

February 2024

January flew right by. I was off roaming the countryside making visits and both teaching at AZ Mission Training and attending National Mission Training. If you didn't get to go to Vegas for the National Training, start saving for next year. There is a lot of great information given out and it's a different subject every year.

Vice President Stacey and the rest of Arizona is bound and determined to get me in a dress for processional this year. We are 5th in the Nation in membership! Way to go AZ.

The National President Lisa Williamson's tentative schedule was in the January bulletin. We do, however, have a change, on Wednesday March 20th we will leave for Yuma between 6 and 7 pm. We will be at the Yuma State Home at 10am on the 21st.

There is a flyer now for the NP dinner at Post 26 on March 23rd. Please get it turned in as soon as possible.

President Lisa requested; In lieu of personal gifts, please donate to the American Legion Auxiliary's greatest funding need, the Spirit of Youth Scholarship program. To do so, go to alaforveterans.org sign in, go to Committee's, and click on Education, scroll down and there will be a donate button.

Detachment Commander Chris "Baz" Balsley and I will be having a combined Homecoming Dinner at Post 26 on April 13th. Please mark your calendars, and a flyer will be coming out soon.

Until next month

Rose

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
January 20, 2024	Mission Training Unit 125	Casino Del Sol
January 21, 2024	District 2 Meeting	Post 36
January 26 -28, 2024	National Mission Training	Las Vegas
February 3, 2024	Finance Committee Meeting	Department
February 10, 2024	Official Visit Unit 2	Post 2
February 17, 2024	Mission Training Unit 81 Lake Havasu	Post 81
February 24, 2024	Mission Training Dist 8	Post ??
March 2, 2024	Mission Training Unit 2	Post 2
March 16, 2024	Post 19 Birthday Ball	Post 19
March 17, 2024	District 1 Official Visit	Yuma
March 20 - 24, 2024	NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S VISIT	YUMA/MESA
March 30, 2024	Finance Committee Meeting	Department
April 6, 2024	Mission Training 202 District 3	Post 24
April 13, 2024	Homecoming Post 26	Post 26 Mesa
April 19- 21	SAL Campout	Cottonwood
April 28 - May 3	Northern Run	
May 1, 2024	REPORTS DUE TO CHAIRMAN	
May 19, 2024	Official Visit Dist 4	Post 133
June 2 - 9, 2024	Girls State	U of A
June 8, 2024	Girls State Banquet	U of A
June 20-23, 2024	Department Convention	El Conquistador



DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA

**DINNER HONORING NATIONAL PRESIDENT LISA WILLIAMSON
MARCH 23, 2024**

No Host 4:30 p.m.
Program Begins 5:30 p.m.
Dinner Served 6:00 p.m.
Cost: \$20.00

MENU: BBQ – Pulled Pork or Chicken
Sides
Dessert

DRESS CODE: Smart Casual, Branded shirts/Blouses

LOCATION:
American Legion Post 26
505 W 2nd Ave
Mesa, Arizona 85210

QUESTIONS? Call or text Mary Dunn 602-999-7481 OR Connie Love 480-586-5209

Please send bottom part, along with payment

Make Checks payable to: ALA Unit 26
c/o Mary Dunn
505 W 2nd Ave
Mesa, AZ 85210

Please reserve _____ dinner(s) for the National President's Dinner

DEADLINE: SUNDAY MARCH 17, 2024

Enclosed \$ _____

Please list Names for this event:

LODGING INFORMATION

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S DINNER

If you are planning to attend the Dinner honoring our National President Lisa Williamson on March 23rd at Post 26 and are coming from out of town, We have gotten a block of rooms at the Courtyard by Marriott at 1221 S Westwood, Mesa 85210.

Rooms are \$229.00 per night.

CUTOFF FOR THE GUARANTEED PRICE IS MARCH 1st.

(Some of you might not think that is a deal, but remember, Spring Training is going on in Mesa. There are cheaper motels along Main St., however I do not recommend any of them.)

Please use the Link below to make your reservation.

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1707842073636&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

Or you can call the Marriott reservation line at 1-800-228-9290, but please tell them you are with The American Legion Auxiliary to receive the special group rate.

Questions???

Email or text, roseala2324@yahoo.com 602-628-4088

Rose Ficklin

Dept. President



Chaplain Report February 2024

February is National Security and Americanism and Auxiliary Emergency Fund

The Four Chaplains



George L. Fox



Alexander D. Goode



Clark Poling



John P. Washington

On February 3, 1943, four Army Chaplains – Father John P. Washington, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, and the Revs. George L. Fox and Clark V. Poling – gave up their life jackets on a sinking Army transport in the North Atlantic so that other might live.

