

# 2025-2026 ABC BOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Section 1 - Department Officers and Committee Chairs

## Section 2 - District Presidents

## Section 3 - Resources

### SECTION 1 – Officers and Chairs

Department President	Ruth Hietbrink	page 5
Department Vice-President	Vicki Cyboron	page 6
Department Historian	Lori Reimers	page 6
➤ Cavalcade of Memories		page 7
Department Secretary	Roxanne Hiatt	page 7
Department Treasurer		page 7
Department Chaplain	Vicki Colson	page 8
➤ Gold Star		page 8
National Executive Committee	Vicki Ozenbaugh	page 9
➤ Distinguished Guest Committee		page 9
Department Advisory	Vicki Ozenbaugh	page 10
Americanism	Cie Kauth	page 10
Auxiliary Emergency Fund	Vicki Ozenbaugh	page 11
Children and Youth	Julie Schnitzler	page 13
Community Service	Nancy Niemann	page 14
Constitution and Bylaws	Gayla Schmid	page 15
County Government	Tammie Runions	page 15
Education	Cindy Moore	page 16
Finance Committee	Karen Brink	page 17
Girls State	Vicki Ozenbaugh	page 18
Junior Activities	KayLynn Novak	page 19
Leadership	Tina Nelson	page 20
Legislative	Loree Hendrickson	page 21
Membership	Debra Albers	page 23
➤ Unit Awards		page 24
Music	Jean Vackiner	page 24
National Security	Amanda Washburn	page 24
Parliamentarian	Lynne Wild	page 26
Past President's Parley	Lisa Moore	page 26
Poppy	Justina Birkel	page 27
Public Relations	Meri Hietbrink	page 29
Service to Veterans	Maria Atterberry	page 31
STAR Editor	Lorene Bartos	page 31

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation	Amanda Washburn	page 32
➤ Central NE Veterans Home	Kathy Fisher	page 33
➤ Eastern NE Veterans Home	Donna Smith	page 34
➤ Norfolk Veterans Home	LaRee Kubes	page 35
➤ Western NE Veterans Home	Cecil Doshier	page 36
➤ Grand Island VA Medical Center	Vicki Cyboron	page 37
➤ Omaha VA Medical Center	Paula Pillen	page 37
➤ Hot Springs VA Medical Center	Karol Lockman	page 39
➤ Lincoln CBOC	Linda Varejcka	page 39



## SECTION 2 - District Presidents

District 1	Jean Vackiner	page 41
District 2	Corrine Janovec	page 41
District 3	Laura Novak	page 42
District 4	Terri Poley	page 42
District 5	Eva Crawford	page 43
District 6	Barbara Dosey	page 43
District 7	Nancy Patras	page 44
District 8	Lee Brauer	page 44
District 9	Lana Bennett	page 45
District 10	DeAnna Tuttle	page 45
District 11	Mary Beth Coffey	page 46
District 12	Erma Naber	page 47
District 13	Bobbi Albers	page 48



### Section 3 - Resources

Senior Unit History Book Rules	page 51
Senior Unit Narrative History Rules	page 52
Unit Senior Prayer Book Rules	page 53-54
Christmas Program	page 55-56
➤ Bird Pattern for Christmas Program	page 57
Gold Star Program	page 59
Unit Publicity Book Guidelines	page 61
Americanism Essay Guidelines	page 63-64
Americanism Essay Cover Sheet	page 65
Nebraska Department Scholarships	page 67
National Scholarships	page 68
Poppy Poster Contest Rules	page 69-70
Poppy Poster Contest Cover Sheet	page 71
Poppy Centerpiece Contest	page 73
Little Miss Poppy Contest	page 75
Service to Veterans	page 77



# SECTION 1: ALA DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

## DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT – RUTH HIETBRINK

735 Washington St – Sterling NE 68443 – 402-239-6371 (C)

rhietbri@gmail.com

"Stirring Up Member" SUM=SUCCESS

During 2025-2026 the American Legion Auxiliary will be celebrating its 250th birthday. Hopefully everyone will join in with the festivity and celebrate our accomplishments by our commitment and passion for our Veterans and their families.

The Chairmen of 2025-2026 are ready to make the programs of the Auxiliary successful. There are many programs from which to choose. You do not have to participate in all programs. Select the programs that fits your area and your Unit, choose a goal, and make a plan. Look for ways to participate in your communities. You don't need many members to make a successful project happen. Recruit our shut-in members to contact members to remind them of membership deadlines. If you can involve young people in the area, they may be the key to learning about new technology.

The 2025-2026 ALA administrative year for National President Pam Ray is to emphasis mission driven and family focused. We are going back to why we were organized and focusing on the family — not just the families we serve — but The American Legion Family.

Membership is high on her list and ours. We have Deb Albers to touch on our plan to exceed expectations there.

Please check the Nebraska American Legion Website at <https://nebraskalegionaux.net/> to keep up with upcoming events and learn more about projects. The links will take you to the National Website. Keep in mind you will need to log in to your member account for some of the pages to work. If you have not set up an account, you will need to do that.

We are going to have a great year “STIRRING UP MEMBERS.”

*Ruth Hietbrink*



**DEPARTMENT VICE PRESIDENT – VICKI CYBORON**

2454 7<sup>th</sup> Ave – Boelus NE 68820 – 402-740-5665

vcyboron@aol.com

I am a Paid Up for Life (PUFL) 45-year member of Shipman Mogensen Unit 201 in Boelus, NE, and I am eligible for membership in the Auxiliary through the service of my dad. My membership started as a Junior member. I am currently serving as Unit President! I am also the current Grand Island VA Medical Center Representative.

Past positions that I have served were Department Historian, Department Chaplain and Gold Star Chair. Plus I served as District Six President for two years, two years District Historian, and a two-year term as Howard County President. On the Department Level, I served five years on the Finance Committee and three years as Finance Chair. I served a three-year term as President of the Nebraska American Legion Press Association (NE-APLA).

I graduated from Midland Lutheran College with a degree in Business Administration. I currently work at Pitney Bowes Presort Services as a Collection Specialist for seventeen years. I am a member of the Custer County DAV Auxiliary Unit. I am the current Unit Junior Vice Commander and Department of Nebraska DAV Auxiliary Commander (President). I attend Faith Lutheran Church in Nysted.

I look forward to working with each of you this upcoming year. I will be working closely with the Department Membership Chair, Deb Albers. If you need any assistance, please let us know.



**DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN – LORI REIMERS**

**2011 24<sup>th</sup> St – Central City NE 68826 – 402-604-8636**

**lljunker66@gmail.com**

My name is Lori Reimers, a proud member of the Lester Harder Post 42's Auxiliary in Aurora Nebraska. I have been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 42 since 2010 and am eligible through my husband, Mike, who served in the Air National Guard for 26 1/2 years. I have been married to Mike for 15 years, a mother of 3 children and a Nana to 8 grandchildren. I belong to Christ Lutheran Church in Aurora. For work I am a District Manager for Driveline Retail Merchandising.

In my Unit I have served as President. I have also been the District 6 Vice President and President. I have served as the Department Poppy Chair and Department Chaplain.

Rules for the 2025-26 History Book and Narrative History contests are included in the Resource Section. Please contact Lori Reimers with any questions.

## CAVALCADE OF MEMORIES – LORI REIMERS

The Department Cavalcade of Memories is located at the Department Headquarters. The Cavalcade has been preserving our memories with pictures, scrapbooks, pins, and other mementos from the beginning of our Department in 1921.

Units should also have a Cavalcade of Memories. You might not have a separate room for your items, but you still have items that tell the history of your Unit.



**DEPARTMENT SECRETARY – ROXANNE HIATT**  
**150 NW 40<sup>th</sup> Street – Lincoln NE 68528 – 402-464-1808**  
**nealasec@gmail.com**

I am Roxanne Hiatt. In 1964 my mother joined the Auxiliary and at the same time signed my two sisters and me up to become Junior members. My eligibility is because my grandfather served our country during WWI. I am a 61-year member of Mette-Reed Unit 270, Venango.

I learned our organization's values and instruction through my Junior Leader Betty Duden. I have participated on the Unit, County, District and Department Level. I was Department VA & R Chair for five years before holding the offices of Historian, Vice President and Department President for the 2005-2006 year.

I have served on the National Executive Committee, NW Division VA & R, NW Division National Security, NW Division Girls Nation and NW Division Membership.

I was hired in 2020 as the Department Membership clerk, which I still hold. After an 18-month opening, I was hired as the Department Secretary and am still serving our Department in this capacity.

I lived and attended K-12 school in Venango. My husband Harlan and I have two sons, two daughters-in-law and two Junior Auxiliary member granddaughters. Before our move to Lincoln in 2011, I was employed for 15 years at the Perkins County Veterans' Service Office. We enjoy living next door to our son and two granddaughters, Sawyer and Charlee.



**DEPARTMENT TREASURER –**  
**150 NW 40<sup>th</sup> Street – Lincoln NE 68528 – 402-464-1808**  
**nealatreas@gmail.com**

Currently (September 20, 2025) this position is vacant.



**DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN – VICKI COLSON**  
PO Box 61 – Paxton NE 69155 – 308-289-4836  
colson.vicki@yahoo.com

I have been an active member of the Paxton Unit 303 for 45 years. I am eligible thru my husband but also eligible thru my dad, brothers and son.

I have served as District Five president, secretary, treasurer and on several Department Committees.

I look forward to being your Department Chaplain. In my news article in “The Star” I hope to inspire you to do good things.

Please send me prayers for the Department Presidents Prayer Book. You can send them anytime, but have them submitted by May 15 to allow time for me to put the book together.

The rules for the Unit Prayer Book can be found in the Resource Section.

### **GOLD STAR – VICKI COLSON**

Since the early days of World War I, service flags have displayed a blue star for each member of a family serving in the military. As the war progressed, service members were killed in action or died shortly after from war wounds or disease. The nation wanted to honor those who had sacrificed so much for their country. Thus, the gold star was substituted and was stitched onto the banner, completely covering the blue star.

The gold star represents the honor and glory due a service member for making the supreme sacrifice for his or her country. Rather than emphasizing the tragedy and personal loss of the family, the gold star banner represents the last full measure of devotion and pride of the family in this sacrifice.

National Gold Star Mother’s and Family Recognition Day is held on the last Sunday of September. This year it is September 28. May is another month that Gold Star Mother’s are recognized. However, recognizing a Gold Star member any time is showing them our gratitude for the sacrifice they endured. A Gold Star Program is in the Resource Section that you can use to honor any Gold Star Family members. If you wish any other information, you can contact me at colson.vicki@yahoo.com.



**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – VICKI OZENBAUGH**

515 Road 18 – Ohioa NE 68416 – 402-759-0411

ala.ozenbaugh@gail.com

My story—I am a Paid Up for Life (PUFL) member of the Ohioa Franklin Unit #193, where I have been a member since 1977. Over the years I have served the Unit, County, District, State and National levels. I served as your Department President in 2022-2023. Currently I serve as Nebraska's National Executive Committee (NEC) person, Northwestern Division Children & Youth chair, Advisory Committee Chair, Girls State Chair, and the AEF Chair.

As your elected National Executive Committee (NEC) Member, I am Nebraska's representative of the national governing body of the American Legion Auxiliary with fiduciary, policy, and strategic responsibility for the organization. My term begins at the close of the 2025 National Convention and ends at the adjournment of the 2026 National Convention. The National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules govern me. This is my third year as Nebraska's NEC.

The National Executive Committee is comprised of the National President, National Vice President, the five National Division Vice Presidents, National Chaplain, National Historian, and one NEC member from each Department. The National Secretary and National Treasurer serve with all rights except the right to vote. Nebraska's Past National President Carol VanKirk is a member for life, with all rights except the right to vote.

Nebraska's NEC alternate is President Ruth Hietbrink. She will serve only in the absence of me at NEC meetings.

Per our CBSR, I will serve as the **DISTINGUISHED GUEST COMMITTEE** Chair when a national officer pays an official visit to Nebraska. The 2025-2026 National President Pam Ray is scheduled to visit Nebraska during our Department Convention, June 25-28 in Columbus.



**DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE – VICKI OZENBAUGH**  
515 Road 18 – Ohiowa NE 68416 – 402-759-0411  
ala.ozenbaugh@gail.com

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Lisa Moore and Amanda Washburn**

(see Vicki's bio in the National Executive Committee article)

The Department Advisory Committee is comprised of three Past Department Presidents (PDP), each of whom will serve on the Committee for a three-year term following the completion of their year as the Department President. As the three-year member, I serve as the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

Per our Constitution and Bylaws, the Advisory Committee is “under the direction of the Department Executive Committee, shall provide guidance to the Department Education committee for judging of the Department scholarships; shall advise the Department President and Department Leadership when consulted; and perform such other duties as the Department Executive Committee shall prescribe.”



