

PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRENTS



IN THIS ISSUE

- Honor those serving
- National Poppy Day virtual 5K
- AI + branding
- National PR Awards



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Memorial Day is one of the most sacred observances we recognize, and as public relations leaders, we carry the responsibility of ensuring its meaning is clearly understood in our communities. Memorial Day is not a celebration. It is not a sale. It is not simply the start of summer. It is a day set aside to **honor the men and women who gave their lives in service to our country**. That distinction matters—and how we communicate it matters even more.

Every post, flyer, letter to the editor, and announcement shared by our units is an opportunity to educate and remind the public of the true purpose of this day. Clear, respectful messaging helps preserve the integrity of Memorial Day while honoring the sacrifice behind it.

Units are encouraged to:

- Share the meaning of Memorial Day in their own voice
- Highlight local ceremonies and moments of remembrance
- Encourage participation in the National Moment of Remembrance (3 PM, local time on Memorial Day)

Visual storytelling is especially powerful during this time. Photos of ceremonies, flags placed in honor, and quiet moments of reflection speak volumes and create lasting impact.

As we approach Memorial Day, be intentional. Lead with purpose. Use your platform to ensure that remembrance remains at the forefront. Because when we tell the story right, we honor them well.

ARMED FORCES DAY: HONOR THOSE SERVING TODAY



By Virna Luke

Armed Forces Day (third Saturday in May) gives us the opportunity to **recognize and honor the men and women currently serving** in the United States military.

While much of our mission focuses on Veterans, this day reminds us that service is ongoing. There are individuals actively defending our freedoms every day, and they deserve to be seen, recognized, and appreciated.

Armed Forces Day has a meaningful history, on July 26, 1947, Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act, bringing the military branches under one unified structure. This led to the creation of the Department of Defense in 1949.

Shortly after, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson established Armed Forces Day to replace separate observances for each military branch. The first celebration took place on May 20, 1950, with nationwide events. It gave Americans a closer look at their military and strengthened the connection between service members and the public.

In 1961, John F. Kennedy officially declared Armed Forces Day a national holiday.

Public relations plays a key role in continuing that mission..

Units can make an impact by:

- Highlighting active-duty service members in their community
- Sharing messages of appreciation across social platforms
- Partnering with local organizations to show support

Inviting service members or families to be recognized at meetings

Keep the messaging clear and focused: gratitude, respect, and acknowledgment of current service. Make sure to share your photos to [ALAFI National Security](#) and use hashtag

#FillTheirHeart

Recognition does not have to be elaborate to be meaningful. A simple, sincere message, shared with intention, can have lasting impact.



Photo Credit: [Liberty Flags](#)

APRIL 2026

NATIONAL POPPY DAY: LET'S SHOW UP AND STAND OUT

By Virna Luke

This year, the American Legion Auxiliary is taking National Poppy Day to the next level with a **Virtual 5K in May**—and it's all about visibility, impact, and honoring our mission.

Here's the deal: complete a 5K (3.1 miles) your way—walk, run, bike, swim—between May 1–22. Do it all at once or break it up. No pressure, just participation with purpose.

The goal? Show up, wear your poppy gear, and make it seen.

A suggested **\$25 donation** supports your local unit or department Poppy Fund. And yes, this is open to everyone, not just members.

Now the important part, **document it**:

- Take photos (lots of them!)
- Share on social media using **#ALAPoppyDay5K**
- Email high-resolution, actual-size pictures to Poppy@ALAforVeterans.org.

Registration closes April 30, with medals available for early registrants (700).

This is more than a 5K. It's a chance to put the poppy in front of more people in our communities and across social media and remind everyone what it stands for.

More information is available on the National website; click [here](#).



AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY

National Poppy Day[®]
Virtual
5K



2026

Wear it.
Share it.
Make it count.