In the early morning hours of February 3, 1943, the U.S.A.T. Dorchester was crowded to capacity, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen, and civilian workers. Once a luxury coastal liner, the 5,649-ton vessel had been converted into an Army transport ship. The Dorchester, one of three ships in the SG-19 convoy, was moving steadily across the icy waters from Newfoundland toward an American base in Greenland. SG-19 was escorted by Coast Guard Cutters Tampa, Escanaba, and Comanche.

Of the 902 soldiers, Navy armed guard, ship's crew and civilian passengers on board of the Dorchester, only 230 survived. They have told us of the chaplain's efforts to restore claim in a hopeless and chaotic situation, and how they were last seen at the ship's stern, arms linked in prayer.

The Four Chaplain's promoted interfaith cooperation and selfless service in individual. They encouraged selfless service in the tradition and to teach and promote interfaith understanding and cooperation among all peoples. "Unity without Uniformity".

It is customary to hold a ceremony in February. The Ceremony for Four Chaplains is in the Chaplains prayer book, here is the Link: <https://www.legion-aux.org/Member/Guides/Prayer-Book>

If you know of someone who could benefit from a card or phone call, please let me know:
Lynda Griffin Chaplain, Lynda4ala@gmail.com, (623) 349-3979



A posthumous Special Medal for Heroism, The Four Chaplains' Medal, was authorized by Congress and awarded by the President on January 18, 1961. It was never given before and will never be given again.



Education February 2024



As we all know, college is very expensive, and all of our high school students should be taking advantage of any and all scholarships available to them. Units and departments are responsible for promoting American Legion Auxiliary scholarships and making sure the schools have them in ample time for students to apply. The American Legion Auxiliary offers four scholarship opportunities to students:

1. **Children of Warriors National Presidents Scholarship:** Scholarship is awarded to children of veterans who served in the armed forces during eligibility dates for The American Legion. Three \$5,000 scholarships will be awarded in each division. Fifteen outstanding students will be awarded a total of \$75,000 to further their education. The applicant must complete 50 hours of community service during their high school years to be eligible for one of these scholarships. **Applicants must submit this scholarship online this year by March 1, 2024. It will be forwarded to the Department Education Chair by the National Organization.**
2. **The Non-Traditional Student Scholarship:** One scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 will be awarded in each American Legion Auxiliary division. Applicant must be a member of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion and shall have paid dues for the two preceding years and for the calendar year in which the application is made. **Applicants must submit this scholarship online this year by March 1, 2024. It will be forwarded to the Department Education Chair by the National Organization.**
3. **Spirit of Youth Scholarship:** One Junior member in each division will receive a scholarship valued at \$5,000. The applicant must have held membership in the American Legion Auxiliary for the immediate past three years, hold a current membership card and continue her membership in the American Legion Auxiliary during the four-year scholarship period. **Applicants must submit this scholarship online this year by March 1, 2024. It will be forwarded to the Department Education Chair by the National Organization.**
4. **Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship:** American Legion Auxiliary Junior members are the future of our organization. To reward those who retain their membership into adulthood, the American Legion Auxiliary offers the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship to current college students. Ten scholarships, in the amount of \$2,500 each, will be awarded to a current college student for 2020. Two scholarships will be awarded in each division of the American Legion Auxiliary. The scholarship is a grant; not a loan. Applicant must present the completed application to the American Legion Auxiliary unit president on or before March 1, 2024 to be forwarded to the **Department Secretary by March 15, 2024.**

Please promote these American Legion Auxiliary scholarships to enable our children of veterans to apply and receive funds the American Legion Auxiliary has so graciously provided. Applications are available online at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships. Links to the scholarship applications can also be found on the Department website.

In the Spirit of Service, not for self,
For Veterans, God and Country,

Julie Vietri

Education Chairman
Department of Arizona
jvietri@msn.com
480-495-1558

Finance

February 2024

Heads up ALA Arizona!

Please be aware that May 2024 is around the corner. Do remember the following important items.

- **A reminder that your 2023-2024 End of Year Finance Report is due to this Chairman on May 1, 2024. You will find this Form on the Department website, www.aladeptaz.org and please make sure that you allow enough time to either email by midnight May 1, 2024 or send via regular mail with a postmark of May 1, 2024.**
- **And on another important subject, as of January 1, 2024, approximately 33% Units in the Department of Arizona owe Mandates and you are reminded that Mandates must be paid 30 days before Department Convention. If not paid your Unit will lose voting privileges. Please comply by this date.**
- **You are also reminded that record keeping is a valuable tool to provide information for preparing next year's budget.**

Do you have questions about any Finance Topic? Concerns about which 990 form to use for IRS reporting? How about record keeping? This Chairman welcomes your calls or emails.