## **SECTION 1: ALA PROGRAM CHAIRS**

**AMERICANISM – CIE KAUTH**  
205 Jackson St – Belden NE 68717 – 402-369-2266  
cie.kauth@gmail.com

Hi! I am Cie Kauth and I live in Belden, Nebraska. I belong to the Brunswick Unit #357. I have been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary family since 1988. I started as a junior member and now a senior member. I am a member through both of my beloved grandfather's. One served in the Korean War and the other served in the Vietnam War. I am very proud of them for serving our country.

Over the many years of being part of the American Legion Auxiliary, I have volunteered in many different areas for our veterans, like when we do a fundraiser from our Unit to helping out at the Norfolk Veterans Home. Also in my early 20s I have served a term as the Vice President for District 2. I am also part of the 8&40 which I belong to the Madison Co. Salon #410. I am also currently an officer for the Departmental #9 Nebraska 8&40. Thank you to those who has and are serving our country.

This year's theme for the Americanism Essay Contest is “Celebrating America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday and the Veterans who Fought for Our Freedom.” I think this essay will be fun to read what the children are going to write for this topic. For the due date for the units I am letting them decide

when they want the essays back from the schools to allow them to judge them so that they are post marked to me by March 1. This allows time for me to judge them and submit the winning essays by the deadline. I suggest that Units make a copy of their first place winners before sending me the essay.

The cover sheet and guidelines were included in the Department August/September Newsletter. They are also included in this ABC Book in the Resource Section and on the Nebraska website.

Some other Americanism programs that is out there are Star-Spangled Kid's kits and how to promote it. There are books and coloring books about the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution, like how we celebrate Constitution Day (also known as Citizenship Day) on September 17, and so much more. For more information you can visit The American Legion website ([www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)) or [www.constitutionfacts.com](http://www.constitutionfacts.com). The American Legion Auxiliary website ([Amerianism@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Amerianism@ALAforVeterans.org)) has a lot about the Flag, like the history, etiquette, and the understanding on the importance on what the flag means to our country. Wreaths Across America has a curriculum for all ages and you can find more information on the [Amerianism@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Amerianism@ALAforVeterans.org).

I hope this helps our Units with some helpful tips for showing and teaching our children about Americanism.



**AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND (AEF) – VICKI OZENBAUGH**  
515 Road 18 – Ohiowa NE 68416 – 402-759-0411  
[ala.ozenbaugh@gail.com](mailto:ala.ozenbaugh@gail.com)

(see Vicki's bio in the National Executive Committee article)

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AEF**

The purpose of the AEF is members helping members. This is accomplished by providing knowledge about the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and raising funds.

## **THE AEF PROGRAM**

1. The AEF is a national grant assistance program.
2. It provide assistance to eligible members of ALA up to \$3,000 as the result of an act of nature (disaster) or other personal crisis (hardship).
  - DISASTER grants may be awarded damage to the interior/exterior of the vital livable portion of the member's primary structure, contents and/or for essential emergency expenses after the disaster based on proper documentation provided.

- Hardship funds may only be awarded for over/past due primary shelter expenses, essential household utilities (electric, gas and/or water/sewer) and/or loss of employment income based on proper documentation provided.
3. As an ALA member, your dues must be current and you have maintained annual membership for three consecutive years (the current year in which the application is submitted and immediate past two years).
    - Applicants who are new or rejoining ALA members must have maintained continuous membership for at least 36 consecutive months, based on their initial or rejoin date by the ALA National Headquarters.
    - Additionally, you cannot have been awarded an AEF grant (disaster or hardship) in the previous twelve months.
  4. Applications are completed on-line. An applicant DOES NOT apply through their Department Headquarters.
    - Visit [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org). Go to the Committee tab and select AEF.
    - On the left-hand side under “AEF Key Resources” you select AEF Hardship Assistance Application or AEF Disaster Assistance Application.

## **RAISING FUNDS**

1. Consider having a special fundraising event just for AEF.
  - Special fundraising will take place at District Fall Roundups, Mid-Year, and District Conventions.
2. The Department President’s Project is the AEF. Units please make a donation to President Ruth’s project. There is a line on the ALA General Donations sheet or you can send donations anytime, earmarking your check for President’s Project AEF.
3. Individual members may donate to the AEF.
  - Individual member donations are credited to your Unit.
    - You may donate on-line from the AEF Committee page on [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org).
4. All donations should be submitted prior to May 31, 2026, to be credited for the 2025-2026 year.

## **GOALS FOR NEBRASKA**

Nebraska AEF donations (President’s Project, special fundraising, individual donations, etc.) totals over \$12,000 for the 2025-2026 year. This would cover four AEF grants at the maximum amount of \$3,000 per grant. It would be a 36 percent increase from last year’s donation of \$8,898.87. Nebraska can do it!

100 percent participation from Nebraska’s 291 Units. Any amount will help.

Special award (provided by this AEF Chair) for the Unit that donates the most.

100 percent of End-of-Year reporting for AEF. What should be included in your Unit report?

- How your Unit shared information about the AEF at your meetings.
- How your Unit raised funds for the AEF.
- How your Unit promoted the AEF program (events, flyers, newsletters, social media).
- How many members donated directly to ALA National Headquarters and/or through your Unit.
- And, of course, PICTURES of your activities for AEF

### **REMEMBER – AEF IS MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS**



### **CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM – JULIE SCHNITZLER**

6355 N Winchester Ave – Kenesaw NE 68956 – 308-440-9218  
 schnitzlerjulie@gmail.com

I am Julie Schnitzler from Kenesaw, NE. I served in the United States Army Reserves for 26.5 years and was deployed during Operation Enduring Freedom. I have been an American Legion member for 25 years in Gibbon Post #310 and recently joined American Legion Auxiliary Unit #52 in Kearney. I am eligible through my late Uncle Jim Armbruster, a Vietnam Veteran. I have four children and two granddaughters.

I have served in the American Legion in leadership positions at various levels:

Local: Sergeant of Arms and Commander

District: Commander and Membership Chair

Department: Publication Chair and Children & Youth committee

National: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Communication and Media.

In the Legion Auxiliary, I am currently Chair of Children & Youth.

I am a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Lowell. I have served as a Public-School educator for 36 years in a variety of roles, including coach, high school English teacher, Alternative School teacher, Gibbon High School Principal, Howard Elementary Principal in Grand Island and just retired from the Grand Island Public Schools as the Early Childhood Education Coordinator. I enjoy my family, quilting, officiating high school volleyball and being an Adjunct Professor for Wayne State College.

The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.

Below are some special dates/events that could be hosted by the Legion family in your community. You are welcome to call or email if you'd like to "think aloud" about the possibilities or if you'd like to invite me to your event. Two specific events that I would personally encourage:

1) perform the Military Child Table ceremony and 2 ) nominate youth for either or both of the Youth Hero Award and the Good Deed Award. Both of these actions are on the end of the year report.

Let's have over 50 units perform the Military Child Table ceremony and 10+ youth nominated for the Youth Hero/Good Deeds.

- Perform the Military Child Table ceremony at a unit meeting or in your community.
- Contact your local news sources (newspaper, community television, community websites, and social media accounts) and town council with an offer to give a presentation about you and your unit's work for veterans and military children.
- Host a dinner, game night, or community fair, etc., that will bring military and non-military families together.
- Wear purple April 15 in honor of Purple Up! Day for Military Kids.
- Nominate students for the Good Deed/Youth Hero awards using the online form
- More information: <https://member.legion-aux.org/youth-hero-good-deed-awards>



**COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE – NANCY NIEMANN**

3100 Trudy Ann Cir – Raymond NE 68428 – 402-417-8792  
[niemann05@gmail.com](mailto:niemann05@gmail.com)

This year I, Nancy K Niemann, will be serving as Community Service Chair. I am a 53-year member of Weston Auxiliary Unit 308 being eligible through my father, Arnold Machacek, who served in the Army during the Korean War. My mother, Rose Machacek, was a Gold Star Sister to her brother, Charles Snitily, who died in World War II. Those two connections are my personal reasons for being an auxiliary member, as well as “to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion.” I live by Raymond (just north of Lincoln) with my husband, Don, and nearby family of two sons, one daughter, one son-in-law, one daughter-in-law, two granddaughters and one grandson. I work for The City of Lincoln Aging Partners and the Village of Raymond. I enjoy working with all of you and growing with my Legion Family!

The three big pushes for community service are on the following days:

9/11 National Day of Service, September 11, 2025  
Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service, January 19, 2026  
American Legion Family Day, April 25, 2026

Be sure to check on the national website for great key resources help mobilize community support, partner with organizations and how to participate in those special days.

Please join the Community Service Facebook page at ALA Community Service!

There are three awards available:

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Community Service program (per division)  
Unit Award: Best Promotion of American Legion Family Day (one per division)  
Department Award: Best Department Community Service Program (per division)

Please let me know if you have any questions, comments or suggestions!!



**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS – GAYLA SCHMID**  
303 Esplanade Street – Bellwood NE 68624 – 402-367-7738  
gaylaschmid@gmail.com

I am Gayla Schmid, and I have been a member for 48 years. I live in Bellwood, NE and am a member of Unit 327 LaVern Schmit Bellwood. I am eligible for my membership through my husband Kenneth Schmid, a Viet Nam Veteran. I am a Paid-Up For Life Member (PUFL) for over 40 years, and I have served the Auxiliary for many years on the Unit, County, District, State and National Level, serving as your Department President in 2007-2008.

In addition to my commitment to the American Legion Family, I am an active member of St. Peters Catholic Church taking care of all the candles and linens. I am also an active member of Catholic Daughter of Court San Salvador #576 and a Seven Sister of that Court.

As your Constitution and Bylaws Chairman, I am responsible for our Departments Governing Documents and Standing Rules and to ensure that our documents follow the National Constitution and Bylaw and Standing Rules, which all District, County and Units must also follow.



**COUNTY GOVERNMENT DAY – TAMMIE RUNIONS**  
PO Box 253 – Minden NE 68959 – 308-440-1476  
tammierunions@gmail.com

This program was started to give governmental instruction to all high school students with a goal to create an informed citizen that would become active in the area of government which most closely affects the everyday life of the individual. The County Government program expands the learning experience to all high school students and brings the process down to

the local level. Thus the creation of the corporation known as “Cornhusker Boys’ and Girls’ County Government, Inc.” on November 17, 1947.

General guidelines:

- Have a planning committee (District and County Commanders, District and County ALA Presidents, Post Commanders, Unit ALA Presidents, county courthouse representative, and if possible, a representative from each school in the county).
- Contact all involved with the date and time.
- Give the students an opportunity to critique the program. These will be helpful when planning the next year’s event.
- Publicize your activities.
- Keep good records for planning your next year’s program as well as completing your End-Of-Year Report.



### **EDUCATION – CINDY MOORE**

1271 – 260<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Spirit Lake IA 51360 – 402-672-2040  
GretnaALA216@gmail.com

This is my first year serving as the Education Department Chair. I have served as my unit's education chair as well as several other chairs. I have been a member of the Leonard Conley American Legion Auxiliary Unit 216 in Gretna, NE for 49 years. I am a member under my father, Ronald Iske, who was in the Air Force in Korea.

I am currently fulfilling my second term as Historian after two years of Unit President. In 2023, I was named Department of Nebraska Unit Member of the Year, received the National President's Award for Excellence, awarded Overall Public Relations in the Northwestern Division, and received a national membership recruitment award.

I recently moved to Spirit Lake, IA; however, I am still very dedicated to be of service to my local Unit as well as the Department of Nebraska.

The Resource Section has information about the Nebraska and National Scholarships.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Education Committee is to promote quality education for children—especially for military children—and adults. *Standing Rule #6, Mission Outreach Programs*

- Promote quality education for children, especially for military children, and adults
- Encourage schools to invite veterans to speak in their classrooms
- Support and promote the Education Program and scholarship opportunities of The American Legion Family

- Provide scholarships for students who desire a college education
- Support legislation that establishes new scholarship opportunities

### **Deadlines/Important Dates**

- Fall 2026 – Participate in Give 10 to Education
- November 17-21, 2025 – American Education Week
- March 1, 2026 – Deadline for National Scholarships
- March 1, 2026 – Deadline for Dept. Scholarships applications to Units for judging
- March 15, 2026 – Deadline for Units to submit Scholarship applications to Dept. for judging
- April 15, 2026 – Purple Up! Day for Military Children
- May 4-8, 2026 – Teacher Appreciation Week

**[member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Education/Get-Involved-Education](http://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Education/Get-Involved-Education)**



### **FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN – KAREN BRINK**

7959 S 154<sup>th</sup> St – Omaha NE 68138 – 402-740-1455  
brinkkaren63@gmail.com

I became a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 374 Millard, NE through my father who served in the Army during the Korean War.

The purpose of the Finance Committee is to oversee the general financial policy of the American Legion Auxiliary and to prepare and monitor the annual budget and its expenditures.

It is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to ensure that proper internal controls are designed, implemented and maintained. An adequate budget ensures there will be funds earmarked for all purposes necessary to participate in the various Auxiliary programs throughout the year. We rely on member dues to cover our expenses. The finance committee will discuss various ways to raise additional funds in order to lower the dependence on dues and/or reserves alone to meet our obligations.