ALAFL.org

AI + BRANDING: USE IT SMART, USE IT RIGHT

By Virna Luke

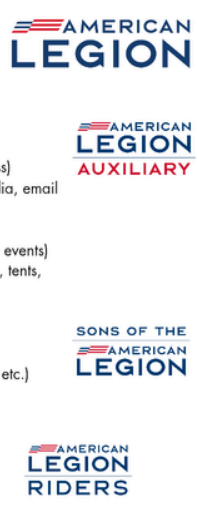

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming part of everyday public relations work. From creating social media graphics to drafting content, AI offers speed and convenience. But with that comes a responsibility we cannot overlook, protecting the integrity of our brand. As members of the American Legion Auxiliary, we are entrusted with safeguarding the emblem and everything it represents. The emblem is not just a design element, it is a protected symbol tied to our Congressional Charter, our Veterans, and our mission. AI tools can sometimes generate logos, symbols, or graphics that appear similar to official emblems but are inaccurate or altered. Using these can unintentionally misrepresent the organization and weaken brand consistency.

To stay aligned:

- Always use official emblems from approved sources
- Review AI-generated content carefully before sharing
- Avoid recreating or modifying protected symbols
- Follow [national branding guidelines](#) in all materials

AI should support your work, not replace your judgment. It is a tool, not the voice of the organization.

Used correctly, AI can help expand your reach, improve efficiency, and enhance storytelling. But the standard remains the same: accuracy, consistency, and respect for the brand. Strong public relations is built on trust. Protecting the emblem protects that trust.

<h3>BRANDMARK</h3> <p>Marketing, recruiting, & fundraising uses, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advertising• Apparel & merchandise• New building signage• Business cards• Event invitations (public-facing events)• Brochures or membership packets• Community partnership materials• Credentials (for external events or public access)• Digital applications (apps, website, social media, email newsletters, PowerPoint presentations)• Donor recognition displays (public-facing)• Email campaigns (for fundraising, outreach, or events)• Event signage and materials (signs, backdrops, tents, tablecloths, swag/giveaways, flags, banners)• Marketing and recruitment presentations• Media/press kits or press releases• Newsletters (external)• Promotional communications (flyers, handouts, etc.)• Promotional videos or PSAS• Public-facing annual reports• Social media profile imagery• Vehicle signage (wraps, decals or magnets)• Volunteer and donor recognition items• Website content and features	
	<h3>EMBLEM</h3>  <p>Internal, official, legal, ceremonial uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificates (official recognition, service, or retirement)• Ceremonial uniforms, pins, patches, insignia, or flags• Financial documents• History books or heritage publications• Internal-facing newsletters or bulletins• Legal affairs materials• Meeting agendas, minutes, and voting materials (official proceedings)• Memorial or tribute materials (e.g., ceremonies, remembrance programs)• Organizational charters or bylaws• Reports and resolutions (internal or formal governance-related)• Seals on plaques or certificates• Uniform caps
	<p>BRANDMARK & EMBLEM BRANDING GUIDELINES Updated September 10, 2025</p>

APRIL 2026

NATIONAL PR AWARDS: NOW IS THE TIME TO PREPARE

By Virna Luke

Now that your unit's end-of-year report has been submitted, it's time to take the next step: prepare your entry for [ALA National Public Relations Awards](#). You've already done the work; now it's about showcasing it.

All award submissions require a **narrative** (PDF or Word) explaining why the unit deserves the award. This narrative may also be the unit PR chairperson's report. Supporting documentation such as photos, screenshots, or PDFs may be uploaded to provide a full picture of your mission-driven work.

Submission deadline for all PR awards:

June 1 at 5:00 p.m. EST

Submissions are completed electronically, and you will receive a confirmation once submitted.

National Public Relations Unit Awards

ALA Mission-Focused Social Media Account (Division Award)

Recognizes units with active, well-maintained social media accounts that clearly support the ALA mission.

Requirements:

- One unit per division (five total)
- Active and consistently maintained social media account
- Content must be mission-focused
- Must conform to the ALA Branding Guide

Submission materials:

- Document with screenshots or photos of social media posts
- Social media account URL

Most Outstanding Unit Public Relations Program (Division Award)

Honors units that effectively tell their story through earned media in their local communities.

Requirements:

- One unit per division (five total)
- Media placements highlighting ALA mission delivery

Submission materials:

- Copies or links to media coverage (print, online, TV, or radio)

Florida is not here to blend in; we're here to lead. You've already done the work and told the story in your report. Now it's time to put it on the National stage. Own your impact, show your mission in action, and submit like you know it matters, because it does.