



American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Florida
Program Engagement Plan
2025 – 2026
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2025 - 2026 HISTORY

PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT PLAN

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

We are Passionate about our Vets, and our history has already proven that. So, let's keep that trend going Don't forget to hashtags #passionforrvets and #heartsasone on your social media posts which helps to show that passion while we tell the story that will become our History! If President Robin attends your events, please share your photos either on the History Facebook page = ALAFL History or e-mail the Department Historian at historian@alafl.org.

History is the record of what's going on and then kept for the future. Please write about and photograph accurate information about what our organization is doing, not only in the Units but also in the Districts and Department. Your history is not just the travels or events that the President takes, but all the activities, programs and projects that your group is participating in. Use the passion that you feel to document and memorialize that History. Historians chronicle & archive the everyday events that write our History. Our History is contained in artifacts, documents, newsletters, written history's, scrapbooks, etc... and can answer the question, "What are we passionate about?" We are passionate about the Auxiliary's legacy, in which members will be able to look back and learn what was successful and why, as well as what we did to show that passion for our Veteran's. Dating back to 1919 when the American Legion Auxiliary was formed, we were known to Serve, Honor, Advocate and Educate, our founders show their "passion" Our ALA history is rich in the Department of Florida and with your help, we will continue our legacy of a community of volunteers and mentor our members.

Unit or District Histories can look overwhelming but can be as simple as keeping a dated log, events in a notebook or writing a narrative of what has happened in your Auxiliary Group. Since you can't be everywhere or at every event, ask other members that are attending, to share photos or jot down specifics for you. Ask them what went on or you can find needed information through social media, Newspaper Articles, the Internet, Newsletters, the Unit Checkbook, Calendars, Blog submissions, etc. Your written History can be from May 1st – April 30th (the following year) so that you can include your Memorial Day celebrations as well. It must follow the rules and guidelines listed, if you are submitting for an award. Otherwise, your history, can be put into any form of book, folder or electronic form and doesn't have to follow the requirements of how to submit a History – assemble it your own way. The most important thing is to record your Unit/Districts history and let the PASSION shine through.

Start as soon as possible! The history is the heart of your Unit/District so you should have already started writing and accumulating, recording events as soon as your President was sworn in.

- You should include the President's theme and how your group promoted it.
- President Robin's Special Project AEF Emergency Relief Fund, did you donate to it or incorporate it into your group this year i.e: fundraise, themed events ...? National President Pam Ray's theme is "Mission Driven, Family Focused" and her Special Project is AEF. So, please remember to add any events that may encompass these items in your story.
- You can include current events that impact the ALA both locally and globally, as well as the cause & effects on the Auxiliary resulting in new or resurrected projects and programs. Show the passion while promoting something that is special to your group.
- So many members take photos, you can add those to our History Social Media pages such as Facebook pages ALAFL History and ALAFL Public Relations. These can help you write your history, or you can put together a pictorial history book for your Unit, District or Post as well as submit it for a Department Award. (The guidelines for written award submission, say no more than 5 photos allowed; so, a great option would be to construct a scrapbook.)
- Checking newsletters, meeting minutes, e-mails, governing documents, check book registry and newspaper clippings can also help when writing your history.
- Put all your information in chronological order.
- Make sure you share any Auxiliary memorabilia and doing it electronically can help your Unit/District treasure and preserve them for years to come.
- Set-up a system to archive important communications and make sure you initiate a record management program on how to keep these important artifacts, specifically digitally so it can be saved for safe keeping.
- It is important that after you share this information that several people can access it, it does your group no good if only a few have access as if something happens to someone, another person can obtain it.

The recording of the ALA History on all levels is important so that everyone will know who we are, what we do and why we matter.

Initiatives can include:

- (1) Assisting in developing a system to archive important communications such as newsletters, handbooks, guidebooks, brochures and program information.
- (2) Participate in and promote the "Members Remembers" history project.
- (3) Work with the Junior Activity committee to promote the History Patch for Jr. Members in grade 9 – 12.
- (4) Encourage Sr. & Jr. Historians to participate in the Veterans History Project.

- (5) Develop your own categorizing system of your Unit or District past Histories
- (6) Start Digitizing your Unit or District Histories to preserve the safe keeping of groups History books.
- (7) Record some fun facts about your Post Home, Name sake or an important Member.
- (8) Post on the Department History social media page any of your findings from above mentioned.
- (9) Take photos to accumulate for a Pictorial History book or scrapbook and submit for the Department Voorhis Award.
- (10) Apply and submit for all awards you're eligible for.

Best Senior Written History – for Unit and District Record the ALA's history through the eyes of its members. There will be Chairmen Awards given for the Best Written Sr. History for the Units in each Grouping and

- (1) Best District Written Sr. History. We would appreciate these sent electronically rather than by mail (but will be accepted either way). **Additional requirements are attached See: Best Written Senior History guide.**
- (2) DEPARTMENT AWARD - Best Pictorial History book for Unit or District - The Voorhis Award. Most of us take photos, why not accumulate them and place them together. You can assemble them into a Photo book, Scrapbook or Historical Picture Book and submit it for a Department Historian Award. Submissions must be from this administrative year. **Rules are attached. See: The Voorhis Award – Best Pictorial Sr. History Book guide.**
- (3) Members Remember History Project – Do you have a Past President, leader or a charter member hailing from your Unit or District? Do they have an interesting story? Complete a history project on them and submit it any time during this year. The questions that you can ask are:
 - What was the purpose or mission driven program that sparked your interest?
 - What Unit did you start with and why?
 - What are some of the programs and committees that you served on and what was your favorite and why?
 - What has been the greatest reward while being in the Auxiliary?
 - Did you go up the chairs and who mentored you?
 - We will showcase it on our Department Facebook page at ALAFL History and possibly in the Department Newsletter: Passionate Posts. A certificate will be given for each submission. Junior members can also participate in this project. See: How to record and post to “Members Remember” guide.
- (4) Celebrating Woman's History - Female Veterans Project - The month of March is dedicated to the celebration of Women's History, but this can be done at any time during this year. Interview a Female Veteran and submit that to the Department Historian. Your submission may end up on social media and in the Department Newsletter: Passionate Posts. See: How to Celebrate Women's History guide.
- (5) Best Junior Written and Pictorial History – A certificate will be given to any Junior member that submits a written or pictorial History for Unit, District or Department. You can involve

