Americanism games, host a scavenger hunt, participate in a parade, help with a community service project, or have a Junior pizza and game night! 🎮 🍕

Have a small Junior group? No problem! Team up with another Unit and create a Junior activity together. Sometimes the best activities happen when we get everyone together!

And here's a challenge for our Units: Let the Juniors choose an activity! Give them a chance to share their ideas, help plan, and even take the lead. You might be surprised by what they come up with! ★

Remember, Junior Activities don't have to be complicated or expensive. Sometimes it's as simple as getting together, having fun, and doing something meaningful for our veterans, our communities, or our American Legion Family.

📷 HAVE FUN? TAKE A PICTURE!

📝 DID IT? REPORT IT!

DON'T FORGET TO REPORT! 🔔

If your Juniors are out there doing great things, we want to hear about it! Keep track of your activities, take pictures, and REPORT, REPORT, REPORT! Your Junior projects deserve to be recognized!

I am truly looking forward to working with all our Juniors and Units and making this a fun, exciting, and memorable year!

Be creative. Be involved. Be YOU! And most importantly... HAVE FUN! 🌟

LEADERSHIP
SANDY SEACAT

Leadership — Every Note Matters!

As we Sing Praises for Veterans this year, remember that strong leadership helps keep our mission in harmony. Every member brings a unique note, and together we can create something truly meaningful.

National Mission Training is coming to Albany, NY, January 30, 2027! Registration is now open. Last year's event sold out quickly, so don't miss your chance—register and book your hotel room early!

Keep your leadership skills in tune by familiarizing yourself with the Leadership Plan of Action and taking advantage of the ALA Academy. You'll find informative courses ranging from ALA Basics to communication and leadership development, along with several courses created especially for our Junior members. It's never too early to help the next generation find their leadership voice!

And don't let your accomplishments go un-sung! Remember to report all the wonderful activities happening throughout your units and counties. Our first reporting dates are:

- November 1 — Units report to County Leadership Chairs
- November 10 — County Leadership Chairs report to Department

Keep learning, keep leading, and keep making every note count as we Sing Praises for Veterans!

The American Legion Auxiliary is a “Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families”. Advocating and supporting our veterans, servicemembers, and their families is at the core of the American Legion Auxiliary mission. We uphold this mission through many different programs.

The purpose of the Legislative Committee is to support the legislative agenda, priorities and initiatives of the American Legion. Unit and County Legislative Chairman encourage us to support our members by providing education, training, and resources, so they have the tools to help make a difference through advocates for veterans and their families with local, state, and national elected officials. The American Legion’s Grassroots Action Center offers information to stay informed on the issues and priorities. The Action Center also provides tools to communicate online with lawmakers about the organization's priorities. All members are encouraged to subscribe to the Grassroots Action Center, which makes direct contact with lawmakers to advance American Legion Family priorities.

Please click on the links below to learn more!

TOOL KIT – provides tips and resources to become an American Legion advocate

[Advocacy toolkit | The American Legion](https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/washington-conference/2023/february/advocacy-toolkit#overlay-context=washingtonconference/toolkit) (https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/washington-conference/2023/february/advocacy-toolkit#overlay-context=washingtonconference/toolkit)

GRASS ROOTS LINK- you can sign up for alerts, find legislation, learn about the proposed bills, and quickly send messages to legislators.

[Action Center](https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home) (https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home)

NATIONAL SECURITY
DENA A RESTAINO

The American Legion maintains that a robust national defense is indispensable to upholding national security. As articulated in its Preamble, the organization is bound "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY... To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America... To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy." As a fellowship of veterans dedicated to preserving the liberties for which they served, the Legion regards national security as one of its foundational Four Pillars. This objective is realized through a fully funded Department of Defense, an elevated quality of life for service members, and a seamless transition from active duty to civilian life.

Complementing this mission, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) National Security Committee is dedicated to bolstering national defense, supporting military families, and preparing the civilian population to respond to both natural and man-made disasters.