Yolanda Bonilla, Chairman, 602-989-3321, yodobo@msn.com

Penny Maklary, Member, 520-364-5038, ahhpenny@aol.com

Helen Griffin, Member, 602-478-4909, hgriffin6868@gmail.com

Members by Virtue of Office: Rose Ficklin, President, Barbara White, NEC, Barbara Matteson, Sec/Tres. (no vote)

GIRLS STATE INTERVIEW

APPLICANT _____

Date _____ Give 1- 5 points for each question.

- _____ 1. What advantages and responsibilities are there of being a citizen?
- _____ 2. Will you be able to attend the entire session of American Legion Auxiliary Girls State?
Date _____ Where _____ University of Arizona, Tucson. Can you get there?
- _____ 3. What do you know about Girls State? Why do you want to be a Girls State Citizen?
- _____ 4. Tell one interesting school, community and/or church activity in which you have participated.
- _____ 5. Who is the current Governor of Arizona? Senators?
- _____ 6. As you look at your future, what do you see yourself doing in the areas of career, family and community? How so you think that your experiences at Girls State will help you in your future?
- _____ 7. How do you feel about meeting new people? Do you object to rooming with someone you have never met?
- _____ 8. Who do you think of as a positive role model?
- _____ 9. What is one (or more) positive thing (s) about your school?
- _____ 10. If there was one thing you could change about your school, what would it be?
- _____ 11. How do you document important activities in which you take part?
- _____ 12. Do you have a problem pledging the Flag? Non-Denominational Prayer?

SKILLS OF THE APPLICANT

_____ Poise	Points _____
_____ Communication Skills	NOTES:
_____ Personality	
_____ Application	
_____ Other Skills (list)	

GIRLS STATE INTERVIEWS

(Score 1 as lowest and 4 as highest)

1. If you are chosen to attend Girls State, from the experience of attending, how will you promote Girls State to next year's class? 1 2 3 4

2. The American Legion Auxiliary is an organization "for God and Country"; do you have a problem with learning about the flag and participating in prayer and why?
1 2 3 4

3. While attending Girls State if an individual was causing a problem, or being disrespectful, how would you handle this? 1 2 3 4

4. Poise 1 2 3 4

5. Communication 1 2 3 4

6. Eye contact 1 2 3 4

7. Presentation 1 2 3 4

Additional comments that you would like to be considered today, or questions you would like answered.

History
February 2024

History is for Juniors too!

1. Did you know there is a Department History award for a Junior History Book?

Connie Erickson Middlebrook Plaque – Junior History

Someday your Junior members will be senior members like you. Why not help them capture what they are doing now so that someday they can relive their youth.

Don't let the fussy format rules stop you and your Junior Historian from completing a History. As the Senior Historian, you can mentor and help your Junior Historian with that part of the History! Encourage them to put down in their own words what they did to support the mission—then help them get it into the History format. Their history doesn't need to long or perfect to become a keepsake (or to win an award)!

2. Did you know there is a History Patch for “Blue Level” Juniors?

Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary in grades 9-12, as well as same-aged Sons of the American Legion members who often work alongside Juniors, may earn a patches for history activities. Participating in the Patch Program is a terrific way to be involved in learning about the Auxiliary and our Legion Family, volunteering in the community, and serving our country's veterans.

For a template on how to structure a Junior History, go to:

[--Department Awards & Narratives \(aladeptaz.org\)](https://www.aladeptaz.org)

(tab #10 of member resources on www.aladeptaz.org)

Scroll to the History awards.

Questions? Comments?


Marge Christianson, Dept Historian. (763) 234-9852--call or text; alaunit62az@gmail.com email!

ALA Academy Live: ALA Patch Program

Join us for a Lunch and Learn webinar on Feb. 8 at noon EST.

This webinar will focus on the ALA's Junior Patch Program. ALA Junior members and school-aged Sons of The American Legion members may earn patches for activities in ALA programs. The Patch Program teaches youth about The American Legion Family, volunteering, and serving veterans, military, and their families.

This workshop will introduce attendees to the ALA's Junior Patch Program, a valuable tool when working with our Legion Family youth by teaching them about the mission of the Legion Family: helping veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

Reserve your spot today!  <https://bit.ly/422sjmf>

Legislative Bulletin
Feb 2024
Educating Tomorrow's Veterans Today

Greetings,

The second session of the 118th Congress will commence in the upcoming weeks. Although there have been many successes for our Veterans in 2023. We need to push harder and reach out to our Congressmen and Women.

Some highlights from 2023 include, the NDAA and two stand-alone bills were signed into law by President Biden. With support from the Legion, S. 777, also known as the *Veteran's COLA Act of 2023*, requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) to increase wartime disability compensation, clothing allowances for disabled veterans, and certain compensation for dependents and surviving spouses and children. The amounts payable must increase in conjunction with the cost-of-living increases. As law, this will directly improve the quality of life for veterans and military families across the country.