Junior members and ask them to write their own history, have them interview a Female Veteran or a Previous Leader and also encourage the Junior History Patch for 9th – 12th Graders. See: How to involve a Junior Members guide.

- (6) ALA History Blog at <https://alaforveterans.pastperfectonline.com> You can explore and learn about our vast history of the American Legion Auxiliary and find the Digital Archive Collection. For over a century ALA members have volunteered selflessly to help our Veterans, military and their families, children & youth and our communities. Today our mission outreach impact exceeds \$2 billion annually to sustain our commitment to honor our past, present & future Veterans.
- (7) You can find more Historian Resources in the My Auxiliary – Member Portal under “Find it Fast” / Member Resources / Department & Units / Historian Resources at www.legion-aux.org or click on our Department website at www.alafl.org under Programs >Member/Org Support >Historian
- (8) “Dig” and find out 1 important piece of History of your group and share it either on social media, in a newsletter or at your post bulletin board and let the Historian know so it can be highlighted!
- (9) A year-end report will be due by the deadlines. Units report to District Historian by: April 1, 2026 and District reports to Department Historian by: April 15, 2026.
- (10) HISTORIAN AWARDS –
 - Best Written Unit Senior History (1) in each of the 6 Groupings
 - Best Written District Senior History Member Remembers - Certificate given for every submission, also sent on to National Celebrating Women’s History
 - Female Veteran Project - Certificate given for every submission
 - Best Written Unit, District & Department Junior History Best Pictorial Unit, District & Department Junior History Book

DEPARTMENT AWARD - The Voorhis Award – Best Pictorial Sr. History Book for Unit or District and will receive a plaque. Certificates given for each electronic submission.

RESOURCES –

- ALA FL Historian Program Engagement Plan
- Unit Report Form
- District Report Form
- How to Write a History
- The Voorhis Award Best Pictorial Sr. History Book Guide,
- Members Remember History Project
- Celebrating Woman’s History,
- Female Veterans Project Guide
- Best Junior History Book Guide

Attachments & Links – ALAFL Website / Programs / Historian

How to Record & Post to Members Remember

How to Celebrate Women’s History

Junior's Involvement in History

Junior History Patch Info

One final note. Here are the lyrics to song I chose for this year as Historian

We Didn't Start the Fire

By Billy Joel

Harry Truman, Doris Day, Red China, Johnnie Ray
South Pacific, Walter Winchell, Joe DiMaggio

Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Studebaker, television
North Korea, South Korea, Marilyn Monroe

Rosenbergs, H-bomb, Sugar Ray, Panmunjom
Brando, "The King and I" and "The Catcher in the Rye"

Eisenhower, vaccine, England's got a new queen
Marciano, Liberace, Santayana goodbye

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
But we tried to fight it

Joseph Stalin, Malenkov, Nasser and Prokofiev
Rockefeller, Campanella, Communist Bloc

Roy Cohn, Juan Peron, Toscanini, Dacron
Dien Bien Phu falls, "Rock Around the Clock"

Einstein, James Dean, Brooklyn's got a winning team
Davy Crockett, Peter Pan, Elvis Presley, Disneyland

Bardot, Budapest, Alabama, Krushchev
Princess Grace, "Peyton Place", trouble in the Suez

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
But we tried to fight it

Little Rock, Pasternak, Mickey Mantle, Kerouac
Sputnik, Zhou En-Lai, "Bridge on the River Kwai"

Lebanon, Charles de Gaulle, California baseball
Starkweather homicide, children of Thalidomide

Oh, huh, ho

Buddy Holly, "Ben-Hur", space monkey, Mafia
Hula hoops, Castro, Edsel is a no-go

U2, Syngman Rhee, payola and Kennedy
Chubby Checker, "Psycho", Belgians in the Congo

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
But we tried to fight it

Hemingway, Eichmann, "Stranger in a Strange Land"
Dylan, Berlin, Bay of Pigs invasion

"Lawrence of Arabia", British Beatlemania
Ole Miss, John Glenn, Liston beats Patterson

Pope Paul, Malcolm X, British politician sex
JFK, blown away, what else do I have to say?

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
But we tried to fight it

Birth control, Ho Chi Minh, Richard Nixon back again
Moonshot, Woodstock, Watergate, punk rock
Begin, Reagan, Palestine, terror on the airline
Ayatollahs in Iran, Russians in Afghanistan

"Wheel of Fortune", Sally Ride, heavy metal, suicide
Foreign debts, homeless vets, AIDS, Crack, Bernie Goetz
Hypodermics on the shores, China's under martial law
Rock and roller Cola wars, I can't take it anymore

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
But when we are gone

It will still burn on, and on, and on
And on and on and on and on and on and on

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
But we tried to fight it

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
But we tried to fight it

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
But we tried to fight it

We didn't start the fire

source: https://www.lyricsondemand.com/billy_joel/we_didnt_start_the_fire

We didn't start it but we sure can make sure it is not forgotten!!

Now let that **Passion for Vets** shine while we tell the story that is our History!

#heartsasone

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