



The American Legion Auxiliary is extending its administrative year through our 2021 National Convention due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please save your 2019-2020 reports and add the great work you will continue to do throughout the 2020-2021 year.

2019 - 2021 Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan History

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What is this program, and why do we have it?

The heart of any organization's history is in its records – items that officers, members, directors, staff, and volunteers have produced and compiled over the years. They provide unique testimony to the achievements of an organization.

History Reporting:

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department History chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **January 5, 2021** to the national History chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department History chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **May 15, 2021** to the national History



chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines for report submissions at the department level.

Special 100th Anniversary Program History Facts:

The History Committee was created by resolution at the 1972 National Convention. Originally named the Cavalcade of Memories Committee, it began as a curator committee of three to collect, display and care for artifacts of national interest of the American Legion Auxiliary, donated for the new Cavalcade of Memories Museum located at ALA National Headquarters. The committee name changed to reflect that the Auxiliary's history is contained not only in these artifacts, but also in its photos, books, and governing documents, which require care as well. While the committee is still committed to collecting items of national importance for the museum and archives, the main focus of the committee has evolved to assisting departments and units in the collection and care of their important histories.



HOW TO CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Committee:

History

Contact Information for Questions:

History@ALAforVeterans.org

Objective:

Celebrate the special women of our organization

Background Information

The month of March is dedicated to the celebration of women's history. It corresponds with International Women's Day on March 8th. What could be better for a women's organization to do than celebrate their own history? Our Auxiliary members have accomplished a great deal all around the world. Now it's time to celebrate what makes them so special!

Step-by-Step Instructions

What can we do?

- Learn more about Auxiliary members who made history within your department or unit. This could include girls sponsored to ALA Girls State who have gone on to do great things or those members who have improved their communities, state or country.
- Celebrate the women in your life – mom, grandma, even your sister.
- Donate money to the ALA Cavalcade of Memories budget at the unit, department, or national level in honor of a special woman.
- Set up a display in honor of those members who have gone above and beyond the ALA's mission.
- Write an article for your unit/department newsletter about Women's History Month or about the woman you are honoring.
- Check out how women's fashion has changed over time in the Auxiliary, as well as women's hair fashion. There has been a great deal of change from 1919 to today!
- Research and write about how the former and present members make a difference in the community and share with others.
- Put up a display at your local library, historical society, or storefront, celebrating the work that the women of the ALA have done and still do every day.



Remember – these activities can be shared with the Junior members. Honoring our members provides them with a role model. Sharing our history with our Junior members allows them to know that they, too, are valuable members of this great organization. Hopefully, they will begin to own this history and remain members throughout their lifetimes.



HOW TO INVOLVE A JUNIOR MEMBER

Committee:

History

Contact Information for Questions:

History@ALAforVeterans.org

Objective:

Help a Junior member (9th – 12th grades) earn the new History Patch

Background Information



In a joint effort with the National Junior Activities Committee, we have developed a History Patch for our high school (9th – 12th grades) Junior members. These young ladies have an opportunity to work with, learn from, and take ownership of the American Legion Auxiliary history. It is important for them to understand that they are a part of the Auxiliary's history. By earning this patch, they may become interested not only in the history itself, but in preserving it as well, and become a unit's or department's History/Cavalcade chairman.

Step-by-Step Instructions

What can we do?

- Contact the department Junior Activities chairman and ask her to help promote this new patch. Make joint announcements at your fall/winter/spring meetings, division/district meetings, etc.
- Write an article about the patch for the department newsletter.
- Make a poster to promote the patch for meetings. Include the patch and activities list (see below).
- Encourage the unit History/Cavalcade chairmen to promote this patch and work with their unit Junior Activities committee chairman.
- Find a high school aged Junior member and be a mentor to her as she works the activities to earn the patch.



HISTORY PATCH BLUE LEVEL 3
(Grade 9th-12th)

Educate yourself about the history of the ALA and The American Legion Family

Level 3: Twelve (12) possibilities; **Three* (3) activities are required;** Six (6) are your choice. A total of Nine (9) activities must be completed from the Twelve (12) choices.

No.:	Activity:	Date:	Adult Signature:
*1	Interview at least two ALA members for the <i>Members Remember</i> project. Post your video interviews on YouTube.com. Information can be found on the National History Committee page of the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org .		
2	Learn about the Veterans History Project. Interview at least two veterans and preserve their stories. Send your project to the Library of Congress www.loc.gov/vets .		
3	Contribute to your unit's ALA Senior History Book. Focus on who we are, what we do and why it matters.		
*4	Contribute to your unit's ALA Junior History Book.		
5	Contribute to and/or start a unit history museum to capture the impact the ALA has had on your community.		
*6	Research and do a presentation on the history of your unit. Present it to your Junior unit, or at a unit or post meeting.		
7	Research current, former or deceased members of your Legion Family (unit, post or squadron) who made a significant contribution to your community.		
8	Organize a <i>Veterans in Community Schools</i> presentation. Work with a veteran in your post, and find a school or classroom in which to make a presentation.		
9	Organize a library of past issues of <i>Auxiliary</i> magazine for your unit. Make special notation of issues with articles relevant to your unit or department.		