The S. 30, the *Fiscal Year 2023 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act*, approves the construction of several VA hospitals and medical facilities and provides the budget to do so. According to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs (SVAC), the aim of this bill is to improve upon the "historic infrastructure investments" that came with the *PACT Act*.

So far 12 bills with Legion support have passed one chamber. 10 bills have passed the House and are waiting their turn in the Senate, and 2 have passed the Senate and must be approved in the House.

Of the bills that have passed the House, 2 provide support for caregivers, 4 strengthen education and employment benefits, 2 focus on disability compensation and benefits, 1 ensuring that veterans have equal access to the second amendment, and 1 improving housing allowances and aid for homeless veterans.

Because there is always a looming shut down of the government. I do not understand, but they passed a "laddered" approach to the shutdown, with two dates in mind. Jan 19 and Feb 2. This applies to Homeland Security, Labor-HHS-Education, and a few other bills.

The House and Senate have reached a deal on a \$1.59 billion topline for spending, but the details of how this money will be spent is still up in the air. If Congress is unable to pass all of the spending bills or a combination of them, they will either be forced to pass another CR or to shut down the unfunded parts of the government.

If they will just work together, they can get this done! Please reach out to your Congress person.

Let's hope that they can meet the deadlines.

As always, there are other important bills to check out on the following website. Check it out here: <https://www.votervoicenet.com/AmericanLegion/home>.

Create an account and click away supporting these important legislative issues.

Questions? I am here to help you!

Sincerely,

Kathy Amery
Arizona Department Legislative Chair
Luv2p8@gmail.com
623-640-0134

National Legislative Division Weekly

GRASSROOTS ACTION UPDATES

The American Legion is urging Congress to pass the *Love Lives On Act* (S. 1266 / H.R. 3651). Without this bill, Gold Star Spouses over the age of 55 are forced to choose between remarriage and their survivor benefits. To ensure that surviving spouses can be married without repercussions, you contact your representatives in support of S. 1266 or H.R. 3651 by [clicking here](#).

Last session, three critical bills passed the House of Representatives: The *Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2023* (H.R. 542), the *HOME Act of 2023* (H.R. 3848), and the *COPE Act* (H.R. 3581) bill. If the Senate agrees to pass this Legion-backed legislation, Congress has an opportunity to provide indispensable support for our Nation's veterans and their family caregivers.

The American Legion is also proud to support S. 3546, the *Veterans Mental Health and Addiction Therapy Quality of Care Act*. S. 3546 aims to evaluate the quality of mental health services at the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) and non-Department providers. If you would like to contact your representatives in support of this bill, H.R. 542, H.R. 3848, or H.R. 3581, you can visit our [grassroots actions center](#) to identify and email your elected official.

The American Legion has released its legislative agenda for the 2nd Session of the 118th Congress. To review our priorities, you can check our [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

THE LEGION CALLS FOR AFGHAN ADJUSTMENT IN DEFENSE SUPPLEMENTAL BILL

This article's original publication can be found [here](#).



Legion Staff, National Security Chair Matthew Shuman, and Senator Amy Klobuchar at a press conference for Afghan Adjustment

Today, The American Legion joined with other organizations in calling for the U.S. Senate to include legislation in the Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2024 that will adjust the status of our Afghan allies while assisting those still in Afghanistan and other countries.

National Legislative Division Weekly

The [letter](#) was sent to Senate Majority Leader Sen. Charles Schumer and Minority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell and reads, in part, "It has been over two years since the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the evacuation of over 80,000 Afghans to the United States; however, the lives of our brave wartime allies remain imperiled. Legislation providing adjustment of status for Afghans in the U.S. and support to the nearly 150,000 Afghan allies still abroad is vital, and we cannot continue to miss opportunities to include critical provisions in the few legislative vehicles available."

Joining The American Legion in signing the letter were Veterans of Foreign Wars, Operation Recovery, No One Left Behind and With Honor. "Providing a path to permanent, legal residency has broad political support, as evidenced by bipartisan legislation like the Afghan Adjustment Act and the Afghan Allies Protection Act, as well as national polling showing nearly 90% support amongst Americans for fulfilling our promises to our Afghan allies," the five organizations wrote. "Providing legal residency to our allies after they are fully vetted is a moral and national security imperative. Congress has failed over the last two years to pass necessary legislation. Political infighting and partisan acrimony have made passing bipartisan legislation increasingly difficult, but our allies can no longer be casualties of this inclusion in the Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2024 and to support passage of the bill."

American Legion Family members are encouraged to contact their senators and call for Afghan adjustment legislation in the Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2024 and for passage of the supplemental legislation.

The text of the [letter](#) is posted below.

