

History - Program Action Plan *"We're All In"*

It is the objective of the historian at all levels to record the history of their activities throughout the year.

Our history is contained in artifacts, documents, newspaper articles, publications, meeting minutes, photos, newsletters, written histories, etc. We do this to honor those members who have made a difference in our organization at all levels. History allows us to build a stronger organization based upon those experiences.

The Program and why?

Items that officers, members, and volunteers have produced and compiled over the years provide a unique testimony to the achievements of an organization. Records contribute in many ways:

- Members will be able to look back and learn what efforts were successful and why. They will be able to see the missteps as well as the achievements which can assist in determining a future strategy.
- Exhibiting materials not only stimulates enthusiasm but also encourages members to maintain the organization's standards and promote its future.
- Pride in the organization has a direct correlation to motivate the current membership to bring in new members, achieve more goals, create a sense of strength and conviction while developing leaders.
- Maintaining and preserving our records are invaluable to society and serves as informative and educational resource to a variety of potential users.

What can we do? :

The historian should develop a system to archive communications such as newsletters, fliers, hand books and program information.

- Include current events that impact the American Legion Auxiliary and its programs/projects in the written history of the year.
- Historians should promote the **Veterans History Project** (<http://www.loc.gov/vets/kit.html>) through ALA Historian's Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAHistorians/members/>), emails and during meetings. This would be a great project to partner with the Junior Activities chairman, helping them earn the History patch. Highlight details of the project on the national historian's web page.
- Highlight historical, important and interesting events in your unit.
- Include memorabilia of your honorary junior presidents.

- Use new technology to create and maintain digital images and records. Note: Make more than one digital copy and store them in different places.
- Attend local workshops to learn preservation and conservation methods.
- If you enjoy history or writing and want to learn more, volunteer to be the History Chairman or committee member for your unit.
- Appoint a History chairman. Invite members and unit to participate.

What is expected?

- Collect information about famous Auxiliary Members. Include full names, years of Auxiliary membership, details of what they did, who they are and why they are famous. Remember to include where you found the information.
- Your history is in more places than just artifacts. It is in your meeting minutes, governing documents, newspaper articles, photos, etc. Set up a system as to how these will be kept.
- Make sure you initiate a record management program. Preserve your history on a flash drive/disc to keep for future viewing.
- Inventory of your entire collection: i.e. organizational documents, written histories, and scrapbooks. Be sure to include information such as who donated the item and when.
- Feature a historical item or write an article about an important time in the unit's history in your department newsletter.
- Ask members to consider donating or loaning important items they may have.

Initiate a History project.

- Search throughout the post/unit home for items.
- Gather photos and document the event(s) at which they were taken as well as the people in the photos.
- Learn the history of your unit, department and national organization. If you do not have a written unit or department history, volunteer to help put one together.
- For documents and photos, digitize them, making sure to make more than one copy and the additional copies stored in different places.

An organization benefits itself and the public by preserving its records and making them available for use by everyone inside and outside the organization.

Why should I write a narrative?

Narratives shape history (the series of events, the story of what happened). Each year the American Legion Auxiliary uses narratives as a way to report the work that we do

and the impact of that work. The narratives are used by the ALA to communicate to not only our members but to people o

How do I write a narrative?

When a Unit or a member of a unit does something to support one of the Auxiliary programs the best practice is to write down what was done as soon after as possible. On the next pages there is a template that can act as a good place to start for writing your narrative. This template has been used by several Units and they have found it to be an easy way to get started.

On the next page of this document you will see a list of 21 questions. Once an event is held fill in the answers to the 21 questions. Then print the last page the "A Good Place to Start" template.

Now that you have started keep going, add any additional information that you think is important, and add pictures.

Good Luck & Happy Writing!