The Finance committee will make recommendations to the governing body and that body is responsible for the actual policy decision.

The members are Donna Hatfield and Eileen Gentrup, and we rely on our Finance Advisor, Julie Totten.



**GIRLS STATE – VICKI OZENBAUGH**  
515 Road 18 – Ohiowa NE 68416 – 402-759-0411  
ala.ozenbaugh@gmail.com

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice Vicki Colson – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Elsa Knight**

**Kathy Mazur, Secretary**  
12932 Meadow Ridge Road – Omaha, NE 68138  
Cell: 402-659-6689 Email: negirlsstate@outlook.com

(see Vicki Ozenbaugh's bio under NEC)

## **WHAT IS GIRLS STATE?**

Girls State is a week-long program of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) where the citizens learn about the political process of our state by electing officials for all levels of government (city, county, state) and actively run a mock government. The participants are assigned to mock cities and counties. The non-partisan program includes the "Federalist Party" and the "Nationalist Party."

The citizens are selected and sponsored by ALA units. Your candidate should be interested in government and current events, and show strong leadership abilities. With the assistance of dedicated ALA volunteers, the week is filled with many learning opportunities in non-partisan governmental, patriotic, and civic objectives. There is always time for fun. The end result of the week is the formation of long-term friendships.

The Cornhusker Girls State program is offered to girls who have completed their Junior year of high school and will be entering into their Senior year. Girls from public, parochial, and home-school are eligible. For 2026 it will be **May 31-June 6**.

Girls State is an Auxiliary sponsored program; however, it has its own Constitution and Bylaws. We have our own chairs, advisory, secretary, and treasurer. Units will receive a packet of information and forms that will need to be completed and returned to Department Headquarters by March 1, 2026.

As the year progresses, additional information will be available via Department Newsletters and the Cornhusker Girls State website.

<http://www.girlsstate.net/Nebraska/wp/>

**Girls State Advisory Committee**  
**Renee VanWinkle, Chair**  
**2063 9<sup>th</sup> Ave – Farwell NE 68838**  
**Cell: 308-750-3591 Email: momrenee@hotmail.com**

**Committee Members - Nicole Vance, Debra Albers, Sara Mueller & Vacant Position**



### **JUNIOR ACTIVITIES – KAYLYNN NOVAK**

1006 Dakota St – Emerson NE 68733 – 402-369-0487  
lnovakklin@gmail.com

Hello! I am KayLynn Novak, a PUFL (Paid Up For Life) Member of the Winside Unit #252 since 2006. I am also beginning my second year as a college student at Northeast Community College in Norfolk, majoring in Nursing. In addition to Junior Activities, I am currently serving as District 3 Chaplain and Unit #252 Secretary. My ALA eligibility comes from my grandfather, Robert G. Neel, a United States Marine Corp veteran.

### **2025-2026 Honorary Junior President**

The 2025-2026 Honorary Department Junior President is Erica Fuchs. She is a freshman at Arlington Public Schools where she is involved in softball, basketball, cheer, FFA, band, and student council.

### **Erica's Presidents Project**

Quilting and comforting for our veterans valor - raising money for groups across Nebraska that make quilts of valor in hopes that they can make more to give to our veterans.

**Contact:** nebralajr.president2526@gmail.com

### **Department Junior Convention**

**April 26, 2026**

**Arlington VFW in Arlington, NE**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Junior Activities Committee is to inspire active participation in members aged 17 and under so they become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood. Standing Rule 6, National Committees – Mission Outreach

- To inspire active participation in members age 17 and under so that they will become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood.
- To build the Junior Activities program one member at a time by giving Junior members a voice and an opportunity to participate.
- To promote and encourage Junior participation in the Patch Program in order to teach them about the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.
- To make Junior meetings fun and informative.

### **Recognizing our Junior Members**

A new award for Juniors will be available during the 2025-2026 ALA year: the Rising Star Junior Award. It will recognize our Juniors who are too young to qualify for Junior Member of the Year for scholarships, but they are still out there working the American Legion Auxiliary's mission.

### **Fundraising Focus**

The Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund is an umbrella that supports three separate scholarship opportunities for participants in American Legion Auxiliary programs. One is for American Legion Auxiliary Junior members, another for the Junior Members of the Year, and one is for participants in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program. The Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund is the fundraising focus for this administrative year.

### **For more information, visit**

[www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships/spirit-of-youth](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships/spirit-of-youth)

**To donate, text "SPIRIT" to 1-844-940-3450**



### **LEADERSHIP – TINA NELSON**

503 N Brown Ave – Clay Center NE 68933 – 402-469-3367  
[trnelson81602@gmail.com](mailto:trnelson81602@gmail.com)

I am Tina Nelson, a proud PUFL (Paid Up For Life) Member of the Clay Center (Mills-Schroder) Unit #87 since 2015. I am serving my second term as Department Leadership Chair. I am eligible through my husband Don's service in the Navy Seabees, but I also honor both of my grandfathers' service in the Army.

I am looking forward to judging Unit Member of the Year submissions this Year. I hope to get a submission from each unit; but as I looked at potential submissions from my own unit last year, I realized that there are probably many units that are in a similar position. A member that you would consider may have served in a position higher than Unit President; therefore, they are not eligible for Unit Member of the Year.

So this year I am looking for submissions to my "Step Up" award. This is for a member that has either been a mentor to you or your unit or stepped up to a higher office at an accelerated rate and was missed when they were eligible for Unit Member of the Year. Complete details on how to submit a member will be provided in a Department Newsletter.

For more information, log on to:

**[member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Leadership/Get-Involved-Leadership](http://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Leadership/Get-Involved-Leadership)**

Please reach out if you would like me to attend a meeting: Unit, County or District. My favorite travel is for Legion Family events. I hope to eventually make it to every Post in our beautiful state.



### **LEGISLATIVE – LOREE HENDRICKSON**

511 Rd 3 Unit 1 – Shickley NE 68436 – 402-759-6016  
loreeh@hotmail.com

Hello Members of the American Legion Auxiliary! My name is Loree Hendrickson, and I am honored to serve as the Department of Nebraska's Legislative Chair for the coming year. I am a member of American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Unit #164 in Shickley, Nebraska. My eligibility is through my father, A. LeeRoy Hendrickson, who served in Korea with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1950-52. He loved being a member of the American Legion and encouraged our family to always respect America and her veterans.

### **WHAT IS THE ALA LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM, AND WHY DO WE HAVE IT?**

In Nebraska and in Washington, D.C., ALA members work to keep veterans' issues in front of legislators, strengthening our mission to serve veterans, servicemembers, and their families. One voice may not make a difference on its own, but by joining together, ALA members can make a difference when we advocate for America's veterans.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

The ALA supports the public policy positions of The American Legion. The Legion publishes and disseminates material to communicate said positions. These materials are available at the Legion's Legislative Center ([www.legion.org/legislative](http://www.legion.org/legislative)). Some legislative issues which are priorities for The American Legion Family include:

#### **1. ACCELERATE IMPROVEMENTS IN MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE.**

- Increased funding for new and renovated barracks and family housing while safeguarding tenants' rights for those who reside in privatized family housing.
- Expanded financial assistance to servicemembers for child-care facilities and military construction authority for new child development centers.
- Full funding for quality-of-life programs, such as military commissaries and exchanges, educational benefits, and spousal employment programs.

#### **2. ACCELERATE MODERNIZATION OF AMERICAN MILITARY CAPABILITIES.**

- Increased funding for defense-related Research & Development initiatives to accelerate fielding capabilities in areas such as artificial intelligence.
- Prioritized funding for increasing ship-building capacity through construction of additional shipyards and associated work force trade schools.

### 3. **PROVIDE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR OUR POW/MIA SERVICEMEMBERS.**

- Continued funding and allocation of resource requirements to the Defense Department POW/MIA Accounting Agency.
- Funding for POW/MIA Awareness Programs in elementary and middle schools.

ALA members can also participate in the annual Legislative Day at the Nebraska State Capitol in February. On the federal level, ALA members can attend the Washington Conference from February 28 – March 4, 2026, at the Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU REPORT?**

### **LEGISLATIVE REPORTING:**

**Ongoing Reports:** Celebrate the program work of your Unit by sharing stories and photos throughout the year.

**Year-End Reports:** Each Unit should submit a report detailing the Unit's accomplishments and/or activities. Be specific with details since what you share may be useful to others.

**Deadline:** **TO DEPARTMENT CHAIR BY APRIL 20, 2026**

### **LEGISLATIVE AWARD:**

**Unit Award:**

**MOST OUTSTANDING UNIT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

**Citation Presented To:**

One Unit Legislative Chair who best demonstrates what the Unit did to advocate for America's veterans during the year.

**Materials & Guidelines:**

Narrative not to exceed 500 words, telling the story of legislative activism and how it made a difference in the lives of veterans and their families. Pictures and examples such as newspaper articles are encouraged.

**Deadline:**

**SUBMIT ONLINE TO NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BY 4:00 P.M. C.D.T. ON JUNE 1, 2026**



**MEMBERSHIP – DEBRA ALBERS**  
1759 Road 5200 – Davenport NE 68335 – 402-364-3162  
dalbers727@gmail.com

## **CELEBRATE AND PARTY – 2026 IS THE BIRTHDAY OF THE USA**

I am a new and proud PUFL (Paid Up For Life) member of the American Legion Auxiliary. My membership celebrates the Service of my father who was a WW II Veteran. I have been a member for 52 years. I am married to Tregan Albers, a Sons of American Legion Member. My two sons, grandsons and granddaughters are all members of the Legion Family.

Our National President's theme for the year "Mission Driven Family Focused" fits with retaining, renewing, and recruiting members. Members are interested in the Mission of the organization. Get everyone involved in working the programs of the organization. Focusing on the fact that everyone in the family can be involved with our mission is a great selling point for our organization.

I am always encouraging members to remember the reason she or he became a member and develop an Elevator speech. Why did you become a member? I want to remind every member to become a membership chairman. **Ask every member of your unit to ask one person to become a member of the Legion Family. Also a great way to involve members who do not get out is to ask them to call and remind current members when dues need to be paid.**

## **UNIT GOALS**

There was a mistake in the original way the Unit Goals were distributed. The corrected membership goals were sent in the August Newsletter. Be sure to check those. Nebraska's Department Goal is 14,284 members, which is a 1% increase in our membership from 2024-2025.

## **RENEWAL NOTICES**

Please do not hold memberships. Transmit dues in a timely way once the membership has been paid. Members expect to be on the roll once they pay their dues. Membership renewals will be mailed to members from the National Office on September 15, 2025. Members will receive a notice if their dues have not reached National by September 9.

## **RECOGNITION**

100% Units will be recognized on the Nebraska American Legion Facebook Page.

## **Unit Awards**

There will be a Drawing for the following:

**25% Award** by SAL Birthday, September 15, 2025 – two \$25 awards

**60% Awards** by ALA Birthday, November 10, 2025 – one \$60 award

**85% Award** by TAL Birthday, March 15, 2026 – one \$85 award

(Our Department needs to reach this Goal to be considered  
for the Merit Medallion Award at National)

**100% Award** by President Ruthie's Birthday, June 10, 2026 – two \$100 awards



### **MUSIC – JEAN VACKINER**

35878 Boiling Springs Road – Cody NE 69211 – 402-376-4648  
vackiner@yahoo.com

Hello again! My name is Jean Vackiner. I am a 27 year member of the American Legion Auxiliary. I am eligible through my late father, Eugene H Kurpgeweit of Ewing NE, Army Infantry Veteran from Korea. I am a PUFL member of Cody Unit 319. I have held Unit President for 26 of my 27 years. I am the 2025-2027 District One President. I am also a member of 8 and 40 de Nebraska #9 Salon 410.

I am an RN/Case Manager for Aseracare Hospice. I am mother of three sons and grandmother of four.

I understand that Music is not one of the core committees of the American Legion Auxiliary. I also cannot imagine our organization without it – could you?

I do not have any concrete goals for this year's programs. I only wish to encourage you to step up to keep our country's musical history alive for our elders and our youth. Please, do not whitewash our history! The sadness of our war songs, our slavery songs, our funeral dirges are just as important as our rousing patriotic tunes. If you ever need help finding resources, please contact me!

I promise to do my best to fill this honorable role. And, as always KEEP SINGING!



### **NATIONAL SECURITY – AMANDA WASHBURN**

5230 N 148<sup>th</sup> Street – Lincoln NE 68527 – 402-480-1472  
amandafaye33@gmail.com

My name is Amanda Washburn, and I am the VA&R Chair this year. I am eligible for membership in the ALA through the service of both of my grandfathers, Merle Riensche and Don Washburn, during World War II. I am a 32-year member of Bickel-Nelson Unit 360 in Cook, NE.

