

**Department of Arizona
2017-2018**

Mid-Year Report

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Mid-Year Report

The Department of Arizona lives and breathes its commitment to enhancing the lives of veterans, military and their families in this year's quest to fulfill the National goal of "ALA Membership Pride". In doing so, Arizona has raised awareness by stressing "High Heels and Spurs in Service to Veterans" thus creating its own bridge to ALA Pride.

In keeping with our National Vision by honoring our veterans and military through meaningful service, the Department of Arizona issued a challenge to all Chairmen in July to work all programs.

Support of the Americanism is ongoing and Units report distribution of pocket flags; attendance at Memorial Day, Flag Day, Patriots Day, Veterans Day and Pearl Harbor Day ceremonies; assisting Boys and Girls Scouts; hosting POW/MIA ceremonies, just to name a few. Local youth involvement is at all time high with distribution of Flag Etiquette Book at schools and Boys and Girls Clubs. Units report support of American Legion programs such as the Junior Shooting Sports, the Oratorical Contest and American Legion Baseball. Units report support of community events that honor veterans and assisting active duty veterans. Units promote law enforcement projects that are held at Christmas such as, "Shop with a Cop", that helps underprivileged children enjoy the holiday season. Promotion of the Americanism Essay Contest is underway with plans to distribute information to all Units.

As of the beginning of January, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee is promoting fund raising projects throughout the State and has reported that participation is quite brisk.

The Department Chaplain reports Units are holding memorial services for their Legion Family members. Units drape charters for passing Auxiliary members. Units send sympathy; get well and thinking of you cards when the need arises. Units have plans to hold Four Chaplain Services in February. Members are quite busy gathering prayers, poems and inspirational poems for Units, District and Department. The use of interdenominational prayers is promoted for the entire Legion Family.

The Children and Youth Chairman states that Junior members are participating in patriotic programs and recite the “Pledge to the Flag”, with the anticipation of participation in the upcoming Americanism Essay Contest. Many Units report participation in Veterans Day, Football parades and presentation of Flag Education to local primary schools and Girls Scout Troops. Units are also providing much needed supplies to local schools. There is support of the military families with emphasis on the military child. They provide information on bullying, fire safety and home safety. Local youth is invited to participate in Poppy Poster Contests. Many Units promote scholarships for grades 8 thru 12.

The Community Service Committee reports participation at local food banks and blood donation centers. Some units report helping at local libraries, assisting at local church

projects, delivering food baskets to elderly patients in nursing homes. There was participation in decorating town Christmas trees and preparing treat bags for children in their communities in December. Overall, units reported a sense of teamwork, cooperation, and mutual respect within their communities.

Constitution and By-Laws is busily promoting governance documents based on actions taken at the Department Convention held last June. Updated computerized files were sent to this Department President, the Department Secretary and the Department Parliamentarian. The final step is to upload files to the website at aladeptaz.org. and includes maintenance of:

Department Constitution and By-Laws, Department Standing Rules and Addendums to the Standing Rules, Department Policies and Procedures Manual, Department Office Policy and Procedures Manual, Manual of Department Awards and Historical Manual of Department Convention Resolutions and Actions.

Constitution and By-Laws Chairmen reports the maintenance of a database to keep abreast of all Unit and District files. She reviews all District and Unit documents for needed revisions regularly. There is a close relationship with all Department Officers and Chairmen providing advice on resolution of problem areas thus calling for kindness, tact and firmness when needed.

The Education Chairman states that Units have raised funds and presented school supplies to local schools. They donate personal items, gift certificates, food items to elementary and high schools. Many Units have plans to award Americanism badges to qualified middle school students in May. Some Units promote scholarship programs in May. The promotion of Ten for Ten Program is encouraged. Halloween Safety is promoted at many schools. Some members report that they work voluntary hours in local school libraries. Many Units reported working with schools in Flag Etiquette and the observance of Veterans and Memorial Day.

The Finance Committee is busily at work ensuring that Units are in compliance with all State and Federal reports, especially the 990. Also, preparation for the 2018-2019 Budget has begun.