"An entire generation of Afghan allies grew up believing in American ideals of freedom and democracy. Our allies are now paying for their service with bloodshed." Elizabeth Lynn, Operation Recovery

It has been over two years since the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the evacuation of over 80,000 Afghans to the United States; however, the lives of our brave wartime allies remain imperiled. Legislation providing adjustment of status for Afghans in the U.S. and support to the nearly 150,000 Afghan allies still abroad is vital, and we cannot continue to miss opportunities to include critical provisions in the few legislative vehicles available. As Congress considers the defense supplemental, The American Legion, No One Left Behind, Operation Recovery, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and With Honor Action strongly support the swift passage of legislation that will adjust the status of our Afghan allies and assist those still in Afghanistan and third countries. We urge all Senators to support such legislation's inclusion in the Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2024 and to support passage of the bill.

Providing a path to permanent, legal residency has broad political support, as evidenced by bipartisan legislation like the Afghan Adjustment Act and the Afghan Allies Protection Act, as well as national polling showing nearly 90% support amongst Americans for fulfilling our promises to our Afghan allies. Providing legal residency to our allies after they are fully vetted is a moral and national security imperative. Congress has failed over the last two years to pass necessary legislation. Political infighting and partisan acrimony have made passing bipartisan legislation increasingly difficult, but our allies can no longer be casualties of this inaction. Therefore, we strongly support the swift passage of the proposed defense supplemental package and its inclusion of Afghan adjustment.

National Legislative Division Weekly

After two decades of service alongside American troops, there is no population in the world more deserving of American support. The nearly 80,000 Afghans who were evacuated to the United States are building new lives upon trapdoors, and the nearly 150,000 allies left behind face persecution, oppression, and, at worst, execution by the Taliban because they worked with the American military and trusted us to keep them safe. Despite their loyalty and shared sacrifices, the Afghans we evacuated during the fall of Kabul remain in a debilitating legal limbo in the United States while the Taliban hunt down their colleagues, family members, and loved ones. To correct this moral injury, we must support our Afghan allies – both those here in the United States and those trapped abroad. Thousands of lives are at stake, and so is our sacred honor as a nation.

FINANCIAL READINESS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

As global conflicts compound and uncertainties grow about the United States' homeland security, operational readiness has a prime concern among officials in the defense community. A well-trained military with robust manpower and sophisticated equipment are all critical to developing readiness but are superfluous if military families do not have financial stability and the necessary resources to perform wartime duties.

A [2022 report by the Congressional Research Service](#) dives into the concept of financial readiness and why it is a challenge for Department of Defense (DOD) operations. On top of frequent and unpredictable relocation and employment and spouses, about half of active duty enlisted members are under the age of 26 meaning that they have had very little time to build savings.



Last week, the [House Armed Services Committee Military Quality of Life Panel](#) discussed military spouse employment, childcare, housing, and financial uncertainty as barriers to servicemembers' readiness. Much of the legislation on these topics will be found in the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). But, with the support of The American Legion, there are many lawmakers taking the initiative to create stand-alone legislation benefitting military families and operational readiness.

[The Military Family Protection from Debt Act \(H.R. 5190\)](#) was introduced by Congressman Andy Kim (D-NJ-3) in August of 2023. The bill aims to ensure that the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, which caps interest rates for servicemembers at 6%, can be extended to both military spouses and dependents. According to the [Congressman](#), "Military families sacrifice along side servicemembers when on deployment and Congress should provide them with any protections they need to be able to keep food on the table and a roof over their head." Through Resolution No. 342: Support and Strengthen the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, The American Legion is proud to support this bill, and applauds Congressman Kim's efforts to support military families.

National Legislative Division Weekly

The Military Spouse Hiring Act (H.R. 1277/S. 596), which has the support of 143 lawmakers in the House and 47 in the Senate, also aims to support the military families who are critical to the readiness of servicemembers. *The Military Spouse Hiring Act* would amend tax code, allowing business to receive the Work Opportunity Tax Credit when they hire military spouses. With frequent relocation and unpredictable timelines looming over their careers, military spouses have struggled to secure meaningful and beneficial jobs for far too long. By incentivizing employers to hire qualified military spouses, one obstacle to military family well being could be surpassed.

Along with these bills, The American Legion supports any legislation that aids military families under our resolutions. As lawmakers consider appropriations for the upcoming NDAA and prepare our military for the possible escalation of global conflict, we hope that military families are given the benefit and consideration they deserve.

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK

In an effort to recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

Henry Bassman, New Jersey

I would like to recognize Mr. Henry Bassman, Department of New Jersey, as the Legionnaire of the Week.

Because Congressman Tom Kean Jr. (R-NJ-7) will not be in the Capitol for Washington Conference, Mr. Bassman met with him last week to ensure that The American Legion's Legislative Agenda for 2024 could be represented in his work. Accompanied by Past Commander of NJ Post 322 William Rapp and NJ Department Commander Dan Channel, Mr. Bassman briefed the Congressman and his district deputy on each of the The American Legion priorities for the 2nd Session of the 118th Congress. According to Mr. Bassman's report, Congressman Kean is "extremely supportive of our legislative agenda."