I have held positions at both the Junior Auxiliary level and as a Senior member. I was honored to be elected as the Department Junior President in 2009, National Junior Historian in 2012, and the National Junior President in 2013. I have been District President, Department Historian, Department Vice President, and just finished a year as Department President. At the National level, I have been a member of the Girls Nation Committee, Junior Activities Committee, Education Committee, VA&R Committee, Membership Committee, and Leadership Committee.

I live in Prairie Home and am a member of American Lutheran Church in Ashland, NE. I work as the Executive Assistant for the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary. In my free time, I help my parents, Doug and Barb Washburn, on their farm and spend time with my friends and family.

### **National Security Get Involved Statements**

- Support active-duty military families by working with an installation Family Readiness Group (FRG).
- Raise awareness of POW/MIAs and the work being performed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in the search for missing personnel.
- Remember to support those families whose service members made the ultimate sacrifice.
- Support and enhance American Legion Family and partner initiatives that strive to improve the Quality of Life (QoL) of our servicemembers and their families through the Base Assessment and Servicemember Experience (BASE) Program.

### **Outside Partnerships**

- Armed Services YMCA food pantries
- Blue Star Families
- USO
- Quilts of Valor Foundation
- Taking Care of Our People (defense.gov)

### **Reporting and Awards**

- Year-end reports — Reports are due to the Department Chairmen by April 20, 2026
- Department and Unit Award Nomination Form Completed and Submitted: June 1.
- Salute to Servicemembers Award Deadline: June 1.

**More information can be found on the national website**

**<https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/National-Security/Get-Involved-National-Security>**



### **PARLIAMENTARIAN – LYNNE WILD**

1510 N 71<sup>st</sup> Street – Lincoln NE 68505 – 402-525-5012

kathryn.wild123@gmail.com

My involvement with the American Legion Auxiliary began when I worked in the office at the 1957 “Cornhusker” Girls State session. I also worked at Department Headquarters where the offices were on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of the State Capitol Building at 15<sup>th</sup> and J Streets. It was a sight to look out the east windows and see the Lincoln VA Medical Center on South 70<sup>th</sup> Street.

I joined Lincoln Unit No. 3 with payment of 1961 dues through the military service of my brother during World War II and the Korean Conflict. After my marriage to Roger L. Wild, I was also eligible through his service in the U.S. Navy during the Korean Conflict.

My Auxiliary service spans the Unit, County, District, Department and National organizations in various ways. I was appointed Department Secretary-Treasurer in 1971 when the former officer resigned mid-term. My appointment was reaffirmed annually for the next 21.5 years. During many of those years I also served as Girls State Secretary and Editor of “The Star” publication. I served as Department Historian, Department Vice President and was elected Department President for the 2003-2004 term.

On the National level, I’ve been National Vice President of the Northwestern Division 2010-2011; National Executive Committeewoman; Education Chairman; Vice Chairman of the Girls State, Community Service, Legislative, History, Constitution & Bylaws, and Leadership Committees; Northwestern Division Chairman of Membership and Americanism; and served on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee for 3 years. My biggest joy was being a part of the Girl Nation staff for 8 years.

As Parliamentarian for the 2025-2026 year, I’m available to assist the Department President as she conducts the Mid-Year Conference and Department Convention Executive Committee meetings and offer advice when asked at other times throughout the year. Our parliamentary authority is Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised (current edition) in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with applicable state statutes, the National governing documents of the American Legion Auxiliary, and the constitution, bylaws and standing rules adopted by the Department of Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary.



### **PAST PRESIDENT’S PARLEY – LISA MOORE**

318 N Railroad – Wilber NE 68465 – 402-821-7077

moore1986@hotmail.com

The purpose of the Past Presidents Parley is to provide assistance and leadership within the American Legion Auxiliary. Any past president at any level in the ALA is eligible to be a part of a PPP where they can mentor other members.



## **POPPY – JUSTINA BIRKEL**

PO Box 64 – North Loup NE 68859 – 402-389-0537  
jbirkel.ala@gmail.com

My name is Justina Birkel, and I am a member of North Loup Unit#285. I became a Junior member at the age of 5 in 1985 with the Springview Unit #98. I was a Junior member for 13 years. Then in 2006 I rejoined as a Senior member in the Springview Unit #98 and was a member there until I transferred to North Loup Unit #285 in 2017. I was a Junior member for 13 years and have been a Senior member for 20 years. I am eligible through my grandfather Harley Jack Snyder. He served in the Korean War. I am also North Loup Unit #285 Unit President and just finished with my 2 year term as District 6 President.

I am excited to be the 2025-2026 Department Poppy Chair. We are going to help President Ruth by Stirring Up Members with the Poppy Program. At the post DEC meeting Ruth gave each program “recipe” cards. Which are from the deck of cards that were able to be purchased last year. We already have all of the ingredients available to us in the recipe to create a successful Poppy program. Here are some ideas to do that.

### **Ingredients (Resources)**

- Challenge Deck of Cards
- Poppy Program guide
- National Website Program Engagement Plan <https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Poppy/Get-Involved-Poppy>
- Poppy Coloring books and Bookmarks
- American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program Facebook page.
- Members ready to promote the Poppy program
- Poppies and donation cans

### **Recipes (Ideas to Promote)**

- Promote the ALA’s Poppy Program
  - Wear a poppy when you are at public events to promote conversation and interest among non-members. Be prepared to explain the significance of the poppy.
  - Promote the Poppy Poster Contest. It is not too early to get the information out to schools or youth groups that may participate. I created an information flyer that came out in the September newsletter or is available on the Nebraska website [www.nebraskalegionaux.net](http://www.nebraskalegionaux.net) under the Poppy tab. Do not forget the cover sheet. The cover sheet is available in this ABC book or on the Nebraska or National website under the Poppy tab.

- Participate in the District's Poppy Centerpiece Contest. Remember to use President Ruth's theme Stirring Up Members.
- Contact local businesses for permission to distribute poppies on their premises.
- Educate your Junior members and young SAL members of the importance of the poppy and let them help you promote the poppy. Kids are harder to say no to than adults!
  - Find Juniors and young SAL members willing and able to promote the poppy.
  - Train them to distribute poppies. Supply them with poppies and cans for donations.
  - Promote the Little Miss Poppy Contest to Juniors in your unit. Each unit can have its own criteria but if wanting to be considered for the National contest the unit must follow the National requirements.
  - Print Poppy Coloring Books and poppy bookmarks to handout.
  - Help Juniors with Poppy Craft projects to take to Junior Conference in Arlington
- Celebrate National Poppy Day the Friday before Memorial Day. May 22, 2026
  - Wear a red poppy all day and tell everyone why.
  - Organize a poppy distribution
  - Use social media to promote National Poppy Day
  - Place a poppy wreath at a memorial in your community. Consider reciting "In Flanders Fields" or ways to include your unit members.

### **Finished Product**

- Make sure you send me pictures of your Poppy events throughout the year.
- Send your reports to Department. Please tell me everything you did to promote the Poppy Program.
- If you have a Little Miss Poppy Contest please let me know what your criteria is or if you follow the National requirements.
- Remember that Poppy Donations can only be used for certain things. Make sure you follow the rules on this. Here are a few reminders on what these funds can and cannot be used for.

Poppy Funds can be used for:

- Honor Flights for Veterans and Guardians
- ASYMCA Food Pantries
- Grocery or gas cards for veterans in need
- Items of necessity for homeless veterans or hospitalized servicemembers
- Poppy kits or supplies for poppy distribution

Poppy Funds cannot be used for:

- Investments, including Certificates of Deposits
- Deceased Veterans or families of deceased veterans
- ALA Girls State or ALA Girls Nation Fees
- Commercial property improvements that will also be used by non-veterans

### **Deadlines/Important Dates**

- Poppy Centerpieces to your District Convention using President Ruth's theme
- Unit Poppy Poster winners are due to me by April 1, 2026, with Cover Sheet included
- Report to Department before April 20, 2026, on what great things you did to promote the Poppy Program.



### **PUBLIC RELATIONS – MERI HIETBRINK**

4816 Kingsley St – Lincoln NE 68524 – 402-239-3171  
mhietbrink6@gmail.com

I have the honor of being the 2025-2026 Public Relations Committee Chairperson this year. I have been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) since 1997. I belong to Unit #140 in Sterling, Nebraska as my grandfather, Paul Straube, served in World War II. My grandmother Marvene joined the ALA along with her daughters Debra, Ruth, and Velda. She also made sure to start my membership after I was born. My mother, Ruth, is this year's President. With her and my family's guidance I have had amazing support being an active member in my community and work to serve our service members through my ALA unit and current career.

As someone who has a marketing degree I know first-hand how powerful good public relations can be for a brand. Without news articles, community outreach events, public speeches and so many other items people would have no idea what the ALA is and what we stand for. Each and every member is responsible for promoting our organization in order to continue to see it thrive and grow. We are nothing without our members and it is important that we all work together to ensure that this organization can continue the fight for our service members. I challenge each unit to be active in getting publicity out there about the great things happening in your area. This is the only way we can tell people who we are, what we do and why it matters.

#### **Public Relations Ideas:**

- Wear ALA branded items (Clothing, Accessories, Etc.) - These can be great conversation starters!
- Maintain a social media account(s) for departments, divisions, and units - Personal or Unit social media can be a powerful tool to share information and increase event turnout. Consistent content posting is needed for this to be useful.
- Build Relations with local media - Publish articles in newspapers or even have your own local newsletter available for members to share.
- Host charitable events, supply drives, card parties, etc. to get members involved and invite the community to participate.
- Give speeches and presentations on relevant topics such as flag etiquette, veterans day presentations, meaning of the poppy, etc.

Many resources, such as the Branding Guide and the PR Toolkit, are available for you on the national website.

### **Unit Publicity Book:**

This book will NOT be submitted to National as there is no contest for it; however I will give out awards for the top three unit submissions at the department convention. The guidelines are in the Resource Section.

### **National Public Relations Committee Awards:**

All submissions must be in to the committee chair by May 1st in order to allow time for review and submission to Nationals.

#### **Unit Award: ALA Mission Focused Social Media Account**

- Presented to units with active social media accounts
  - One unit per department
  - Must have a maintained account focused on the mission of the ALA
  - Must conform to ALA Branding Guide
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Document with screenshots/photos of social media postings
  - Social media account URL
- All unit entries must be submitted via electronic form by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.

#### **Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Public Relations Program (per division)**

- One unit in each division (5) that earns media placements in their community
  - Materials and guidelines:
- Media placements/coverage highlighting ALA mission delivery.
- All unit entries must be submitted via electronic form by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.

#### **Department Award: Best Department Public Relations (per division)**

- One department in each division (5) to departments that exhibit outstanding use of public relations.
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Articles, newsletters, pictures of displays, ALA events, speeches, website address, social media activity, etc.
  - Narrative not to exceed 500 words
- All entries must be submitted via electronic form by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.



**SERVICE TO VETERANS – MARIA ATTERBERRY**  
704 Rochelle Street – Elwood NE 68937 – 308-325-2863  
m\_atterberry@hotmail.com

My name is Maria Atterberry, and I am the Service to Veterans Chairman for 2025-2026. This is my second year for this assignment, and I have enjoyed every minute! I have been a member of Elwood Unit #290 for 21 years. I have served at the Unit level, District level and State level. I am currently our Unit President and District #9 Secretary/Treasurer. We have 14 of my family members in our Unit!

What is the Service to Veterans Program?

This program provides service to veterans, active service members as well as their families. Any projects or activity done outside a VAMC should be recorded for End of Year Reporting to Department. As your Service to Veterans chairman, I fill in the assignment chart for tray favors and centerpieces for VAMC facilities in Nebraska. I would love for you to give me a call and sign up your Unit! An informational page is included in the Resource Section with details.

A few things to remember when making your tray favors & centerpieces. Do not use anything with food or sharp objects. Do not use items from nature like real leaves, nuts, etc. Donations should be sent or delivered at least two weeks before assigned month. Finally, please leave contact information with your items donated to all facilities. Information should include your Unit name and Unit number, contact person and phone number. Sometimes the facility contact needs to be in contact with the Auxiliary Unit.

Thank you for volunteering!



**THE STAR – LORENE BARTOS**  
7441 San Mateo Lane – Lincoln NE 68516 – 402-310-3481 C  
lb32906@windstream.net or Lbartos1@unl.edu

Hi! I'm Lorene Bartos, Editor of *THE STAR*.

I am a 68-year member of St. Edward Unit 226. I belong to help support veterans and youth programs – and also to honor my father and husband, both of whom served our country in the Army.

*THE STAR* is the publication of the Nebraska ALA. It is published six times a year. *THE STAR* is the pull-out center fold of the *Nebraska Legionnaire*. When the paper comes, be sure to pull out *THE STAR*. You will then have all the information handy.

Any Legion Family member may submit articles and pictures for inclusion in the paper. All issues will include articles from the Department President, Vice President, Historian, Chaplain, Secretary, Membership Chair, and Music Chair. It will also include Thank-you's, In Memoriam, Service to Vets, and a Calendar.