The Girls State Committee is busily preparing for the 2018 Arizona Girls State Session which will be held June 3-9, 2018 on the campus of the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. Information was distributed to all Unit Chairmen at Fall Conference with a Check List of vital data. The selection process will start shortly and hopefully, the 71st Session of Girls State will have close to 300 high school junior girls that are comprised of four counties and twelve cities. Delegates check in on Sunday and promptly begin meetings from the Precinct process on Sunday and Monday. City elections happen Monday with the work of the County followed on Tuesday. Girls State citizens elect Representatives, Senators and ultimately a Governor. By Friday afternoon, Court Sessions occur and by

Saturday morning, this hands on program is over with announcement of Awards, Girls Nation Delegates, Scholarship Recipients, Capitol City and Outstanding County.

The Historian reports the compilation of History starting with the June Convention held in Carefree, Arizona. With the Department theme of High Heels and Spurs in Service to Veterans allows all Units to report on Arizona activities throughout the year. A month to month history allows promotion of all ALA activities throughout the year. In July the Officers/Chairman Workshop promoted basic responsibilities associated with various positions with the distribution of materials. The Department President sends out regular emails reminding Chairmen and Officers about upcoming events. In August, delegates attend the National Convention and returned with information. Unit 41 was honored to receive the Presidents' Award for Excellence for "Feeding the Homeless" in their community. All Department Chairmen distributed information at Fall Conference in November. Monthly reporting is greatly encouraged to ensure a more thorough History at the end of the year.

The Junior Chairman reports that the Junior Fall Conference held in late October was a success. Active Juniors are participating in all Auxiliary programs. The Badge Program is promoted.

Leadership development is promoted by "Arizona Mission Training" workshops throughout the state. The Leadership Team consisting of the Chairman and qualified instructors have held training sessions open to the entire Legion Family. To date, nine

sessions have been held with members from forty five units, with 156 Auxiliary members, six legionnaires and one Son in attendance. There are three sessions scheduled for the months of January and February. Topics include protocol, parliamentary procedures, goodwill culture, constitution and by-laws, standing rules, meeting agenda, membership, finance with the inclusion of budget/audit, all auxiliary programs, reporting, impact reporting, writing narratives, Department Awards, duties of Chairmen and Officers. Workshop seminars include motivation sessions, team work emphasis with the encouragement of questions and comments throughout the day. A reference guide, information flyers and brochures are provided to all in attendance. All attending members are encouraged to share information with all members and to continue their leadership education within the ALA. At the end of each session evaluation forms provide feedback for the Leadership team.

The Legislative Chairman reports the following:

The Arizona Legislative program provides information to all American Legion Auxiliary members through their Unit Legislative Chairmen. The Unit Chairmen provides tools to the members teaching them how to advocate for the American Legion supported legislative agenda. As constituents, members are provided educational tools to help them understand the importance of supporting bill passage for Veteran's rights.

All Unit Legislative Chairmen have been provided monthly bulletins as a guideline to help with program success and they have reported the following information:

- **Providing flyers to 1761 Auxiliary members at every meeting describing what to do and how to make a difference advocating for Veteran's rights through contacting their Congressmen requesting legislative votes supporting bills.**
- **40 members were provided a legislative binder containing American Legion supported bills, status of current bills, results after voting in Congress and responses received from Congressmen.**
- **203 Auxiliary members are encouraged to attend various meetings; The League of Women Voters, town halls sponsored by community organizations, attending city and county council meetings and to report their attendance/involvement to the unit Chairmen.**
- **536 Auxiliary members are reporting to their Chairmen that they have signed up to receive Legions Legislative Action Alerts and view the website at: www.legion.org/legislative to keep current on legislative priorities.**
- **747 Auxiliary members send emails and letters to their Congressmen advocating for Veterans rights through passage of bills.**
 - **S.J.RES. 46 Stopping desecration of our flag.**
 - **HR 601 The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2017**
 - **HR 244 The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017**
 - **HR 1433 Strengthening Preventative Health Care for Service Members Act; TRICARE**
 - **HR 3364 Countering American's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act**
 - **HR 1181 Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act**
 - **S 1255 Military and Veterans Caregiver Service Improvement Act, 2017**

- **S 1598 Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educations Assistance Act, 2017**
- **Signing of bills S 1153 allowing veterans to use the doctor of their choice and S 1024 Veteran Appeals Modernization Act, 2017**
- **S 1266 Enhancing Veterans Care Act**
- **S 899 Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Transition Improvement Act**
- **S 804 Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act**
- **S 57 Require Secretary of Veterans Access to Revoke Bonuses paid to employees involved in Wait List Manipulations**
- **225 Members are also signed up to receive their Congressman newsletters.**
- **225 report using social media to stay informed; Television broadcast, Facebook, Twitter, etc.**
 - **Veterans Affairs Telehealth**
 - **President Trump's speeches held in Phoenix, AZ and Reno, NV**
 - **President Trump and General Mattis talk about 9-11**
 - **President Trump's speech on the 70th Birthday of Air Force at Joint Base Andrews**
- **51 Have also made phone calls directly to their Congressman advocating veteran's rights.**

