

# History - Program Action Plan 2020-2021



## Introduction

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, and 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**. 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.
- 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.

- Participate in the **Members Remember** project (see Resources). The History Patch is available to junior members in 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Work with junior activities chairman to promote the patch. Stress the importance of collecting the ALA's history and the ease of participating in the project through all communications.
- Post your unit history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration webpage at <http://centennial.legion.org/>
- 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. This information should be sent to the national historian as it is collected throughout the year with a deadline of May 15, 2021.
- 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.
- Feature a historical item or write an article about an important time in the unit's history in your department newsletter.

### **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.***

## **Narrative Instructions**

Unit Historians shall write a Unit history to be entered into Department Contest. Start compiling information early, and bulletins for additions or further information.

### **What is a narrative?**

A narrative is some kind of retelling, in words, of something that happened (a story). The narrative is not the story itself but rather the telling of the story. While a story just is a sequence of events, a narrative recounts those events. In a series of events, a car crash takes a split second. A narrative account, however, might be almost entirely about the crash itself and the few seconds leading up to it.

### **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 outside our organization including potential donors. Additionally, some of the ALA awards require a narrative.

### **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

1. Name of your Unit \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of your Unit \_\_\_\_\_
3. District or County 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

22.

A

## 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 CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

## MARCH

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!

### 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.

## 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>)

## RECORD AND POST TO “MEMBERS REMEMBER”

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. 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 in length. 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 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_O7iUiftbKU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O7iUiftbKU).
- 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 files easily. These will make it easier for others to locate the videos.
- Under Category, click on Nonprofits & Activism
- Under Privacy, click on Share your video with the world
- Click Save Changes



## **INVOLVE A JUNIOR MEMBER**

### **Help a junior member (9th – 12th grades) earn the new History Patch**

The National Junior Activities Committee has developed a History Patch for high school junior members. These young ladies have an opportunity to work, learn, and take ownership of the American Legion Auxiliary's history. It is important for our juniors to understand that they are a part of the Auxiliary's history. By earning this patch, our juniors become interested not only in the history but also in preserving it as well. Who knows? They may become a unit's or department's History Chairman.

#### **What can we do?**

- Contact the department's 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 Chairman 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 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)***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 <a href="http://www.ALAforVeterans.org">www.ALAforVeterans.org</a> .		
2	Learn about the Veterans History Project. Interview at least two veterans and preserve their stories. Send your project to the Library of Congress <a href="http://www.loc.gov/vets">www.loc.gov/vets</a> .		
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.		

History

Unit Historians shall write a Unit History to be entered into Department contest.



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: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Historians shall write a Unit History to be entered into Department contest.

## DEPARTMENT AWARDS

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 Senior History Award. Must follow instruction as follows.

## Instructions for submitting histories for unit award

## Introduction, Inclusions

1. Title Page
  - a) American Legion Auxiliary Unit  
\_\_\_\_\_History
  - b) City of Unit
  - c) Name of Unit Historian and President
  - d) Present year of history being recorded
  - e) Membership grouping
2. Foreword or dedication page
3. A prayer page
4. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America page.
5. Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary page.
6. List of Unit officers and chairman page

Total of 6 pages

## Appearance – Formatting

1. Photos, mementos, souvenirs will not be considered in judging. These items may be added later.
2. Use plain, white paper 8 ½" x 11 in ".
3. Page Setup:
  - a. Margins – Left and right margin should be 1.25 in; top and bottom margins should be 1 in.
  - b. Pagination – Page numbers should begin on the first page of the historical content. They should be centered and placed 0.5 in. from the bottom of the page.
4. Spacing: Double-spaced with the exception of the introductory pages (i.e. title page, foreword or dedication, prayer, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary) which shall be centered in the middle of the page.

5. Paragraphs may be indented or in block form.
6. Text: 12 point font, Times New Roman or Arial style font.

### **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.

### **JUNIOR AWARD**

Plaque: Presented to the junior member who submits the best history narrative  
Follow senior instructions.



**2020-2021 Unit Historian Mid-year & Yearly Report**

**Mid-year report submit by November 15, 2020**

**Please complete yearly and return on or before April 1, 2021 to:**

Eleanor V. Amato  
Department of Florida Historian  
892 Catfish Avenue  
New Smyrna Beach, Florida 32169

Unit # \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Historian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list and explain at least three (3) significant events, happenings or newsworthy activities that have taken place in your unit since Department convention.

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for providing a mid-year report! Please continue recording the activities within your department so that our history is maintained for future generations!

Unit to Department by Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>

District to Department by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>

Department to President Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>

to Southern Division by Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## 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, and 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*



## 2020-2021 DISTRICT HISTORIAN ANNUAL REPORT

Please complete and return as follows:

**District Historian to Department Historian before April 15, 2021**

Mail to: Eleanor V. Amato  
892 Catfish Avenue  
New Smyrna Beach, Florida 32169

386-427-1168 Home    386-689-4017 Cell

District \_\_\_\_\_ District Historian's Name \_\_\_\_\_

District Historian's Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many units in your district? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many senior unit histories were submitted? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many junior unit histories were submitted? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many units participated in the Veteran's History Project? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many veteran histories did senior members record? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many veteran histories did junior members record? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many histories were recorded for the "Member's Remembered"

History project? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please outline the methods you used to promote the importance of keeping a thorough and complete record of activities and accomplishments in your district this year

---

---

---

Send to me so that I receive your report no later than April 15, 2021. Thank you.