Guidelines to follow:

- Any member may submit an article or pictures for *THE STAR*.
- Articles are due to the editor by the **10<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication date**
- All levels are encouraged to submit (Unit, County, and District).
- Original pictures only!! (Copies of pictures in a newspaper cannot be used.)
- Get permission to publish the pictures from those in the pictures.
- Adhere to patient/resident privacy for those in any facility.

Any questions? Contact Lorene Bartos, Editor, at 402-310-3481.

Let's share what is happening in our American Legion Family!



### **VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION – AMANDA WASHBURN**

5230 N 148<sup>th</sup> Street – Lincoln NE 68527 – 402-480-1472

amandafaye33@gmail.com

(see Amanda's bio information under National Security)

### **Monetary Donations to Facilities**

Units, Districts, and members - When you are preparing to make a monetary donation to any of our VA Medical Centers or Veterans Homes, please remember to send your donations to the Department Office. The donations will be recorded to the appropriate facility and the funds will be available to the facility. We are trying to maintain an accurate money trail from your Unit/District/Members to the event/project.

### **Special Scheduled Dates**

Each year the ALA Department of Nebraska has scheduled VA&R events that your Units, Districts, and members donate the funding to. These are Veterans Dollar Day, Gifts for Yanks, and Gift Shops. It is great to see new faces attend, and it will warm your heart to see how our beloved Veterans appreciate our gift of money and especially our time and listening ear. Be sure to wear the brand and arrive at least 30 minutes before the events begin. The Nebraska American Legion Family VA & R Schedule of Events is on the website.

### **VA&R Get Involved Statements**

- Support the therapeutic rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts, and hobbies.
- Support veteran caregivers, family members, and survivors.

- Volunteer at local VA facilities, including state VA facilities in your area.
- Collaborate with organizations that support veterans and their families, such as Wreaths Across America, Honor Flight Inc., and the Military and Veteran Caregiver Network.
- Look in your community for opportunities to support veterans, their caregivers, their families, and their survivors.
- Support The American Legion's Be the One mission.

### **Outside Partnerships**

- Wreaths Across America
- Honor Flight Inc
- Military and Veteran Caregiver Network
- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival
- Center for Development and Community Engagement

### **Reporting and Awards**

- Year-end reports — Reports are due to the Department Chairmen by April 20, 2026
- Department and Unit Award Nomination Form Completed and Submitted: June 1.
- NVCAF Award: NVCAF Support Award — Send donations to the ALA Foundation to National Headquarters for the current calendar year by December 31.

**More information can be found on the national website**

**[member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/VAR/Get-Involved-VAR](http://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/VAR/Get-Involved-VAR)**



### **CENTRAL NEBRASKA VETERANS HOME – KATHY FISHER**

1703 W 13th St Place – Kearney, NE 68845 – 308-627-4454

[kmloskill1@charter.net](mailto:kmloskill1@charter.net)

### **Vice Chair Judy Kouba**

Hello. I am Kathy Fisher. I have been an 11 year member of Kearney Unit #52. I am eligible through my brother, Lee Hemberger, who served in Vietnam.

Positions I have held with the unit are President, Vice President and Chaplain. I am currently serving as Unit President.

I enjoy volunteering at Central Nebraska Veterans Home doing lots of activities and visiting with the members. They play lots of BINGO, concerts, and crafts. We held a cornhole tournament. They are wanting to have more.

Thank you to everyone who has helped with the activities and visiting with members.

If you are interested in volunteering or have questions, please contact Jessica Modlin (308-865-3421), Manager of Recreation and Volunteer Services, or Charlene Allen (308-865-3473), Assistant Manager of Recreation and Volunteer Services.



**EASTERN NEBRASKA VETERANS HOME – DONNA SMITH**

15103 S 84<sup>th</sup> St – Papillion NE 68046 – 402-250-3309

ddjssmith@msn.com

Hello members of the American Legion Auxiliary and any American Legion Family members that may be reading this message. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and bring you some important information related to the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home.

My name is Donna Smith. I have been appointed as the Auxiliary VAVS chairman at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home. I am a 32-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary currently a member at Valparaiso Unit 371. I gained my eligibility through my father's service in the Merchant Marines during WW II and service in the Army during the Korean War, also through my brother's service in the Air Force from 1975- 1990, including Desert Storm. I have been volunteering at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home and former Thomas Fitzgerald Veterans Home in Omaha for over 40 years and have served as VAVS co-chairman at ENVH. You may contact me via email at ddjssmith@msn.com or contact Department Headquarters to obtain my cell phone number if so desired.

Now for the most important part of this message, what's happening at ENVH! As of this writing ENVH is currently working on hiring a new Volunteer Service Coordinator. Sarah Ryan continues as the Activities Director at ENVH and handling the duties of the Volunteer Service Coordinator. Sarah is a great asset and easy to work with, she can provide you with the "wants and needs" list at ENVH. Her email is Sarah.ryan@nebraska.gov and her phone number is 402-591-4862.

With the new Honor Neighborhood open and the Dedication Neighborhood remodel complete ENVH will soon be open to a larger capacity, therefore more volunteers will be needed. There are activities scheduled every day and most evenings, with both in need of volunteers assisting members get to the activity or helping them with the activity. One fast approaching annual event is the Husker Auction, held inhouse with items donated from individuals and organizations. Anyone wishing to donate Nebraska Cornhusker items for the annual Husker auction please do so by the first of October. Members love earning points to be used to bid on the donated items, definitely a fun event. Some of the other favorites are Bingo, cards, outings and catered meals just to name a few, all of which need OUR help. Sadly, it continually gets more and more difficult to find individuals to volunteer. You would think with the number of people in the greater metropolitan area that would not be an issue, but the fact is that only a handful of members from The American Legion Family volunteer at ENVH. The members at ENVH love seeing new faces and are so appreciative of everything we do for them.

I ask that when you do any volunteering at ENVH you let me know by email, text or phone call. I have monthly reporting that is required and I cannot be at every activity. Please let me know the number of volunteers, the event, the money and/ or prizes used at the event and the number of ENVH members at the event. I would like to thank the Units that have signed up for the monthly table decorations. The members at ENVH love the added touch!

If you have an idea for any event or activity, let me know if I can be of any help planning it. New ideas are always welcome. We do have monies budgeted for events or activities that may also be available.

Please check the ENVH website at [www.veterans-nebraska.gov](http://www.veterans-nebraska.gov) and scroll down to Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home. There you will find the monthly calendar of activities. If you would like a current needs list please, let me know and I can get that for you.

Please mark your calendars for these events which the Auxiliary sponsors every year. Third Friday of every month is our Ice Cream Social. On November 10<sup>th</sup> we have Dollar Days and on December 3<sup>rd</sup> we have Gifts For Yanks Who Gave. All of these events are well attended by ENVH members and we need help passing items out. Please consider helping, and remember you will be rewarded with the smiles you put on the members faces.



**NORFOLK VETERANS HOME – LA REE KUBES**  
205 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street – Madison, NE 68748 – 402-841-6813  
[lareekubes@yahoo.com](mailto:lareekubes@yahoo.com)

I am a PUFL member of Norfolk Unit #16 and am eligible in the Auxiliary through the service of my three brothers who served in and during Vietnam. I am currently serving as Unit #16 president and District @ Vice-President.

As the chair of NVH, my responsibilities are:

- Work closely with the volunteer staff at NVH
  - ✓ Assisting with providing activities for the facility, for Veterans, family and staff
  - ✓ Assist with meeting the needs of NVH members
  - ✓ Donating funds to cover needs of members
- Attend quarterly meetings for Volunteer Organizations, to go over details of upcoming events and changes at NVH and other facilities.
- Help organize and request volunteers' assistance with various events: Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentines Day, etc., also organize and host our programs—Dollar Day and Gifts for Yanks Who Gave.

- Help to organize and sponsor some outings for NVH members.

My goal this year is to get the shadow boxes all completed and in place. Also, to create more in-house activities for all NVH members to enjoy, with assistance from our awesome volunteers and staff, while continuing numerous outdoor activities as weather permits.

#### OUR NEEDS LIST:

- Ongoing need for clothing protectors.
- Large sized puzzles – 500 or 300 pieces
- Large print Word Searches, Word Find, Sudoku, etc. type of puzzle books.



#### **WESTERN NEBRASKA VETERANS HOME – CECIL DOSHIER**

1960 King Road – Gering, NE 69341 – 308-631-7093

[cddoshier@charter.net](mailto:cddoshier@charter.net)

I am the representative of the Western Nebraska Veterans Home (WNVH) for Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary. I was born and raised in Gering and have made it my home for the last 50+ years. I taught school for 38 years and am now retired. I am President of Gering Unit 36 and District 4 Secretary. I have three children, nine grandchildren, and one 4-month-old great-grandchild.

The time I spend with the veterans is very rewarding. All of the things I do are meant to help veterans and make their stay at WNVH more enjoyable. District 4 has a project called Adopt-a-Vet in which they send cards. This year I am working on providing each with a lap quilt. I am now working on my ninth quilt. Other activities are as follows:

- Sponsor and help with BINGO
- Participate in Lunch Bunch (taking residents to a restaurant)
- Plan special events such as Flag Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Patriots Day, Valentines Day, etc.
- Plan and host Dollar Days

We take pride in working with the Activities Director. This year has been a challenge since we have had several changes in that position.



**GRAND ISLAND VA MEDICAL CENTER – VICKI CYBORON**

2454 7<sup>th</sup> Ave – Boelus NE 68820 – 402-740-5665

vcyboron@aol.com

**Deputies**

**Carmen Larsen, Grand Island Unit 53 and Nancy Griffiths, Clay Center Unit #87**

Grand Island VA Medical Center (GI VAMC) average census of veterans the past year has been 47 veterans. It is always a pleasure working with the staff at the GI VAMC as they are very helpful to us and appreciate all we do and provide for the veterans and staff.

Recent needs lists are food for the food pantry. PLEASE make sure the food is not EXPIRED as it will be thrown away if it is. No dental items as they get the items through the VA.

Please remember to write down your contact information (the address, phone number and contact name and who [what part of the Post Family] with your donation. This is a very important step for the VA to know who they can contact and send a thank you to your Unit or other part of your Post Family.

Thank you to everyone who has helped with the functions we have hosted. One function we had at the GI VAMC was an NCAA Tailgate Party and we had a lot of fun with this. We also worked with the Creative Arts Festival Committee to help with the extra needs that they would need for the showcase at the State Fair, plus the Open House we are co-hosting with the committee. We are in the process of updating one of the waiting rooms on the 3rd floor and making it to the hospice family room.

Please reach out if you have any questions or suggestions for events. Looking forward to seeing all the donations Nebraska American Legion Family donates at the Grand Island VA Medical Center.



**OMAHA VA MEDICAL CENTER – PAULA PILLEN**

402-630-6583 – 6001 N 147th St – Omaha NE 68116

ppillen2@gmail.com

**VA&R AT OVAMC:** This Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Program is connected with the Omaha VA Medical Center (OVAMC), which is part of a corporation called “Nebraska-Western Iowa VA Health System.” I am in ALA District 8, President of ALA-Douglas County and Unit 362-Elkhorn. My eligibility is through my fraternal American Legion family members: Grandfather Henry Pillen, Father Eugene H. Pillen, and my spouse Russell G. Quimby (a devoted West Point grad). We live in a non-annexed area of Western Omaha/Elkhorn and Bennington.

**CDCE STAFF:** It's an easy drive to the VA main facility, which is at 4101 Woolworth Ave., Omaha, NE 68105. The VA department we work with is the "Center for Development (fund raising) and Community Education" (volunteer recruitment), which is currently located in **CDCE:135/O** in the Medical Center basement. If you wish to talk with a CDCE staff member, their phone number is **402-995-3284** and generic email is [\\_VHAOMAcDce@va.gov](mailto:_VHAOMAcDce@va.gov). A new department head will probably be named soon, as the CDCE Chief Michael Ingram is now the head the VA Patient Advocate Program.

**OUR DUTIES:** Did you know that VA&R is the "PILLAR #1" commission of the American Legion? My liaison duty — and yours — is to communicate with and support programs of the VA CDCE programs and staff. My future Deputy will be Jennifer Stutte— if she is approved— and she works mainly with the homeless program at Victory Apartments. You are welcome to participate in our mandatory CDCE quarterly meetings that are held for all veteran volunteer organizations in January, April, July and October. I will send out announcements; The staff answer questions about VA events, administration information, and service improvements. The Chief also works with Grand Island VA Medical Center and their programs.

**COMMUNICATE:** **A)** Share the wish lists! **B)** Who are your unit's current volunteers at any VA facility? Please share that they need to sign-in on a volunteer sheet at the site. **C)** Use the donation forms posted on the District 8 Facebook page ( <https://www.facebook.com/AmLegFamilyNEDistrict8/>), check for the latest updates, and share info on your own auxiliary Facebook page(s).