The Membership Chairmen reports that all ten districts held membership training seminars where they were given all pertinent information that included The American Legion Family Brochure, The American Legion Auxiliary, At A Glance Brochure, and additional application forms to every member who attended this workshop. District Presidents were given a full package to include a cover sheet outlining the vision by 2019

and the goals for the five-year strategic plan. They also received a sheet sharing how, when, why and where to increase membership. This package also included the Department of Arizona membership awards. For the 2017-2018 year a new plaque, the Salute to Female Veterans Plaque, was placed in the field with the requirement that a Unit with the highest number of new dual members win the plaque. Department handouts included, the award sheet that National offered for each Department (Arizona made their goal, achieving the \$1,000) and Individual awards was part of the package, along with the R5 and Silver Brigade forms. Also, the New Member Kit was distributed.

To promote the Legion Family and TAL/ALA/SAL programs, a new plaque, Soaring High for Membership, was added and is open to the entire Family with requirement that a membership event be held outside the Post home. The Legion Family that holds the event must have documentation of all new members by either a District or Department Officer. The plaque will be awarded in June.

In Complying with National's request to answer survey questions, the Department of Arizona's responses were:

1. How is your department encouraging renewals? Provide three examples. Phone calls, emails and hard copy letters were mailed to members encouraging renewals. One Unit offered to pay the mandatory \$16.00 for Department and National, waiving the Unit portion. All Presidents, Secretaries and Membership Chairman were invited to attend all of the District meetings to encourage team work in helping members get renewals to department.

2. Did working any of the ALA programs help to generate new members?

Yes, with many Units inviting the girls who had attended Girls State whom they sponsored, opened up the possibility of new members who otherwise knew nothing about what the Auxiliary is all about. Children & Youth, Education and Community Service programs brought several new members to join by Units having Ice Cream socials, Flags delivered to

local schools and/or holiday parties for the Community offering the opportunity for new members to learn more about the Auxiliary.

3. Have any of your units implemented new/innovative ideas or practices to increase renewals and/or sign up new members? If so, what are they?

Ring Your Bell has gone viral in Arizona. Friends of friends are on Facebook and have seen the postings for Ring your Bell, thus many have joined various Units throughout Arizona. Interest forms received from National have been put into a spreadsheet by Department Chairman. Phone calls and emails, and follow-ups have resulted members joining Units within close proximity to their homes.

The National Security Chairman reports that Arizona maintains and promotes a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military service members and their families by honoring their Veterans at luncheons and dinners. Some Units host USO variety shows honoring Veterans of all wars and conflicts. Units assist with POW/MIA ceremonies at their home post. Some Units help with child care, yard work and meals for active duty personnel. Many Units clip coupons and send them out to overseas military bases. The Department is hosting and Children and Youth/National Security Workshop on January 27, 2018 with speakers from Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Some Units sponsor local high school JROTC Units in their activities and competitions.

Public Relations Chairman reports that the Department built, administers and encourages the use of Ring Your Bell Facebook for unit level postings:

- Members of any unit that are interested or savvy in social media can post their unit activities while demonstrating to other unit members the value of social media.
- Members in this group have more than doubled in the last 6 months to nearly 500.
- In the past 4 months, 60% of Arizona Units have posted to the page!!!
- It's the "go-to" place for current information across the state-- postings related to upcoming events that are submitted to the page are made into "Facebook events"

so there is a chronological view of what's happening across the state. Upcoming department events such as mission training, conventions, etc. & national news and links are posted.