Unit Operational Guidelines Units are encouraged to educate their membership on contemporary national security issues through dedicated meeting presentations and discussions. Recognizing that natural disasters and domestic crime also threaten national stability, the Auxiliary has broadened its scope to encompass emergency preparedness and crime prevention:

- Disaster Preparedness: Units are encouraged to participate in FEMA’s Project Impact initiative, mitigating the human and economic costs of natural disasters through proactive community planning.
- Community Safety: Active engagement in neighborhood watch programs, crime prevention efforts, and support for local law enforcement and fire departments serves to fortify local communities and advance national security goals.

Resources and Program Directives Educational materials—including script templates, informational pamphlets, and the annual schedule of recommended activities—may be obtained from Department Headquarters or via the National Security Division of The American Legion (1608 K Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006).

Units are expected to align their efforts with the strategic objectives established annually by the National Convention. In an evolving global security landscape, sustained vigilance remains critical. Units advance this mandate through civil preparedness, crime prevention, USO support, U.S. Savings Bond promotion, disaster relief, and advocacy for POW/MIA initiatives.

Committee Purpose & Key Strategic Directives (Pursuant to Standing Rule #7, Core National Standing Committees)

- POW/MIA Advocacy: Raise public awareness regarding missing personnel and support the search and recovery operations conducted by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).
- Defense & Family Readiness: Advance a strong national defense by supporting active service members and collaborating with command and family readiness groups.
- Quality of Life: Promote and enhance Legion Family and partner initiatives designed to elevate the overall well-being of military personnel and their families.

To further assist your units in this endeavor, please peruse the following links.

National Security Program Engagement Plan

https://1drv.ms/w/c/ec1575ab6fbe41dd/IQADzW7fSxFDT5yrS4HRy9oNAaE3CrYqDaoQuyX_-kp9e-I?e=g0UkZi

National Security Key Resources

- [How to Train for FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams](#)
- [How to Collaborate with the American Red Cross' Service to the Armed Forces](#)
- [How to Collaborate with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors](#)
- [Planning a Powerful POW/MIA Remembrance Service](#)
- [How to Collaborate with the Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse eMentor Program](#)
- [How to eMentor Women Veterans and Military Spouses with the Business and Professional Women's Foundation](#)

POW/MIA

- [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency](#)
- [POW/MIA Recognition Day](#)
- [POW/MIA or Missing Man Table](#)

PARLIAMENTARIAN
NANCY BABIS

Happy Fall y-all! It is an honor to be by the side of President Lora during meetings of the Executive committee. I'm learning lots of things about parliamentary procedure and hope to share some info with all of you. Parliamentarian Chris Dickey has put together a great resource which includes the following guidance for Processing a main motion:

- A member rises and addresses the chair "Madam/Mr. President"
- Chair recognizes the member by stating their name
- Member states their motion "I move that we...." (instead of "I make a motion")
- Any member can second the motion
- Chair states the motion and places it before the assembly for discussion.
- Members are recognized by the chair to voice their discussion. During this time amendments to the motion may be made. This helps the assembly make their decision on how to vote.
- When discussion is ended, the Chair puts the question to a vote.
- The chair then announces the results of the vote.

Next newsletter we'll talk about common situations when considering motions.

National Poppy Day is May 28, 2027.

Purpose: The purpose of the Poppy Committee is to educate ALA membership and the public on the significance of the poppy and the program's financial benefit for veterans, military, and their families.

Now is the time to get ready for the many events that are part of the Poppy Program.

Order your poppies by December 1, 2026, order form found in the POA.

Send a request to your local government asking for a Poppy Proclamation. A sample letter can be found at www.legion-aux.org/member/committees/poppy

Contact your local school arts department to ask for participation in the Poppy Poster contest. Rules for the contest are found in the POA.