**OUR MAIN SUPPORTED PROGRAMS:** Your hard-won fundraising supports assessed VA programs developed and authorized by Nebraska and National ALA over many years. These gifts are due by October 1 but are always welcome. These gifts lovingly support hospitalized vets who cannot participate in holidays:

Nebraska's Veterans Dollar Days ( around Veterans Day), \$10 per inpatient veteran;

Gifts for Yanks who Gave was nationally established in 1944 (Dec 7 - Pearl Harbor), \$30 per inpatient veterans (50-90 max). It is also supported by The Legion.

ALA Gift Shop (Mid to Late December) funds to provide inpatient veterans in VA facilities with comfort items during the Christmas / Hanukkah season.

There are also other optional programs of value:

Veteran Family Baby Showers (Quarterly): Lists of new baby items for delivery or online purchase will be sent out.

"Stand Down" of VA Healthcare and Homeless Services: Your Unit can support this by your annual gifts, and we have a table of hygiene, clothing, and basic living items.

Creative Arts Reception: Submission deadline is variable. We fund supplies/travel needs

Recreation Therapy: If you wish to suggest an activity or volunteer, please contact me or call the CDCE office for simple instructions. ###



## **HOT SPRINGS VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER – KAROL LOCKMAN**

PO Box 147 – Rushville, NE 60360 – 308-327-2687

No email

Hello from the Panhandle of Nebraska. I have been a member of Unit 161 for over 50 years and been involved with the Hot Springs VA most of that time. Although the Hot Springs VAMC is 85 miles away from home, there are still many ways to help.

Vicki Kotschwar (Unit 12) is my hard working associate. We attend quarterly meetings with South Dakota Legion and Auxiliary, DAV, VFW, Salvation Army, and other service organizations to finance supplies and activities for the veterans in the PTSD program.

The girls in my District 1 Units are very generous and help finance most of what we do for those veterans.

We have the Vets travel to Fort Robinson for the museums, a picnic, and horseback rides. Missy Jeck (Unit 161) and the Wild Turkey Federation treat the Vets to a fishing day at Ft. Robinson. Units in District 1 provide the picnic. Chadron Unit 12 invite the Vets to a college football game and picnic. Rushville Unit 161 have them for the Labor Day parade, home fried chicken dinner, and antique show in the park. Gordan Unit 34 treats them to the Willow Tree Festival where they may eat free at all concession stands and watch live entertainment all day.

State of Nebraska Legion and Auxiliary officers travel on District 1 tour to Hot Springs and enjoy eating and visiting with the veterans.

We have a Christmas party in December with live entertainment, BINGO, food, and gifts thanks to the generosity of “Gifts for Yanks” and District 1 Units.

The PTSD program has a very good success percentage. I feel we help. That is a great feeling!



## **LINCOLN (CBOC) COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC – LINDA VAREJCKA**

450 Conestoga Ave – Hickman NE 68372 – 402-580-2549

jfvarejcka@windstream.net

I have been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary since 1985 serving as unit, county, district officer and chairmanships. I am eligible for membership through my husband who served with the Navy and Marine Corp in Vietnam and Desert Storm. I have officially been volunteering at the Lincoln VA Clinic since 2010 and have volunteered over 8,000 hours. My passion is serving the Veteran and the staff.

Some facts regarding the Lincoln VA Clinic as received from leadership. These facts are as of the end of July 2025.

1. 13,627 veterans have been served at the facility, which is higher than the same time frame last year.
2. The female Veteran populations continues to grow with 1,137 female veterans enrolled, again an increase from the previous year.
3. 84,087 appointments have been completed.
4. 58% of patients are enrolled in "My HealthEVet" with 29% actively sending messages to their clinical teams.
5. The Rheumatology Clinic started at the clinic on May 7 and is available the first and third Wednesdays of the month.
6. Projected to start is a RN Foot Care Clinic this October or November.

Spoke with one of our Social Workers and she indicated the case load has increased since last year serving and helping approximately 170 Veterans.

Some events coming up is the Stand Down on Wednesday, October 8, Honoring our Veterans during Veterans Day week, and Holiday Giving/Blessing tree available starting November 24.



## SECTION 2: DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

### DISTRICT 1 – JEAN VACKINER

35878 Boiling Springs Road – Cody NE 69211 – 308-376-4648

[vackiner@yahoo.com](mailto:vackiner@yahoo.com)

My name is Jean Vackiner. I am a 27 year member of the American Legion Auxiliary. I am eligible through my late father, Eugene H Kurpgeweit of Ewing NE, Army Infantry Veteran from Korea. I am a PUFL member of Cody Unit 319. I have held Unit President for 26 of my 27 years. I am also a member of 8 and 40 de Nebraska #9 Salon 410.

I am an RN/Case Manager for Aseracare Hospice. I am mother of three sons and grandmother of four.

The District 1 Vice-President is Darlene Lemmon from Crawford Unit 138. District 1 consists of 12 units in Brown, Cherry, Dawes, Keya Paha, Rock and Sheridan counties



### DISTRICT 2 – CORRINE JANOVEC

PO Box 661 – Plainview NE 68769 – 402-201-4562

[cjanovec2@gmail.com](mailto:cjanovec2@gmail.com)

I have been a life-long Plainview Auxiliary Unit 148 Auxiliary member. Born and raised in Plainview and graduated with a Registered Nurse diploma from St. Joseph's School of Nursing in Omaha.

I enlisted in the US Army Nurse Corp in 1971. Basic training was in Ft. Sam Houston, TX. I served at Ft. Bragg, NC and Ft. Filey, KS. I was honorably discharged in 1973. I am a member of Plainview Post 148.

I have worked at Plainview General Hospital, Lundberg Memorial Hospital in Creighton, Plainview Manor, Norfolk Regional Center, and was manager of Plainview Community Housing. I purchased a building in Plainview and opened "Serendipity" as a coffee shop and is now a small café.

I am a member of the United Methodist Church, Mt Vernon Chapter, Order of Eastern Star, and serve on the Plainview City Council.

I have served as Commander of Pierce County American Legion. I was elected to serve as District 2 ALA President in 2024.

My family includes my husband David (52 years); my oldest daughter Jamie (husband Paul) and granddaughter Lauren; and my youngest daughter Joni (husband Jon) and granddaughters Sydney and Sophia. My siblings are Lana Lea Swearingen, Kevin Jenkins, and Denise Cox.

District 2 Vice-President is LaRee Kubes from the Norfolk Unit 16. District 2 consists of 35 units in Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Holt, Knox, Madison, Pierce and Stanton counties.



### **DISTRICT 3 – LAURA NOVAK**

1006 Dakota St – Emerson NE 68733 – 402-369-0019

[lnovakala@outlook.com](mailto:lnovakala@outlook.com)

My name is Laura Novak (some still think of me as Laura Neel). I currently reside in Emerson, NE. I am a PUFL member through Roy Reed Unit 252 Winside, NE.

I currently am the Dispatch Supervisor for Thurston County Sheriff's Office and Interim Manager at Pony Express—Emerson. My life is very busy between these two jobs.

I am married and have three daughters, Kiely, KayLynn and Brianna. I also have four rescue dogs that all truly believe they are children as well.

I am energetic about keeping this organization going and teaching those younger members what we are all about. I have always advocated for this as we all know, if the younger ones do not step up the history is gone.

District 3 Vice President is Teesa Beed of the Beemer Unit 159.



### **DISTRICT 4 – TERRI POLEY**

PO Box 531 – Sidney NE 69162 – 308-249-4027

[tpoley55@gmail.com](mailto:tpoley55@gmail.com)

My name is Terri Poley. I am eligible through my father, Clarence Mashek. Although I could have used four brothers and one son. I have three sons and two stepchildren (a son and a daughter). A very proud grandma of thirteen grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren.

I live in the Nebraska panhandle, Sidney to be exact, ten miles from where I grew up. No theme exactly just trying to get membership up and spread Americanism. My President's project is to try to get students in our schools more interested in history and our

veterans.. Growing up it was nothing to see my parents always willing to lend a hand to someone in need. This has carried with me and I have passed it on to my children. I feel that if we can show kindness to our fellow man, this world would be a better place. Just trying to live my Christian values. Thank you

District 4 Vice-President is Dorothy Hall from the Dalton Unit 301. District 4 consists of 13 units in Box Butte, Cheyenne, Garden, Grant, Morrill and Scottsbluff counties.



#### **DISTRICT 5 – EVA CRAWFORD**

PO Box 188 – Mullen NSE 69152 – 308-546-7479  
jectruck5556@gmail.com

I am Eva Wiese Crawford from Mullen Unit #109 and am serving my second year as the District 5 President.. I am eligible for the American Legion Auxiliary through my dad. He was in World War II.

I have been a member since 1983. I am currently the president of our Mullen ALA unit. I am proud of the many things our Unit does during the year for our Veterans and community.

The District 5 Vice-President is Merle Konken from Hershey Unit 279. District 5 consists of nineteen units (Arthur, Lexington, Eddyville, Overton, Farnam, Mullen, Paxton, North Platte, Maxwell, Sutherland, Wallace, Hershey, Stapleton, Tryon, Grant, Venango, Madrid and Thedford) in nine counties (Arthur, Dawson, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, and Thomas Counties).



#### **DISTRICT 6 – BARBARA DORSEY**

47069 Hwy 70 – Arcadia NE 68815 – 308-202-0239  
brdorsey03@gmail.com

My name is Barb Dorsey. My eligibility is through my oldest brother who served in the Navy from 1971-1974 during the Vietnam War. He was an airplane mechanic on board a carrier in different Eastern port. I have been a member for 37 years.

My husband, Kenneth, and I have six grandchildren (four grandsons and two granddaughters). We live just east of Arcadia in Valley county.

My theme is Caring Hearts for Heros. My project, which is still being planned, will raise awareness and funds for the Creative Arts Festival.

The District 6 Vice-President is Cindy Long from the Ashton Unit 108. District 6 consists of 37 units in Blaine, Buffalo, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Howard, Merrick, Nance, Sherman, Valley and Wheeler counties.



### **DISTRICT 7 – NANCY PATRAS**

810 6<sup>th</sup> Street – Columbus NE 68601 – 402-276-3371  
nancypatras@gmail.com

I am Nancy Patras, and I am serving my second year as the President for District 7. I am eligible through my husband, Donald, who was in the Navy Seabees. We have four children (three boys and one girl), ten grandchildren (six boys, four girls) and four great-grandchildren (two boys, two girls).

I am having raffle to help get 20 shadow boxes for residents at the Norfolk VA home. I live in Columbus. I have a new email. It is nancypatras@gmail.com. Thank you for all you do !!

District 7 Vice-President Mari Melcher from the Monroe Unit 322. . District 7 consists of 33 units in Butler, Colfax, Dodge, Platte, Polk and Saunders counties.



### **DISTRICT 8 – LEE BRAUER**

15015 Chicago Cir – Omaha NE 68154 – 402-490-1221  
leebrauer@juno.com

I am a “young” member in the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA). I joined in 2019 and am eligible through the service of my father, Wayne Saunders, who served in WW II, and my husband, Les, who served in the Army during Vietnam. Les and I live in Omaha, and we have six children, fourteen grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Although I have only been a member for almost six years, I want to do my best to serve our veterans and military. I do not yet have a theme or project selected. When I do, it will be made available. Thank you for your support.

District 8 Vice-President is Karen Brink from the Millard Unit 374. The district consists of 17 units.



### **DISTRICT 9 – LANA BENNETT**

706 Ontario Ave – Elwood NE 6897 – 308-325-0766  
lanaben1976@yahoo.com

My name is Lana Bennett, and I serve District 9 as their President. My eligibility is through my husband, Dick, and my father, Roland Kinney. I have been a member for 45 years.

My husband and I have three daughters and one son. We have six grandchildren, one step-granddaughter and one great-grandchild. We reside in Elwood.

My President's Project is the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

The District 9 Vice-President is Kathy Beck from the Elwood Unit 290. District 9 consists of 16 units in Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Hayes Center, Hitchcock and Red Willow counties.



### **DISTRICT 10 – DEANNA TUTTLE**

480 S Porter St – Nelson NE 68961 – 402-621-0038  
deannatuttle@mn.com

I have been a member of Nelson Unit 187 since 2001 through the service of my husband, Vietnam Veteran Charles Tuttle, who is currently serving as District 10 Commander. Over the course of my membership in Unit 187 I have served as Chaplain, Treasurer, Vice President, President and Membership Chair.

Sometime during the 1960's (memory fails me as to exact dates) I was a member of both American Legion Auxiliary and VFW Auxiliary units in Blair, NE through the service of my father, WWII Veteran Edward F. Grabbe. I regret that I allowed my membership to lapse following his death as military service has a lot of history on both sides of my family. My great-grandfather was a Civil War Veteran, my father was in the Army Air Force, my husband in the Air Force, our eldest daughter in, you guessed it, Air Force. This in addition to five uncles.

Charles 'Chuck' and I have been married 44 years and he likes to boast that we have 5 children ranging in age from 47 to 62. We are a blended family with many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Our youngest granddaughter is 7 and oldest great-grandson is 18.

