



**Chaplain Report
JUNE 2024**

WOW! I am so humbled by each and every one of you. A great **HUGE THANK YOU**, for the End-of- the - Year reports I received last month. **In your end of the year report several units have made Prayer books for your Unit President, the same prayers you used for your Unit President's Book can also be used for Department President Rose Ficklin's prayer Book.**

This year as your Chaplain it has been very challenging for me personally. Beginning with the loss of my Father, and then my beloved Granddaughter who lost her fight to Cancer five months from my father and then my Godfather who passed away one month to the day of my Granddaughter.

I want to say Thank You, for allowing me to be the Chaplain for the Department of Arizona Auxiliary this past year

But God has a way of showing me that it's not about me, and I need to get it together and help someone in need. I had a veteran come up to me and asked me to pray for him, that he had a rough day. This was the same day my Godfather passed away. I was so caught up in my feelings that I had to stop and focus on him. What a lesson I learned this week.

Thank you God for showing me that you have me and things are going to be all right.

As this will be my last bulletin as your Department Chaplain I would like for you to remember me by carrying with you these two Quotes:

1. No matter how bad you think you have it, there's always – always somebody who's got it way, way worse, than you.
2. No matter how good or bad you think life is, WAKE Up each day and be thankful for life. Someone somewhere else is fighting to survive.

Dear God;

Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you that you are able to bring hope through even the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes.

Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you've done and will continue to do, and for all that you've given us. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you afresh.

Renew our spirits; fill us with your peace and joy. We give you praise and thanks, for you alone are worthy!

Amen!

PLEASE BRING PRAYER FOR PRESIDENT ROSE PRAYER BOOK TO CONVENTION! THANK YOU FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY SENT YOURS.

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

We are a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.



Education June 2024



I wish to express my thanks to all the Units who participated in the Education Program this year, especially those who took the time to turn in a report and/or narrative. I look forward to recognizing some of your Units for their hard work at the Department Convention in June.

As the Auxiliary year comes to a close, please continue to keep the Education Program in mind. The future success of our schools and children depends on you.

Hopefully, we have all helped National achieve their goals for this year:

1. Enhance respect for the sacrifices of our military heroes among school children by scheduling Veterans in the Classroom programs at local schools.
2. Promote American Legion Auxiliary scholarships, and award local scholarships at the department and unit levels.
3. Build a relationship with your local schools — focus attention on “Give 10 to Education,” American Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week.
4. Assist and support veterans pursuing higher education and vocational education.
5. Assist and support military children with educational opportunities.

Thank you all for everything you have done to make my year as Chairman of the Education Program a success.

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

Julie Vietri

Julie Vietri, Chairman

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480-495-1558

Legislative Update

June 2024

Hard to believe we are in June. There is a very important call to action. Contact President Joe Biden to request that he issue the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Legionnaire Diane Carlson Evans for her work on the Vietnam Women's Memorial! The American Legion supports this recognition, Ms. Evans has been very involved over the years. To support this all you have to do is [Support Presidential Medal of Honor](#)- This will go directly to the White House.

Be sure to track next year numbers!

A couple of noteworthy items.

The house advanced a \$ 884 Bil defense bill. There is a lot of things in this bill for our military.

- The measure contains a dramatic overhaul of the military's pay tables, giving a pay bump of nearly 20% to junior enlisted troops next year. The move would bring almost every service member's base pay to more than \$30,000 a year, a move lawmakers hope will limit the financial strain on younger military families.
- The authorization bill also includes increases to troops' housing allowances (bringing them up to 100% of regional housing costs) and expands eligibility for the military's Basic Allowance for Subsistence stipend.
- And lawmakers also inserted language in the defense bill improving pay and benefits for Defense Department childcare workers, to help with recruiting and retention of those posts.
- Those reforms are included alongside a 4.5% pay raises for all troops next year, which would be the third consecutive year of increases of more than 4% for the military.
- **The committee also adopted an amendment that would automatically register all male U.S. residents ages 18 to 26 into the Selective Service amid a drop in mandatory registrations from eligible individuals in recent years. The committee adopted the amendment from Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa., by voice vote.**

We really need to pay attention!

Did you know the Department of Defense is experiencing its worst recruiting¹ performance since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) over 50 years ago. Four of the six services missed their recruiting goals in FY 2023.

They say much of the issue can be traced to a degradation of the relationship between the American people, service members, and the veteran community.

I am not sure that I agree with all of that but there are a lot of other factors that I think play out. I think quality of life speaks volumes. Lack of pay is another reason. And let's face it, our world is a little scary these days.

It has been a pleasure serving as the Legislative Chair this year. Thank you Madam President Rose Ficklin for this appointment.

Kathy Amery

Department Legislative Chair 2023-2024

Luv2p8@gmail.com or 623.640.0134

1

<https://www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/documents/Veteran%27s%20Responsibilities%20to%20the%20Military%20FINAL%202.pdf>

ALA DEPT OF AZ MEMBERSHIP TRANSMITTAL

UNIT #		Transmittal #			Check #					
	ID#	Last Name	First Name	MI	New Rej	S/Jr	New Female Vet	2025	2024	2023
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American Legion Auxiliary VA&R REPORT
TUCSON VA MEDICAL CENTER
4-29-24

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 but can use more help. Creative Arts awards ceremony was held on March 21st to honor all of last year's medal winners and to promote participation for other Veterans. ALA provided refreshments. An Adaptive Sports Clinic was held for April 17th. ALA provided refreshments. 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 (this is an ongoing need). 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.

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 \$1,500. 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 66, Unit 73, 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 April 29, 2024 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 April 29, 2024 is \$20,219.63. Thank you Unit 62, Unit 73, 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 April 29, 2024 is 1,580. Twelve occasional volunteers have contributed 114 hours as of April 29, 2024. 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. VA Female Volunteer of the Year is Marilyn Zabowsky, member of ALA Unit 36. ALA Deputy Dawn Davidson was nominated for the three year term on the VAVS Executive Committee with the election to be held on July 31, 2024.

This chairman has volunteered 201.5 hours and logged 2,480 miles this year in service to the Tucson VA Medical Center as of April 29, 2024. This chairman has now logged over 4,600 hours in service to SAVAHCS. This chairman was privileged to present the honorary check to the directorship of SAVAHCS in the amount of \$2,199,900 representing value of volunteer hours and donation this past fiscal year. This chairman is finishing 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 on March 21st. Unit 73 provided refreshments for this event. A NVCA virtual planning meeting was held on April 18th. Both Dawn Davidson & I to attended. NVCA Meet & greet is planned for May 21st. Annual Joint Review was completed November 28, 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