- **Activities & events from this page feed the Department Public Relations “public” Facebook page and the Department level website.**

The Department of Arizona has moved social media into everyday business by:

- **Arizona Mission Training has incorporated social media & “Joining the page” into their curriculum**
- **The Department of Arizona added individual Unit Facebook page links to the Department website where each individual Unit is “geo-mapped” on the image of Arizona. This has helped Units using Social Media and Units that may need help in building a social media presence.**

Units in this department been mentioned in local media promotion of mission

Activities and have received the following public recognition:

- **A Bullhead city member received the “keys to the city” for her work for veterans and the community**
- **A Oro Valley member was recognized as “Community Leader of the Year” by the Chamber of Commerce for her work with veterans**
- **A 70 year member from Safford was recognized by the Arizona TAL Commander and ALA President which was covered in the local newspaper.**
- **“New Officers Elected” stories were published in multiple newspapers across the state**
- **“Junior Officers Elected” stories were published.**

Units have received public recognition:

- **Multiple stories about ALA Girls State have been published in multiple local papers**
- **A new Unit in Crown King received local newspaper coverage**
- **The American Legion Family was recognized during a Major League Baseball Fall League game on November 10, 2017 as part of the community's Veteran's Day events.**
- **Multiple Units were recognized in multiple local newspapers for their**

Holiday donations with collaborating organizations have received public recognition

- **Stories about Chick fil-A, community crafters have been recognized for their support of the ALA**

The Department of Arizona ALA maintains and builds upon the media list developed by the Department of Arizona TAL. As stories are written and submitted to local papers across the state, the list is updated as needed. Units are asked to follow-up on story submissions to add a “local” contact to the story. Thank you cards are sent by the Chairman.

The Department of Arizona has:

- **Printed thousands of “wooden nickels” with the ALA emblem and a thank you message for flying the U.S. flag for members to distribute**
- **Designed and printed 3” static cling ALA emblems for unit members to place in publicly viewed locations like the back of their phones, clothing, note-books, gifts, etc.**
- **In coordination with TAL & SAL, the Department of Arizona ALA is working on cable television programming about the American Legion Family and local veterans. MORE ON THAT TO COME!!**

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Chairman reports that all Units received the ALA Action Plan at Fall Conference held in Tucson on November 3-5, 2017. As part of the mission statement to enhance the lives of Veterans, Military and their families Units volunteer through the VA voluntary services at the three VA facilities in Arizona. They assist at Veterans Homes in Tucson and Phoenix by holding bingo sessions and assist residents during the holidays by decorating their Christmas trees. They send birthday cards to residents and are present to plan ice cream socials that are planned through each facilities coordinator. Units also work with facilities recreation director for suggestions of items needed for Wish Lists.

Another huge endeavor, VA Gift Shop is held at the three VA facilities in the State. They buy gift items for Veterans. They set up Gift Shop, help Veterans in gift selection, wrap

their items and in some cases ship these items to family outside the state. And after Gift Shop is over, they assist with cleaning and tearing down at each location.

Last October Auxiliary members volunteered to work at the Arizona State Fair to help reduce the cost of holding Stand Down event held at the same location on January 25-27, 2018. There are several Stand Downs held throughout the state that assist homeless Veterans with their various needs. According to United Arizona Veterans, 2,070 Veterans were helped at the Stand Down held in February, 2017.

Many Units donate meals to local Veterans Shelters. Auxiliary members donate much needed items and funds to these shelters. Units sponsor Bridging Ceremony refreshments for the Substance Abuse Disorder Treatment Program in Tucson, Arizona. Units donate funds to help support Soldiers Best Friend, a program that pairs Veterans with PTSD with a service dog.

At the moment there are ongoing plans to assist with the Creative Arts Festival, aptly named Put Your Heart In Art, which will be held at the Phoenix VA on February 7-8, 2018. Auxiliary members help with set-up, judging of artwork, the awards ceremony and clean up that immediately follows.

The Poppy Chairman reports that Units have ordered 120,000 for poppy distribution this year. Poppies are made by both Veterans and some Unit members. There are quite a few distribution ideas: Units report the use of the Miss Poppy idea during Veterans Day and

the month of May. Units set up a basket of poppies and/or donation can in their Post hall/Lounge during meals. Some Units have a poppy fluffing party as a fun social gathering. Some Units set up booths at festivals during Veterans Day or Memorial Day. Other Units have distribution sites such as cafes, pro shops and restaurants. In conjunction with most events, Units provide information on the poppy story, telling the Flanders Field Story. Some Units promote the story in newspaper articles, websites and social media. Poppy Posters are promoted at both Junior Fall Conference and throughout the State for competition at the annual Convention.

Thus the Department of Arizona continues the road to raise program awareness by stressing “High Heels and Spurs in Service to Veterans” thus creating its own bridge to “ALA Membership Pride”.

Respectfully submitted,

**Yolanda Bonilla
Department of Arizona
2017-2018 President**