My President's Project is the identification of remains of POWs and MIAs, specifically at Offutt AFB here in Nebraska. As a child, I knew of a family in limbo over the unknown whereabouts of their loved one. In later years I heard that his remains were identified and returned some 44 years later.

District 10's Vice-President is Tammie Runions from the Minden Unit 94. District 10 consists of 26 units in Adams, Clay, Franklin, Harlan, Kearney, Nuckolls and Webster counties.



### **DISTRICT 11 – MARY BETH COFFEY**

209 Road M – McCool Junction NE 68401 – 402-366-3027  
mbc.dist11pres25@gmail.com

I am Mary Beth Coffey, District 11 President from Mc Cool Junction. I have resided here for the majority of my life. My husband Albert is a native of Exeter, NE. We have six children and ten grandchildren.

How did I get started in the American Legion Auxiliary? My father Robert E Smith was a WWII Veteran. He was stationed in England with the Army Air Corps with the 108<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division. He was on a bomber crew named the Lutes Crew. He was very active in and proud to be in the Legion and the Drum & Bugle Corps. I learned my patriotism and love of my country through him. I was a Junior Auxiliary member back in the late 70's early 80's. I got married early and started having children. I didn't start back up into the Unit until the late 90's early 2000's. I really didn't start getting involved until my two sons joined the National Guard and Reserves and went to Iraq in 2005. They both served 18 months in Iraq at mostly the same time. My son Jim served that once and my other son Rob has served two other times in Kuwait.

I have been our Unit 341 President for the last ten years. I was York County President from 2022-2024.

It is my honor to serve as the District 11 President. It is my hope that I will serve you well and be a president you can be proud of. Please always feel free to contact me if you need something. I might not know the answer, but I can help you find it.

My theme for this year is along with our Legion's "Be The One" initiative. My focus is on our Veteran's PTSD and mental health issues. Let's **BUILD** each other!

**B** – Be the One!

**U** – Unite and help each other achieve our goals!

**I** – Inspire and motivate one another!

**L** – Listen to each other!

**D** – Dedicate ourselves to helping each other!

My project this year is a program call JAVELAN (Jack Assisting Veterans Enjoy Life Again). This is a program that helps veterans get service dogs. This program was started by Robert Dean. His wife is a Veteran and needed a service dog. They personally saw how important these dogs are, so they decided to try to do a program to help others. How this program works is when a Veteran (or First Responder) would like a service dog, they need to contact them and the only cost to the Veteran (or First Responder) is \$25. If the Veteran has a dog that is three years or younger, they will come out and train their dog that they currently have. If they don't have a dog, then the JAVELAN program will get a dog through Pet for Vets (another

rescue program for Veterans) or the local Humane Society. If the Veteran wants a specific kind of dog, they need to acquire that on their own. The trainer comes to the Veteran and will train the dog at the expense of the JAVELAN program. This program is nonprofit and relies solely on donations.

District 11 Vice-President is Karen White from the Milligan Unit 240. District 11 consists of 35 units in Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, Thayer and York counties.



### **DISTRICT 12 – ERMA NABER**

1110 Road V – Waco NE 68460 – 402-641-6683

erma\_naber@hotmail.com

Greetings from District 12 President Erma Naber. I have been a member of Utica 49 for 47 years through my husband who served the Air Force during Viet Nam. Neil and I have been married for 54 years and have three children. The oldest, Rachel, lives at Whitefish, MT. Sons Grant lives in Osceola, NE and John lives near Garland, NE. We keep tabs on six grandchildren ranging from high school Seniors to 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary. Always some activity to attend. The families are busy with jobs and school events.

Neil and I live on a farm where there is always work to be done. You can catch me on Facebook, email, or cell. I strongly believe in "communication."

No particular theme outside of "the Units are Leading the way and I am right behind them." All 20 Units of Cass, Otoe, Lancaster, and Seward Counties are active in promoting the Auxiliary programs. My project for the next two years will be supporting needs at the Lincoln VA CBOC with Linda Varejcka Deputy Representative.

I look forward to working with the Units for the next two years. We are cool and calm on top of the water, but paddling like crazy beneath!

Fall Round-up will be October 18 at Pleasant Dale Legion Post Home. Our District Convention will be in Seward with more information later.

The District Vice-President is Jeanette Harris from Lincoln Unit 3.



### **DISTRICT 13 – BOBBI ALBERS**

71493 Hwy 50 – Pawnee City NE 69420 – 402-209-9784  
bobbialbers@gmail.com

I am the President for District 13. I live in Pawnee City, NE and belong to Cook ALA #360 belong thru my grandfather. I have been an ALA for 55 years. I have three children and four grandkids.

My project is Veteran Suicide, and my theme is we're stronger together!!

The District 13 Vice-President is Tana Brown from the Shubert Unit 222. District 13 consists of 13 units in Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee and Richardson counties.



## **SECTION 3:    RESOURCES**



**SENIOR UNIT HISTORY BOOK**  
**(History May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025)**

The entries will be judged and scored according to the following criteria.  
District winner must be submitted to the Department Historian by May 15.

**Score: 100 Total Points**

**I. Introduction, Inclusions (10 scoring points)**

**Points** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Cover: Units may use a three-ring binder or a three-ring folder that can hold 8 ½ x 11 paper for their entry.
2. Title Page
  - a. Center of the first sheet should be a color American Legion Auxiliary Emblem (any size)
  - b. American Legion Auxiliary Unit of \_\_\_\_\_ History
  - c. ALA Unit administrative year mo./yr to mo./yr (Start of installation of Officers ending with the summary of end-of-year reports and closing events for that ALA administrative year.
  - d. Name of Unit historian

**II. Unit Information (10 scoring points)**

**Points** \_\_\_\_\_

1. List of elected and/or appointed Unit officers for the current administrative year
2. List of Unit chairmen or committee appointments for current administrative year
3. List of Unit or national awards received at the previous Department or National Convention

**III. Content (70 scoring points)**

**Points** \_\_\_\_\_

1. The ALA Unit annual history shall be written as a factual narrative beginning with the installation of Unit officers and ending with the summary of end-of-year reports and closing events for that ALA administrative year.
2. The history shall be written in third person. Please refer to "How to Record Your Unit's History" page in the National Historian Programs Action Plan.
3. Use clear, concise language with correct spelling.
4. Do not include or use computer graphics, pen or ink drawings, illustrations, extra material, newspaper clippings, or other embellishments.
5. Be sure the Unit annual history truly represents a historical account of the Unit – what the Unit accomplished.

**IV. Bonus Points (5 points)**

**Points** \_\_\_\_\_

1. You may include up to five (5) photo images placed throughout history. (optional)

**V. Unit Historian Signature (5 points)**

**Points** \_\_\_\_\_

1. The typed name/title and written signature (typed signature if submitting it electronically) of the Unit historian should immediately follow the final paragraph of the history.

**Total Points** \_\_\_\_\_

**SENIOR UNIT NARRATIVE HISTORY RULES**  
**(History May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026)**

Submissions must be sent to the Department Historian by May 15

**Score: 100 Total Points**

**I. Title Page (30 points):**

**Points \_\_\_\_\_**

Unit name

Unit number, Unit town

Your District number

Name of the Unit Historian

Narrative History Year 2025 to 2026

**II. Content (60 points):**

**Points \_\_\_\_\_**

The history narrative needs to be a minimum of five paragraphs and should start with the installation of officers and end with the closure of your administrative year in chronological order.

Within the narrative should be the unit officers, chairman, and other events or activities. Any font can be used, and it can be typed or handwritten.

**III. Unit Historian Signature (10 points):**

**Points \_\_\_\_\_**

Please have the Unit Historian sign the last page of the narrative.

**Total Points \_\_\_\_\_**

## UNIT SENIOR PRAYER BOOK RULES

A prayer book is not made by the Unit Chaplain alone. It is a collection of prayers and devotional thoughts by all that has meaning to each Unit member. They may be original, or they can be found by other sources if cited.

- I. Cover – Blue 3-ring binder or folder with ALA emblem or brand mark 5 points \_\_\_\_\_
- II. Paper – Use standard size 8.5 x 11 inches 5 points \_\_\_\_\_
- III. Introduction page – Centered on page and doubled spaced 15 points \_\_\_\_\_  
Include the following information in the format shown

**Name of the Unit #000**

**Address of the Unit**

**City, NE 00000**

**Department of Nebraska**

**Name of the Unit Chaplain, Chaplain**

**Name of the Unit President, President**

**2025-2026**

- IV. Contents Total – 50 points \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Books must be typed and each page neat and clean 5 points \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Use only one side of the paper per sheet 5 points \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. The book should have two sections separated by a divider. 5 points \_\_\_\_\_  
The divider may be decorated. The sections:  
Prayers  
Devotional Thoughts
  - d. Prayers may be original or of your preference. The author's name or source must be listed. If the author or source is unknown, type "Author Unknown." 15 points \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Devotional thoughts may be scriptures from the Bible, poems, or other articles. 15 points \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Inspirational messages and captions are allowed on sheets With prayers or devotional thoughts. 5 points \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Spelling – be sure to spell correctly. Check closely for errors. 10 points \_\_\_\_\_

V. Summary Page – centered and double spaced

15 points \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit Name and Number**

**Department of Nebraska**

**Number of Members in Unit \_\_\_\_\_**

---

**Signature of the Unit Chaplain**

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**Signature of Unit President**

100 Points \_\_\_\_\_

Please use these guidelines listed above for judging the Senior Prayer Book.

## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Greetings from the 2025-2026 ALA of NE Chaplain, Vicki Colson. I hope you all enjoy the Christmas Program I found in our old files. I have freshened it up for you.



*Setting: A covered table with a Christmas tree which may be a branch of a tree or a piece of evergreen set in a decorated container of sand. You will need 5 birds: cardinal (red), dove (white), oriole (one black and orange), bluebird (blue), and( robin brown and orange). A pattern for the birds is included if you do not have pictures of the specific bird type. Also, a star for the tree top. You will need a Leader and five participants. The Chaplain will read the prayer.*

Leader: (Holds star) The custom of decorating Christmas trees comes to us from Germany. They used the evergreen because it stands for life as the needles stay green throughout the year. The first Christmas trees were decorated with stars, angels and tiny toys. Candy and nuts were also hung from the branches. They thought the candles looked like the stars on a Christmas night.

In the Ukraine, ornaments made like spider webs were supposed to bring good luck.

Circles, squares and stars made of straw were used in Lithuania.

The children of Sweden tie sheaves of grain to the tops of poles so that the birds, too, may enjoy a Christmas time.

Our Auxiliary Christmas tree will be decorated with birds “in flight of service.”

Cardinal: (Place bird on tree) The Cardinal brings us a message of LOVE. Christmas is giving our time, our talents and our love to the service of the Christ whose birthday we celebrate! When the Wise Men followed the star, they were bringing gifts to Jesus. Because love is the spirit of Christmas, it changes hearts and lives. Let love set wide your door. The little Christ Child comes once more.

Dove: (Place bird on tree) The Dove brings us a message of PEACE. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.” (Luke 2:14) Always at Christmas we hear everyone speak of “Peace and good will,” and many hands are raised in prayer as we offer petitions for peace on earth.

Peace was the first thing angels sang. Peace is the nurse of love. Peace is the mother of unity. Peace is the rest of blessed souls. Peace is the dwelling place of eternity. Peace, prayer; this is the gift of Noel.

Oriole: (Place bird on tree) The Oriole brings us a message of JOY. For all of the joys that the Christmas season brings, we give thanks. As we wrap our gifts with the love and joy in giving, helping those in need, bringing comfort to those who are ill, and cheer to the lonely, may we too lay our gifts at His feet and feel the wonder of His presence. There was the light of JOY in the rejoicing hearts of all who came to worship the newborn Christ. (song suggestion; "Joy to the World.")

Bluebird: (Place bird on tree) The Bluebird brings us a message of FAITH. The beginnings of our nation are rooted in the promise, the faith and the assurance given people by the everlasting Spirit that is in the Light from the Christmas Star. It is a beautiful faith. It is the trusting, strong faith of a child. Whether in time of war or in time of peace, whether in time of happiness, or in time of strife, Christmas comes, as the years come. "We walk by FAITH, not by sight." (II Corinthians 5:7) Faith is the spark that leads man on.

Robin: (Place bird on tree) The Robin brings us a message of Christmas.

Tw'as a starry night and the wind was still, And the Star shown bright o'er Judea's hill, When God sent His beloved son down, and left Him with Mary in Bethlehem town. Then the angels sang till the break of morn "Rejoice! For the Prince of Peace is born."

Leader: (Place the star on tree) The Christmas tree that I want for each of you has a bright and shining star at the very top. It will shine through the darkness around you and brings hope to the world as it did so many years ago in Bethlehem. Included in my wish for you is that the tree will be a part of all the good times that will be yours this season, helping to make this Christmas the merriest of all.