10	Start a Blue Star/Gold Star Mothers and Families database for your unit.		
11	Start an ALA Girls State database for your unit: who your unit sponsored, what offices the girls held, and if anyone went on to ALA Girls Nation.		
12	Start a Poppy Program History: Keep track of your unit's Poppy Poster Contest, Miss Poppy, and Little Miss Poppy winners. Make special notation of those who also went on to win at the department or national level.		

Name of Junior Member: _____
Grade: _____ Unit #: _____
Department: _____



HOW TO RECORD AND POST TO “MEMBERS REMEMBER”

Committee:

History

Contact Information for Questions:

History@ALAforVeterans.org

Objective:

Record the ALA’s history through the eyes of its members

Background Information

The history of the American Legion Auxiliary begins back in November 1919, and continues with you. The organization’s history, like any other history, is more than names and dates. It is about its membership and how it developed the ALA’s programs and projects to fulfill our mission of serving the veterans, servicemembers, and their families who sacrifice much for this country of ours.

A written history can only tell so much. However, when an organization’s history is told through the eyes of its membership, everyone learns a great deal more about who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Here are some tips:

- This is a two-person project so find someone to assist. This is a good time to enlist the help of your 9th-12th grade Junior members as it is a required activity in earning the History Patch. If your unit does not have Junior members, enlist the assistance of college students.
- Find longtime members of the Auxiliary and ask them to share their stories in a video. These stories can be about:
 - A special project,
 - A particular highlight during her membership
 - How many generations of her family have been members and why
 - If a chartered member, her experience in starting the unit
- Find a location where it is quiet and where there will be no interruptions.
- Record with iPhones/Smartphones. Please keep in mind that your video file must be either a .mov; .avi; .mpeg; or a .wmv file extension.
- Each recording should be no longer than five (5) minutes long. You may make more than one. Cover one topic in each video.
- Post the video on YouTube. An instructional video on how to upload is located at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O7iUifbKU.
 - Go to YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com>
 - Give the video the following title: ALA Dept. of __ (two letter abbreviation for your state) Unit ____ Members Remember.
 - Provide a description and tags that will help people locate the video easily.



- Under Category, click on Nonprofits & Activism.
- Under Privacy, click on Share your video with the world.
- Click Save Changes.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



It has been said that “a clever hashtag can send a powerful message,” but what if you are not into Twitter? Will an email or article in your newsletter or newspaper be just as powerful? They can be as long as it has a good subject line or title. It makes people take notice, invites their curiosity and causes them to wonder about the rest of the story.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has a Twitter account and has asked followers to tell them why #ThisPlaceMatters. In other words, what’s the story and why is it important? Although often applied to the preservation of historic buildings, or more specifically, to those buildings deemed endangered or at-risk, perhaps that for the many of us, we can make this apply to us as well. Our Auxiliary units and their places do matter. But how well do we tell our own story?

As those of us responsible for collecting, preserving and sharing the ALA’s history at the unit, department or national level, we often pride ourselves in being story tellers. We tell stories of our buildings, our artifacts, our people, our events. But how well can we tell the story of “us?” How often and how well do we talk about our place – our historic site, our museum, our history – as something of value, something worth investing in? Certainly our local history organizations and museums matter to us and we know they matter to our communities. But the question is: does your community know? Can you tell them why the ALA’s mission is important? Have you? As stewards not only of our shared history but of our organizations, we must always be prepared (and, in fact, excited) to tell our story – to explain why our place matters.

The ability to communicate our organization’s story is a key component of garnering support. Whether you want to attract more members, create new partnerships, or secure larger donations, you have to build a case for support. This case starts with your unit’s/department’s story: where it came from, where it is now and where it could go in the future (with additional investments of time, talent, and treasure on the part of your supporters). Once you have identified the myriad ways your organization matters, you will be better able to match people to messages, to strategically target parts of your story to the most receptive audiences.

So, start thinking now about how your organization fits into your community. Why does it matter? To whom does it matter? If you haven’t stopped to answer these questions, give them some thought. Remember that the heart of every case for support is the story. What is your organization’s story? Why does your place matter? Talk to your board, your members, your guests, and perhaps most importantly, talk with those who have never been through your door. The first step is knowing why this place matters. The second step is telling others.

**Credit for the content of this article go to Jamie Simek, Fundraising Educator with the Indiana Historical Society*