There are 5 Poppy Supervisors in NYS, contact them to ask how you can help in the creation of our poppy flowers to distribute throughout the year. Each of the Supervisors host poppy making parties and would love to have members join in. Poppy making parties are a great way to get the Legion Family to work together. The feeling of comradery is heartwarming when we work together, also Veterans can earn \$.17 per poppy they make!

Department of NY Poppy Supervisors:

- 3rd & 4th District Doreen Hedlund 518-377-3440.
- 5th District Debbie Atkins 315-221-0167.
- 6th District Janet Elston 607-372-1935
- 7th District Lisa Moore 585-245-2762
- 8th District Denice Rojek Perenc 716-348-8568

Any question or suggestions for the Poppy Program feel free to contact me.

PUBLIC RELATIONS
ARDELLA TURNER

The purpose of the Public Relations Committee is to establish and maintain a positive public image of the organization by encouraging ALA members to be visible in the communities through branding and informing the public about the mission of the organization. Examples of branding are by wearing branded clothing, pins, etc, at events. Have visible branding at booths, tables, etc. Using Social Media to Your Unit's Advantage. Maintain a Social Media account for your units.

Information regarding the American Legion Auxiliary can be spread by word of mouth, through social media (text, messaging, email, or by publications). It must be noted here that the *American Legion have generated "Dos and Don'ts" of using generative AI digital Branding & Emblem Branding Guidelines of emblem and brandmark. As outlined in the branding guidelines, generative AI tools of any kind may not be used to create, recreate, upscale or otherwise alter, stylize or modify the official symbols of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Riders, American Legion Family, American Legion Baseball, Be the One, American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation, American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and Girls Nation, American Legion Junior Shootings Sports, charities of the American Legion and any associated sub-branding. This includes any use of the Legion marks in the visual branding of departments, districts, posts, squadrons or programs associated with any departments, districts, posts or squadrons.*

Please consider entering your County or Unit Public Relations Project for a reward.

Department Public Relations Award Rules:

- Entries must be typed double spaced, not to exceed 1,000 words.
- Word count in lower left corner of cover sheet unless otherwise noted under award instructions.
- Entries must be narrative form and placed in a folder.
- Pictures, newspaper clippings and other materials and/or documents may be included.

- All entries must include a cover sheet with the name of the award entry, name of the Unit/County/District, name, and address of the Unit/County/Chairman.
- Entries must be received by the Department Chairman no later than May 1st unless a different date is specified.

More details will follow.

Spread the word about the American Legion Auxiliary: A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military and their Families.

WARRIOR FAMILY ASSISTANCE
GINA SOUTHCOTT

The purpose of this committee is to promote a grant that is available to New York residents currently deployed military and their families, those honorably discharged, National Guard and reservists who have been federally deployed are also eligible.

A \$1,500 Grant is available per year for those who qualify. The grants can be used for housing such as household bills, outstanding electricity bills, insurance or home repair. And needed appliances, for medical, current or outstanding medical bills, or for work-related purposes such as car repair, bus money or maybe day care. Each application that is considered is based on families needs. Grants are not based solely on income levels but rather on the needs of the family.

The maximum Grant is \$1,500 during a 12-month period. Multiple grants may be awarded to one applicant during a 12-month period if the total does not exceed the annual \$1,500 limit. In late August an updated version of the application was sent out to all the District Presidents, if you did not receive one at your fall conference please let me know or go into your plan of action under Warriors Family Assistance and you can find an application there if there any kind of questions (remember no question is a dumb question) please contact me at GinaSouthcott@alajob.org to go as smoothly and quickly as possible for the applicant.

RISK AND COMPLIANCE
CARRIE DAVENPORT, CATHE MACINNES,
TRACEE MALLARD

Introducing the Department of New York's New Risk & Compliance Committee!

The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of New York, is pleased to announce the creation of our new Risk & Compliance Committee! While Risk & Compliance has been active and effective at the national level for several years, we are thrilled to bring this dedicated focus directly to our department.

Our Mission & Core Focus:

The primary goal of the Risk & Compliance Committee is to work side-by-side with the Department Office Team and the Finance Committee. Together, we will review and examine current department policies and procedures to identify and analyze potential risks to the organization and its members.