Mr. Bassman, your actions are exemplary of the dedication and leadership for which The American Legion is known. Your efforts are greatly appreciated, and critical to the Legion's mission.

If you have made a Grassroots effort and would like to be considered for next week's "Legionnaire of the Week," please fill out the Congressional Contact Report Form [here](#). You can also email me at kryan@legion.org.

LEGISLATIVE DIVISION UPDATES

This week

National Legislative Division Weekly

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a grassroots training event, please contact grassroots@legion.org or ejohnson@legion.org.

UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

On Tuesday, February 13th at 8:30am ET, the Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party will hold a field hearing in Boston, Massachusetts titled "Growing Stakes: The Bioeconomy and American National Security." To watch this hearing, please click [here](#).

On Wednesday, February 14th at 10:00am ET, the House Foreign Affairs Committee will hold a hearing titled "AUKUS Implementation and Challenges to International Security and Arms Control in the 21st Century." To watch this hearing, please click [here](#).

On Wednesday, February 14th at 10:15am ET, the House Veterans Affairs Committee will hold a hearing titled "VA's HR Office: Did Leaders Ignore and Perpetrate Sexual Harassment?" To watch this hearing, please click [here](#).

On Wednesday, February 14th at 1:00pm ET, the House Veterans Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs will hold a hearing titled "Is VA Illegally Spending Taxpayer Dollars on its Compensation and Pension Programs?" To watch this hearing, please click [here](#).

On Wednesday, February 14th at 2:00pm ET, House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia will hold a hearing titled "Iran's Proxy in Yemen" The Houthi Threat to Middle East Stability, Global Shipping, And U.S. Servicemembers" To watch, please click [here](#).

On Thursday, February 15th at 8:00am ET, the House Veterans Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Technology Modernization will hold a hearing titled "Electronic Health Record Modernization Deep Dive: Can the Oracle Pharmacy Software Be Made Safe and Effective?" As of Friday, Friday 9th at 9:15am, no link has been posted to watch this hearing.

On Thursday, February 15th at 10:00am ET, the House Veterans Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Health will hold a hearing titled "Artificial Intelligence at VA: Exploring Its Current State and Future Possibilities." To watch this hearing, please click [here](#).

On Thursday, February 15th at 2:00pm ET, the House Veterans Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity will hold a hearing titled "Sink or Swim?: A Deep Dive into the Current State of VA's Home Loan Program in a Competitive Market." ?" As of Friday, Friday 9th at 9:15am, no link has been posted to watch this hearing.



POPPY NEWS

Thank you to all the members who have and continue to make poppies. Although the poppies were \$12 a hundred this year, I have been advised they are increasing the price to \$15 next year. Please adjust your budget accordingly.

I apologize for not sending a monthly notice prior to this. I have been doing research on the various aspects of this program as our Unit only does the making and handing out of poppies (no juniors). I also had to clear some time on my calendar and recruit two newer members to assist with the Poppy Poster judging. Yep, just like the rest of you I had overbooked myself to the end of the year and had to dig out.

On January 18th, a quarterly western division virtual meeting was held to share ideas and information about the Poppy Program.

National would like to have photos for posting on face book and the national blog so units are encouraged to forward these anytime during the year to National and at the time their respective narrative or report is filed to the Department chair. These photos cannot be utilized as part of the narrative.

Ideas for raising funds to support this program and the associated veterans' services were:

- Fashion show or hat show featuring the use of poppies

- A contest to highlight the poppies required to cover a person

- Selling valentine hearts and shamrocks so deceased veteran names could be featured on a wall at the Post

- Making bracelets out of the poppies to sell

Discussion of what to do with requests from junior SAL members who might want to be involved in the Miss Poppy part of the Poppy Program, and how to utilize these junior members and reward them was minimally touched on.

Poppy Poster:

Units should be working on the Poppy Poster part of this Program and may either contact schools for participation or encourage junior members to be part of this phase of the Poppy Program.

- Since only the best poppy posters are forwarded to Department, utilize the "loser" poppy posters by selling them to members

- Consider sending the "loser" poppy posters to long term care facilities for veterans

Rules and Cover sheet are provided for your review in separate documents. Please send the Unit winning posters for Department judging by May 10th.

Kat Sticklin, Arizona Poppy Co-chair
1519 S. 2nd Avenue, Safford, AZ 85546
928-322-1550
kat2sticks@gmail.com



POPPY HAT CONTEST 2024

BRING HAT TO CONVENTION READY FOR DISPLAY

All hats must be blank to start

Units may enter two different categories

Must utilize at least 2 paper poppies per hat

May utilize any type of hat including a hard hat

All hats must have a tag attached with the category and Unit #

Contest open to Senior and Junior members

Categories:

Funny or silly

Bling

Elegant

Job specific

Awards

Category winners receives a prize and a certificate

2nd and 3rd place in categories receive a certificate

Winners will be determined by membership attending convention with 4 votes per Unit – one for each category

Cups shall be placed in front of each category for voting

Place the number of your choice on the back of the ticket and place in the cup in front of the category

Voting will take place all day Friday and Saturday until noon. Votes will be counted for awarding Saturday afternoon.