AND I WISH FOR EACH OF YOU A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS DAY.

(Song suggestion: "We Three Kings" chorus)

Oh star of wonder, star of night  
Star with royal beauty bright  
Westward leading, still proceeding  
Guide us to thy perfect light

Chaplain: For all the joys that the Christmas season brings, we give thanks, O God, but most of all we thank thee for the gift of thy Son. May the spirit of loving and sharing be in each of us this Christmas season and every day of our lives; and may we, like Jesus, bring the message of peace and good will to our world. Amen

PATTERN FOR BIRD TO BE PLACED ON TREE





## GOLD STAR PROGRAM

I recycled this from a program I found in papers I have saved of past Gold Star Programs.  
Vicki Colson, ALA of NE Chaplain 2025-2026



Setting: On a small cloth covered table, a large candle in the center of the table and a centerpiece of the Unit's choice. Poppies may be placed around the candles or may be used as the centerpiece.

Ask each Gold Star Member to share their name and something of the incident.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13”

As members of America's Armed Forces protect our country by engaging the enemies of freedom on many fronts around the world, they carry on a noble legacy. We enjoy freedom because of the service and sacrifice of our military men and women. The cost of America's freedom is always personal. Few pay more dearly than our Gold Star Members who have endured the death of a Father, Husband, Son, Daughter, Brother or Sister in service to our country.

Americans owe a lasting debt of gratitude to those who pledge their lives to secure the blessings of liberty. These Gold Star Members we honor today have experienced the anxiety of watching their loved one go off to war, not knowing whether they would return. There can be no doubt that these brave Gold Star Members are due our utmost respect.

Inscribed in the chapel in the American cemetery in Normandy are these poignant words:

*“These endured all and gave all that justice among nations might prevail, and that mankind might enjoy freedom and inherit peace.”*

Our gold Star Members, having endured all, can take solace in knowing that their loved one left all humanity a legacy of invaluable meaning. Through their loved one's death, they gave eternal life to the idea for which they died...freedom.

Let us pray...Father, help us to remember the sacrifices made in service to our country. May we never take these sacrifices for granted. We ask that you protect our men and women serving in harm's way. These things we ask, in your name. Amen.



## UNIT PUBLICITY BOOK GUIDELINES

Formatting should be:

Font Size: 12

Font: Times New Roman or Arial

Single Spaced with Space after Paragraph.

Cover Page - Up to 5 Points

- American Legion Auxiliary Emblem
- Unit Name, Number and Location
- Unit President Name
- Member(s) name who created the Publicity Book
- 2024-2025 Publicity Book

Publicity Narrative - Up to 5 Points:

Written narrative of the ways each department works to publicize the events they hold during the year. Maximum of 1 page.

- How did you use social media and newspaper/magazine/written articles to promote events to members and the community?
- Did you use the ALA's PR Toolkit to assist in public relations?
- Were ALA members branded at all events?
- Were American Legion Family brochures available at events?
- Were video conferences (Zoom, etc.) and/or newsletters used to keep members informed?
- Was the community involved in ALA events?

Book Content - Up to 10 Points:

Books should include at least 5 of the following items in chronological order:

- Newspaper articles
- Emails to radio, TV stations, etc.
- Programs of events held
- Social Media Posts
- Other items used to promote ALA

When possible, include photos of actual events.

Bonus Points can be awarded for High-Resolution Photos or Events that are unique.

Photos should be in a high-resolution format (at least 300 DPI) or sent using the high-resolution option on your smartphone. When emailing the photo, select "actual size" for attaching to the email.



## 2026 AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST

### UNIT INFORMATION

- Each essay submitted must include an Americanism Essay Contest Cover Sheet as the first page of the essay.
- Before providing the cover sheet to the school/student, the Unit should complete the following in the “Essay Checklist” section.
  - “Sponsoring ALA Unit”
  - “Due Date for student to return to ALA Unit”
- When essays are returned to the Unit, complete the remaining boxes in the “Essay Checklist” section.
  - Be sure to count the number of words in the essay.
  - The title of the essay is not counted in the word count unless it is used in the essay itself.
- All the boxes must be checked off before submitting your winning essays to the Department Americanism Chair.
- The student and parent/guardian must complete the next section.
  - Make sure that the cover sheet is easy and legible to read.
  - Make sure the email is the student or parent/guardian and not the school email.

### JUDGING ESSAYS FOR UNITS

When judging the essays,

- Please make sure that the cover sheet is completely filled out.
- Double check how many words are in the essay.
- Make sure you can read the students handwriting on the cover sheet
- Check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- When reading, how does it flow?
- Does the essay relate to the essay title?
- Did the student follow the guidelines?

## GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- The essay title listed on the cover sheet **MUST** be written at the top of the essay in **bold** print.
- The essay for Grades 3-6 can be handwritten or typed but Grades 7-12 must be typed.
- The margins should be 1 inch on all sides.
- Spacing should be 1.5 or double spaced.
- If the essay is going to be on more than one sheet of paper, it must be put on two pages. Do not use the front and back of one sheet of paper.
- Please make sure the essay has proper grammar, spelling and punctuation (no plagiarism).
- Each paragraph must be indented.
- Please print your name on the bottom of the essay with pencil.
- Please complete the Student or Parent/Guardian section of the cover sheet.
- The cover sheet must be included with your essay.

Thank you for participating in the Americanism Essay Contest.



## AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST - 2026 Cover Sheet

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

### Essay Title:

***"Celebrating America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday and the Veterans who Fought for Our Freedom."***

### Essay Classes

Class	Grade Level	Word Requirement*
I	3 and 4	150-250
II	5 and 6	250-300
III	7 and 8	350-400
IV	9 and 10	450-500
V	11 and 12	450-500
VI	Students with special needs. Word count should correspond with student's grade level.	

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

### Essay Checklist:

- ☐ Class competing in \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Sponsoring ALA Unit \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Typed or neatly written essay conforming to the word requirement for class
- ☐ Completed essay coversheet as first page of essay
- ☐ Word count of essay \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Due date for student to return to ALA Unit \_\_\_\_\_

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN. \* Please write legibly in ink.

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

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

Address

(Street, City, State, Zip): \_\_\_\_\_

Student or Parent/Guardian E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Signature of Unit Americanism Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit winner due to Department on: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Department Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_





## 2026 ALA DEPARTMENT OF NEBRASKA SCHOLARSHIPS

All ALA Department of Nebraska scholarship applications and criteria can be found at <https://nebraskalegionaux.net/scholarships>.

- ✓ ***The completed application (including requested documents) must be submitted to and received by your local American Legion Auxiliary Unit by March 1, 2026.***
- ✓ ***The local Unit scholarship selection must be submitted to the Department Headquarters on or before March 15, 2026.***
- ✓ ALA Units should make certain that all requested letters and documents are enclosed and completed properly with the application to the Department Headquarters.
- ✓ Individual students are welcome to apply for multiple ALA Nebraska scholarships; however, each American Legion Auxiliary Unit may submit ONLY ONE individual student per Department Scholarship.
- ✓ One scholarship application will be chosen from the local Unit to be submitted to the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary Department Headquarters for final judging and awarding.

### NEBRASKA ALA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP \$500

The Nebraska ALA Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to a qualified applicant accepted into an undergraduate or graduate (master's only) program at a four-year Nebraska college or university. Preference will be given to a former Nebraska Girls State Citizen who is seeking to teach middle school or junior high school social studies.

Applicants must:

- be a resident of Nebraska
- must be or have a Veteran connection

### HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP \$500

The Healthcare Professional Scholarship will be awarded to a person enrolled in a four-year healthcare professional program.

Applicants must:

- be a resident of Nebraska
- must be or have a Veteran connection

### CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP \$500

Career and Technical Education programs are offered through community colleges, trade schools and/or colleges/universities offering two (2) year programs for students who have the intention of going to the workforce after two years or less of higher education. These program areas are typically:

- Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree program (2 years in length)
- Diplomas (1 year)
- Certificates less than one (1) year
- This Scholarship excludes applicants enrolled in a school of nursing.

Applicants must:

- be a resident of Nebraska
- must have a Veteran connection or be a Veteran



## 2026 ALA National Scholarships

All National scholarship applications and specific criteria to apply can be found at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships)

The completed application (including requested documents) must be submitted to and received by the National American Legion Auxiliary by March 1, 2026.

### **CHILDREN OF WARRIORS NATIONAL PRESIDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP \$5,000**

Three \$5,000 scholarships are awarded annually per geographic division, for a total of 15 scholarships. These scholarships are for undergraduate study only at an accredited college or university, and may be used for tuition, books, fees, room, and board.

### **SPIRIT OF YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP \$1,000**

The Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund is an umbrella that supports three separate scholarship opportunities for participants in American Legion Auxiliary programs. One is for American Legion Auxiliary Junior members, another for the Junior Members of the Year, and one is for participants in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program. National Headquarters will award each department/state one recipient a scholarship of \$1,000. From the potential 52 department/state scholarship recipients, the National Education Committee will select five recipients (one per division) who will receive a \$5,000 scholarship in lieu of the \$1000 department/state scholarship.

### **MEMBER LOYALTY SCHOLARSHIP \$2,500**

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 Member Loyalty Scholarship to current college students. Ten scholarships, in the amount of \$2,500 each, will be awarded to current college students. Two scholarships will be awarded in each division of the American Legion Auxiliary.

### **NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP \$2,000**

One \$2,000 scholarship is awarded annually per Auxiliary geographic division, for a total of 5 scholarships. Applicant may be pursuing training in a certified, trade, professional, or technical program, or a two-year or four-year degree program.

## 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. Also attach cover sheet to back of poster.

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](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_



## POPPY CENTERPIECE CONTEST

**The following rules apply to both the Senior Poppy Centerpieces.**

- Remove the labels from the poppies used in the centerpiece.
- **SENIORS**—use Department President Ruth Hietbrink's theme — **Stirring Up Members**
- Poppies must be predominant, using a sufficient number of small or large poppies or a combination of both to make a nice arrangement.
- The American Flag **MAY NOT** be used in the centerpiece.
- Centerpieces should have a maximum height of 12 inches and width of 12 inches to allow for viewing from all sides.
- **SENIOR** centerpieces are the work of a member of the Unit displaying it.
- Unit name, number, and town should be securely affixed to the bottom of the centerpiece.
- Each District winning centerpiece will be eligible for the Department winning centerpiece.

### **IN FLANDERS FIELDS**

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders Fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:*

*To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields.*

*—Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae December 8, 1915*



## **LITTLE MISS POPPY CONTEST (AGES 6-12)**

- Participants must be between 6 and 12 years of age as of June 1 and be a Junior member in good standing of the American Legion Auxiliary.
- Promotional activity of the poppy story must occur through The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the community during the timespan of May 1 of the current year to April 30 of the following year.
- For National Little Miss Poppy consideration, participants must submit a Little Miss Poppy award electronic application with supporting documentation.
- All entries are due by 5 p.m. on June 1.
- In addition to the information on the award application, please include documentation on the criteria below. Accepted formats are Word document, Google Slides, or .pdf. PowerPoint presentations may also be uploaded via Googles Slides. For more information on Google Slides, please visit <https://www.google.com/slides/about/>.

### Criteria for judging Little Miss Poppy entries:

- The memorial poppy must be visible in all promotion and publicity submitted.
- There is no specific dress code or dress color for Little Miss Poppy.
- Promotion of the Poppy Program: What did you share and do?
- Publicity of poppy activities (newspapers, radio/TV, etc.).
- Submitted file must include the following information (both pictures and descriptions)
  - What I learned during my time as Little Miss Poppy?
  - How I shared the story of the poppy with my community?
  - What does the poppy mean to me?
  - What activities did I attend to promote the poppy and its meaning?
- Age-appropriate originality with considerations for neatness and creativity.

The Little Miss Poppy (age 6-12) winner may be invited to the ALA National Convention immediately following her selection, and if she so chooses, will travel at her own expense.

The winner of the National Little Miss Poppy contest will receive a citation plaque.



## **SERVICE TO VETERANS**

This list provides you with the information for centerpieces and tray favors for our Veterans facilities.

Grand Island VA Medical Center  
Vicki Cyboron – 402-740-5665  
10 Centerpieces

Omaha VA Medical Center  
Paula Pillen – 402-630-6583  
75 Tray Favors

Central NE Veterans Home  
Kathy Fisher – 308-627-4454  
150 Tray Favors

Eastern NE Veterans Home  
Donna Smith – 402-250-3309  
24 Centerpieces

Norfolk Veterans Home  
LaRee Kubes – 402-841-6813  
20 Centerpieces

Western NE Veterans Home  
Cecil Doshier – 308-631-7093  
13 Centerpieces  
90 Tray Favors

For signing up to provide either centerpieces or tray favors, contact Maria Atterberry at 308-325-2863. Some facilities have restrictions on what can be used when making the centerpieces or tray favors. If you have any questions regarding the materials you can use, please contact the facilities contact person.

Remember to send your assignments two-three weeks prior to the month they are due.