

# PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRENTS



## POPPIES! HELP YOUR POPPY CHAIR THRIVE!

*By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC*

Each year, American Legion Auxiliary units throughout the United States honor fallen warriors and raise funds to assist our veterans. National Poppy Day will be recognized on Friday, May 23, 2025 – the Friday before Memorial Day Weekend. What will your Unit do this year?

The Flanders Fields poppy has become an internationally known and recognized symbol of the lives sacrificed in war and the hope that none died in vain. The American Legion Family called upon Congress to proclaim the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day, which was officially designated as such in 2017.

To assist units with their efforts, there is a toolkit on the Member Portal of the American Legion Auxiliary's website. Access this by logging into National's website – [Legion-Aux.org](https://Legion-Aux.org) – and visiting the Resources menu option. In the toolkit, you will find PSA and Press Release templates to send to your local media. You will also find bookmarks, donation can labels, poppy cookie recipes, a coloring book and more.

Let's not let anyone forget. We wish you all the best as you embark this coming Memorial Day weekend on honoring those who sacrifice everything for our freedom.

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MAY 2025



## BUILDING YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

*By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC*

This May, many American Legion Auxiliary Units are hosting elections for incoming officers. This also is a great time to start recruiting Program Chairs, and as the PR program chair, you can help!.

The American Legion Auxiliary has many different programs that ultimately assist the organization serve its mission. Taking on a program chair position does not necessarily mean a member is on her or his own. They can recruit and work with a committee, if they like. There are many different types of programs - from Americanism to Veterans Affairs. Each program also has a Program Chair at the District level and the Department level. Information about each program can be found on [alafl.org](http://alafl.org) under the Programs menu.

As the PR program chair, you can help tell the story about each program and their importance. Perhaps create a series of social media posts about each program (post one per day on Facebook), or include a story in your unit's monthly newsletter. Create a recruitment flyer. Capture and share a testimony from a former program chair.

The PR program is a support function for the organization, and as PR Chair, you play a vital role in helping to develop your organization's leadership. If you create a campaign, we hope you'll share on the [ALAFL Public Relations Facebook Group](#).



*Unit 186, Brooksville - membership initiation*



## PTSD AWARENESS MONTH, STANDING WITH OUR HEROES

By Virna Luke

June is recognized nationally as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month, a time to shine a light on the invisible wounds carried by many of our nation's veterans and active-duty service members. As members of the ALA, we recognize the impact PTSD has not only on veterans but also on their families, caregivers, and communities.

It is critical that we continue to raise awareness, support access to mental health care, and provide a compassionate community for those affected. When we support the emotional and mental well-being of our heroes, we strengthen the very core of our organization and its future impact.

How ALA Units Can Show Support in June:

**Host a wellness-focused event** with guest speakers, resource booths, or yoga/meditation activities for veterans.

**Share educational resources** about PTSD symptoms and support hotlines through **social media** and unit newsletters.

**Partner with your local VA or Vet Center** to distribute flyers or coordinate volunteer support.

**Check in on caregivers**—many spouses, children, and family members quietly carry the weight of PTSD alongside their loved one.

If someone you know may be struggling with PTSD, encourage them to seek help.

Here are two essential resources to share:

- Veterans Crisis Line – Dial 988, then press 1
- National Center for PTSD – [www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov)

Standing with our veterans during PTSD Awareness Month, we continue to secure the foundation of care and respect that builds a stronger future for all who served.

## PTSD IN VETERANS



Veterans are more likely to have PTSD than civilians.



Veterans who deployed to a war zone are slightly more likely to have PTSD than those who did not.



Hispanic and Black Veterans are more likely to have PTSD at some point in their lives relative to white Veterans.



Veterans who identify as LGBTQ+ are more likely to have PTSD and risk increases with time in the military.

Graphic: [ptsd.va.gov](http://ptsd.va.gov)



MAY 2025



## HONORING OUR FLAG

By Virna Luke

Each year on **June 14**, Americans pause to honor one of the most enduring symbols of our nation's identity: the United States flag. On this date in 1777, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution establishing the design of the flag—thirteen stripes and thirteen stars representing a new constellation. Over two centuries later, the flag remains a powerful emblem of freedom, unity, and the sacrifices of those who have served to defend it.

As members of the American Legion Auxiliary, **Flag Day offers us a unique opportunity to reflect on the values we uphold—service, patriotism, and community.** This year's theme, "*Securing Our Foundation to Build a Stronger Future*," calls on us to not only celebrate our past but to invest in the next generation of patriotic Americans.

**ALA units are encouraged to organize and participate in Flag Day events that bring our communities together.** Whether through a public flag-raising ceremony, an educational program on flag etiquette, or a respectful flag retirement service, these acts help instill pride and knowledge in citizens of all ages. **The American Flag Foundation's Annual National Flag Day and Pause For The Pledge of Allegiance happens at 7:00 p.m. EDT on Flag Day.**

Consider hosting a youth-focused event to teach the history and significance of the flag, or partner with local schools. There is an "[I Pledge Allegiance](#)" comic book for elementary students that provides the importance and meaning of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Also, "[Our Country's Flag](#)" comic book explains the history, significance, and proper treatment of our U.S. flag. Other comic books available are "[Light of Liberty](#)" and "[Our Country's Veterans](#)." These would be perfect to distribute at events – include them in your back-to-school drives.

The Legion has a series of social media graphics to share; these include [Voices of Our Flag](#), [Rally Around the Flag](#), and [U.S. Flag Code](#). Use them in the weeks leading up to Flag Day. Share photos and stories on social media using hashtags **#FlagDay**, **#PopAmericanism**, and **#BuildingTheHouse**, and showcase how your unit is helping to secure the foundation of patriotism in your community.

**As a reminder, American Legion Family members conducting Flag Day events are encouraged to share their stories and photos on Legiontown under the [Rally Around the Flag](#) section.**

Let us raise our flags high this June 14 and remind our neighbors that the Stars and Stripes are more than just fabric—they represent a living tradition of courage, unity, and service. Together, we honor the past and secure a stronger, brighter future.

MAY 2025



## TAKE THE SUMMER TO PLAN

*By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC*

Elections will soon be past, and your unit will have fresh new leadership with fresh new ideas. In addition, some of your unit's members may be attending the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Florida Convention this June 12-15, 2025, at the Hilton Orlando in Lake Buena Vista. Those that attend may also return with fresh ideas. This is why Summer is the perfect time to start planning your Unit's year!

Harness that positive energy and consider hosting a planning session for your unit leadership. Take a moment to conduct a SWOC Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges) with everyone as a group brainstorm. Then, start talking about what everyone wants to accomplish in the next year. With this information, leadership can help determine what is most important and build a calendar and timeline.

Ultimately, a planning session like this helps you, as PR chair, plan which programs, projects, services and activities that you are going to help promote and work on in the coming year. So, turn the heat up on planning this summer! It's going to be a great year!



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