Questions for Writing a Narrative "A Good Place to Start"

1. Name of your Unit _____
2. Number of your Unit _____
3. District Number for your Unit _____
4. State where your Unit is located _____
5. Number of members in your Unit _____
6. City where your Unit is located _____
7. Name of your Unit President _____
8. Name of the ALA Program you participated in (example: Children & Youth)

9. Name of the event you held (example: Star Spangled Kids) _____

10. Date you held the event _____
11. Where you held the event (example: ABC Elementary School) _____
12. Short description of the purpose of the event (example: To educate 3rd grade students on the US Constitution) _____

13. Number of members who worked on the event _____
14. Number of people who attended _____
15. Name of any other organization who came to help (example: SAL or VFW)

16. If tickets were sold for the event how much was charged? _____
17. If donations were collected, what was the amount of funds or in kind donations collected during the event? _____
18. Describe what you did during the event. _____
19. List of dignitaries who attended the event (example: Principle Edwards, Julie Jones Department President) _____

20. See Question #9 (Name of the event you held) _____

21. Describe the outcome (Did you fulfill the purpose of the event) _____

Good Place to Start

USE THIS PAGE AS A GUIDE TO FILL IN FROM THE TEMPLATE PAGE

The _____ (1) _____ Unit # _____ (2) _____ in District/County _____ (3) _____ from the Department of _____ (4) _____ is a Unit of _____ (5) _____ members. We are located in the _____ (6) _____ area. Our President for the 2017-2018 year is _____ (7) _____.

Over the past year we have made _____ (8) _____ one of our priorities. One of our best events was the _____ (9) _____ . It was held on _____ (10) _____ at _____ (11) _____ . The purpose of our event was to _____ (12) _____ . _____ (13) _____ members worked on this. We were pleased to see _____ (14) _____ attend. _____ (15) _____ came to help. The tickets were sold for _____ (16) _____ (or there was no cost). _____ (17) _____ were donated. During our event we _____ (18) _____ . We were honored to have _____ (19) _____ be part of our _____ (20) _____ .

(Describe the outcome) (21)

HOW TO RECORD AND POST TO “MEMBERS REMEMBER”

Contact Information for Questions:

historian@ALAforVeterans.org or National Historian historian@alaf1.org for Department of Florida

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, service members, 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 junior members and/or college students due to their experience with technology.
- Find long time 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.

VETERANS' HISTORY PROJECT

Work with junior activities chairman to participate in the Veterans' History Project

(<http://www.loc.gov/vets/kit.html>)

- Work with junior to promote the Veterans' History project through social media, emails and during meetings.
- Stress the importance of collecting the history and the ease of participating in the project through all communications.
- Highlight details of the project on the ALA Historian's Facebook group
- (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAHistorians/members>)

HOW TO CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Contact Information:

Historian@alaf.org, amatoellie@aol.com, 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

History

Contact Information for Questions:

Historian@alaf.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.

Eleanor Kernaghan Senior History Award

History must be written in narrative form as events occur after current year's Department Officers' Installation (See how to write a narrative in Program Action Plan - Historian.

RULES

Introduction, Inclusions

1. Title Page
 - a) American Legion Auxiliary Unit Name and Number
 - b) City and State of Unit
 - c) Name of Unit Historian and President
 - d) Year of history being recorded
 - e) Membership grouping

- 2 Text 12 font, Times New Roman or Arial style font. Double spacing.

Content

1. The unit history shall be written as a factual narrative beginning with the installation of department officers at department convention 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.
3. Use clear, concise language with correct spelling.
4. Do not include or use computer graphics, pen or ink drawings, illustrations, extra material, or newspaper clippings, or other embellishments.
5. Be sure the unit annual history truly represents a historical account of the unit – what the unit accomplished. A unit history lists those who served as leaders and mentions notable awards or individual achievements. It is not a travelogue or diary of any officer or individual's itineraries. The content is about the unit and its collective members mission achievements.

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Certificate plaque: "Honorable Mentioned Award" presented to the unit in each membership grouping who submits the best history narrative in her group but did not receive the Eleanore Kernaghan Senior History Trophy. Unit must follow instructions in Program Action Plan.

JUNIOR AWARD

Certificate plaque: Presented to the junior member who submits the best history narrative. Member must follow rules as indicated in the Program Action Plan under senior's Eleanore Kernaghan Senior History Trophy.

For more information:

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