All hats should be reclaimed by the Units prior to end of Convention.

Poppy Poster Contest Rules

Units shall sponsor contests in local schools. When schools do not conduct activities, other youth groups — including Junior members — may participate under direct supervision of the unit.

Contest Classes

- Class I: Grades 2 and 3
- Class II: Grades 4 and 5
- Class III: Grades 6 and 7
- Class IV: Grades 8 and 9
- Class V: Grades 10 and 11
- Class VI: Grade 12
- Class VII: Students with special needs defined as:
 - a. Those in special education classes.
 - b. A student recommended for special education classes but who has not been admitted due to a waiting list or various other factors.
 - c. A child identified as having a disability, but not in a special education class due to lack of facilities; identification contingent upon discretion of school officials.

Poppy Poster Requirements

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

10. The poster shall be the work of only one individual.
11. The label "In Memoriam" from the veteran-made poppy may not be used.

Poppy Poster Contest Judging and Awards

1. Each department shall establish its own procedure for judging.
2. A citation will be given for the most outstanding poster in each classification within the five divisions.
3. Unit members should follow deadlines and process for the department. All department entries are due to the division chairman by June 1.
4. While ALA representatives will do their best to return all posters, it is not guaranteed. We recommend participants take a picture or scan their poster for their records.
5. Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of artwork, contestants and their legal guardians grant nonexclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and artwork published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.



**POPPY POSTER CONTEST
COVER SHEET**

Each year, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) sponsors a Poppy Poster Contest for students in grades 2-12, including students with special needs. Grade levels are divided into seven classes. One award in each of the seven classes will be presented in each division. Winners will receive \$50 and a \$50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship fund. National winners will be posted at www.ALAforVeterans.org after national convention.

Poster Classes:

Class	Grade Level
I	2 and 3
II	4 and 5
III	6 and 7
IV	8 and 9
V	10 and 11
VI	12
VII	Students with special needs

Class competing in: _____

Sponsoring ALA unit: _____

Due date for student to return to ALA unit: _____

To Be Completed by the Student/Parent:

Student Name: _____

Address (Street, City, State, Zip): _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone: _____

School Name: _____

City/State of School: _____

Parent or Teacher Name and Signature: _____

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

Sponsoring Unit Name/Number: _____

Signature of Unit Poppy Chairman/President: _____

Unit winner due to Department on: _____ Department: _____

Signature of Department Chairman: _____

Department winner due to National Poppy Division Chairman by June 1

Presidents Special Project
February Bulletin 2024

Arizona Girls State - The Greatest State in the Land!

A Huge thank you to all those who have helped with donations and making this Special Project an amazing success so far this year!

Important Girls State Facts to know!!


- Arizona Girls State has been a working program since 1947
- All 76 sessions (minus 2) were held at the University of Arizona
- Two sessions were held virtually during COVID
- One of only 2 Girls State programs that never shut down during the pandemic
- Each session is ONE full week from Sunday to Sunday in June
- Notable Alumni for Arizona Girls State are:
 - Arizona State Governor Hobbs and State Treasurer Kimberlee Yee
- There are several scholarship opportunities while attending Girls State
 - Samsung Scholarship
 - Alumni Scholarship
- Each year there are two community service projects during session
 - Donation of socks or other needed items
 - Poppy making demonstration and creation
- This is a self-governing state of young women who:
 - Elect their own leadership
 - Write bills, create laws and budgets
 - Run functional legislative sessions from city, county and state

If you would like a visit and presentation or help with event ideas please feel free to reach out to me anytime. I would love to visit and give the presentation to your unit or district this year to help all of our members get a better understanding of Girls State and how beneficial the program truly is. Please note that I do work Sun-Thurs so will need to plan in advance for travel. Thank you!

Shannon Mead
Presidents Special Project Chairman
623-521-1263 • shannonmead@live.com

Ring Your Bell Arizona ALA | Jessica Roza posted January 17 at 9:15 PM · 1.1K members

Join group



beconnected
CONNECT EVERY VETERAN

Arizona Veteran Survey

Take the Survey

- 866-4AZ-VETS
- survey@arizonacoalition.org
- ConnectVeterans.org/Survey

We Want to Hear from You!

West Valley Women Veterans
1d · 0

Every two years the State of Arizona conducts the Arizona Veterans Survey. The 2017, 2019, and 2021 surveys received a total of more than 25,000 responses. Was your voice included?