Key responsibilities of the committee include:

- **Financial Oversight & Audits:** Performing routine financial audits and reviewing critical documents, including Form 990 filings.
- **Checks & Balances:** Developing and implementing robust internal controls to ensure the department operates with total fiscal responsibility and transparency.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Identifying operational gaps and adopting proactive measures to protect our members, resources, and reputation.

Empowering Units and Counties

Risk management isn't just a department-level responsibility-it takes all of us! Moving forward, our committee will provide regular tips, resources, and actionable guidance to help units and county organizations establish their own local Risk & Compliance committees.

We look forward to collaborating across all levels of the organization, learning together, and ensuring we take every step necessary to safeguard our shared mission.

Questions or interested in learning more? Stay tuned for upcoming resources and guidance in future department updates!

ALA FOUNDATION
CATHLEEN MACINNES & TERRI WALLACE

2027 marks the 20 th Anniversary of the establishment of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. The mission of the ALA Foundation is to provide funding for programs of the American Legion Auxiliary which positively impact the lives of veterans, military, and their families. Your support matters!

We hope that your Unit, County, or District will consider including a donation to the ALA Foundation in your annual budget - and that individual members will also consider donating as well.

Why donate?

- Because the Veteran Projects Fund awards grants to Units and Departments to enhance their programs for veterans, including the military - and Units in the Department of New York have benefited from several of these grants.
- Because the ALA Mission Endowment Fund supports Girls Nation, keeping costs down for our Empire Girls State program.
- Because the ALA Mission Endowment Fund supports the Spirit of Youth Scholarship program, which has benefited the children and grandchildren of many veterans in New York.
- Because the ALA Foundation helps to fund the ALA's co-presentership of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, a program with proven benefits for veterans with PTSD and MST.

You may donate by sending your check to: ALA Foundation, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268-1334.

You may also donate online: <https://alafoundation.org/donate/>

(just click on the button when the page opens)

Every gift makes an impact, is deeply valued, and supports the Veteran Projects Fund, Veterans Creative Arts Festival, or the Mission Endowment Fund. You decide where your dollars should go and the ALA Foundation will put them to work for America's veterans.

Thank you!

DEPARTMENT OFFICE
BARBARA, CAITLIN, & TARA

POA changes:

- PDP Joan Cammamo's email is jec2266@gmail.com (page9)
- VA&R Chair - Julianne Barton address spelling is - Capron Road (page8)
- 2027 Convention Chair Deborah Morris - email is debk1794@yahoo.com (page8)
- Finance Committee – Unit Audit form is located on the department website under the Finance Committee tab, and it is a fillable document due by December 2026.

Unit and County Officer forms:

- Unit Officer forms were due back to the department office no later than July 1, 2026.
- County Officer form was due back to the department office no later than July 1, 2026.
- County Committee lists were due no later than August 1, 2026.

- **If you recently received an email or phone call from us, please go to the department website and print off the form and email to the office no later than October 1st.**
- All forms will be available on the department website as a fillable PDF form.
- **If your unit officers change, please send an email to the department office and let us know who the new officer is.**
- Mailed copies of the Newsletters are available at the cost of \$15.00 per year.

All Department checks issued must be deposited within 90 days. Going forward the treasurer will not reissue checks that were not deposited in a timely manner.

- All checks sent to the office or given at county visitations should be made out as follows: American Legion Auxiliary, Department of New York and indicate in the memo line what it is for. Also, please remember to sign the check.
- All donations should be sent to the department office and not the committee chair. When submitting a donation form please indicate what unit or county it is from.

New Membership Eligibility:

- Please review the new membership eligibility on the Department website along with the new membership application.
- **Attention all membership chairs:** Please adhere to the membership guidelines and make sure the application is completed before sending it to the office. ALAMIS Full users: send all completed applications to the department office after you enter them and pay for the new member