If you are or know a service member (Active Duty, Guard & Reserve) or veteran— Share the 2023 #AZVeteranSurvey with them and their family before it closes!

The purpose is to assess our needs so program, funding agencies & policy-makers can make data-driven decisions to improve the care and resources available.

Learn more & take the survey & review the previous findings from ASU College of Health Solutions at www.connectveterans.org/survey

Ring Your Bell Arizona ALA | In case you missed the announcement · 1.1K members

Join group


Jessica Roza
1d · 0

In case you missed the announcement! UAV has a new veteran calendar & newsletter for your organization to share upcoming events & news!
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/h6zpd11pE1Meg9Rv/>

Jessica Roza ▸ Unified Arizona Veterans
1d · 0

- Did you know that the UAV has a new newsletter & a calendar of events?!
- ◆ Add your events to the calendar!
- ◆ Add information to the next month's newsletter & submit before the 22nd of the month!
- ◆ Sign up to receive the monthly newsletter!

Learn more:



UAVNEWSLETTER.NET
UAV Newsletter - Stay Informed | Unified Arizona Veterans Newsletter
Stay up to date with the latest UAV technology and industry trends with the UAV Newsletter...

Like Comment Share

American Legion Auxiliary VA&R REPORT
TUCSON VA MEDICAL CENTER
12-31-23

Major changes to mask requirements have finally happened. We are working very hard with the Recreation therapists to get our traditional events back up and running. We have wonderful volunteers for the second Saturday for Bingo at the community Living Center. We need volunteers for the third Wednesday for Bridging at Building 90. Please contact me if your Unit can help.

Ward W2 (Dementia Ward) in Building 60 is currently seeking twin size blankets for their patients. They request that the blankets be different colors/patterns so each patient will recognize their personal blanket. Thank you Unit 8, Unit 62 & Unit 66 for your generous donations. They are also requesting clothing donations (sweatshirts and sweatpants all sizes especially size small in "girly" colors for the two female Veterans, socks and shoes men's sizes 9 and above). Many of the Veterans they serve come in with no clothing. One female patient in Building 60 is 106 years young She plays Bingo with us each month.

Southwestern Blind Rehabilitation Center (SWBRC) is continuing going on outings where they are invited. They would like to request support for outings which are not direct donations such as going to the movies, Pima Air & Space Museum, Botanical Garden, etc. These outings must be financed by donations of the purchase of tickets directly by the sponsor. They currently have a population of twenty.

Patriot Pantry is up and running at is currently supporting 40 to 50 Veterans with food insecurities. The current monthly cost for this program is estimated at \$1,000. VA funds can now be used to purchase the food and different donors are shopping and delivering the items to SAVAHCS. There is also a Patriot Pantry program at the Sierra Vista CBOC. Thank you Unit 131 and Unit 132 for your generous donations.

The grand total of monetary donations for the American Legion Auxiliary for May 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 is \$1,352. Thank you Unit 32 for your generous donation to Fisher House.

The grand total of material and activity donations for the American Legion Auxiliary for May 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 is \$15,265.37. Thank you Unit 62, Unit 109, Unit 131 and Unit 132 for your generous donations to support our programs.

Eight registered hospital volunteers donated time which was credited to the American Legion Auxiliary. The grand total of registered volunteer hours May 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 is 670. Ten occasional volunteers have contributed 102 hours as of December 31, 2023. We have on-boarded two new volunteers whose hours will benefit the American Legion Auxiliary. The Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE formerly Voluntary Service) is bringing back many volunteers.

This chairman has volunteered 127.5 hours and logged 1,580 miles this year in service to the Tucson VA Medical Center as of December 31, 2023. This chairman has now logged over 4,000 hours in service to SAVAHCS. This chairman was re-elected to be the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the VAVS Executive Committee at the meeting on October 12, 2021. This chairman has been elected to fill a three year term on the VAVS Executive Committee. This chairman has attended every Executive Committee meeting and every VAVS meeting this year. This chairman is working with the Homeless Program to ensure that our Homeless Veterans and those in Transitional Housing have the food and beverages that they need. This chairman is actively supporting the Patriot Pantry at SAVAHCS. This chairman is working with the Recreation departments to purchase needed supplies for the National Veterans Creative Arts Program and other recreational activities. National Creative Arts winners were announced in December. Tucson had four medal winners and we are planning a celebration with refreshments. We have already held an advance planning "meet and greet" and invited all interested Veterans. Unit 73 provided refreshments for this event. Annual Joint Review was completed November 28, 2023. VAVS Committee voted to fully fund transportation for the gold medal winners from NVCA at SAVAHCS on February 1, 2023. VAVS Committee voted to support the Patriot Pantry with a donation of \$3,000 on October 25, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Szakonyi, VAVS Representative