

PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRENTS



MAKING THE ALA VISIBLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

By Virna Luke

Have you ever been asked, “What is the American Legion Auxiliary?” Many people still don’t fully know **who we are, what we do, or why we matter**. That’s where each of us can show **our passion for veterans** by sharing the ALA story.

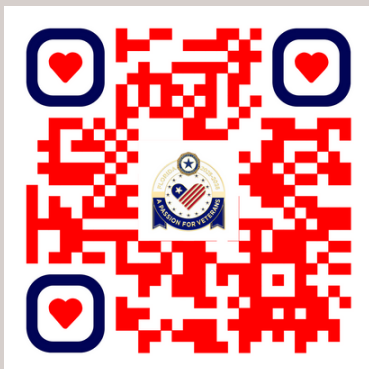
Visibility starts with conversation. When you’re at a community event, a school function, or even chatting with a neighbor, take the opportunity to talk about the ALA mission, serving veterans, military, and their families. Keep it simple and personal. **A heartfelt story about why you’re a member is your most powerful PR tool.**

Don’t forget the power of your presence. Wearing ALA apparel, setting up an informational table, or even adding the brand mark to your flyers helps the Auxiliary stand out. Visibility is about consistency; the more people see and hear about us, the stronger our impact becomes.

As Vice President Dr. Grout reminded us during the recent PR Committee meeting: **spread the word, online and in person**. Every conversation is a chance to invite someone to learn more, get involved, or even become a member. Let’s make the Auxiliary **visible, memorable, and meaningful in every corner of our communities**.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Sharing the how of PR
- Partnerships & community connections
- Crisis communications
- How to write a great story
- Thanks all month long



PublicRelations@alaf.org





SHARING THE HOW OF PR

By Virna Luke

This year, National Public Relations goals are to **Educate and Engage**. A big part of that is encouraging members to share the **HOW** behind their PR efforts.

When you post on [ALA Public Relations \(National\)](#) and/or [ALAFL Public Relations Facebook groups](#), go beyond the final product. **Tell us how you used PR**. Did you create a flyer in Canva? Capture a few photos that brought your Facebook post to life? Maybe you built excitement with a short video, partnered with a school, or submitted your event to the local community calendar. **Each of these steps is part of the HOW, and it matters.**

Sharing the process gives other units fresh ideas. For example, a press release in one community might lead to newspaper coverage, while in another, a booth at the farmers' market might make the biggest impact. **Your HOW might be the spark that helps another unit share their passion for veterans more effectively.**

So next time you share in the group, include a quick explanation: *"We created a flyer in Canva, asked the high school to share it on their page; that's how we drew a record crowd."* Together, our shared HOWs will strengthen PR across Florida and show the **power of working with passion.**





PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

By *Virna Luke*

One of the strongest ways to share our **passion for veterans** is through partnerships. Collaborating with others amplifies our message, strengthens our programs, and extends our mission into every corner of the community. Partnerships aren't just with schools, civic groups, or businesses, though those are wonderful. **Veteran and military organizations** are also natural allies. Working together with VFWs, DAV chapters, Reserve units, or local military bases creates opportunities to reach more veterans and their families. A simple co-hosted event can double visibility while showing unity of purpose.

Certain times of the year bring unique opportunities to connect with community partners:

- **Veterans Day (Nov. 11)**: Partner with VSOs, schools, or civic groups for parades, ceremonies, or classroom presentations. Share photos and stories that reflect our passion for veterans.
- **Pearl Harbor Day (Dec. 7)**: Work with local veteran organizations or schools to host a remembrance ceremony or social media tribute.
- **Holiday Baskets**: Partner with churches, civic clubs, or food banks to assemble and deliver baskets for the needy, especially homeless veterans. Share the story on social media with gratitude to your partners.
- **MLK Day of Service (Jan. 19)**: A perfect time to collaborate with community organizations on service projects. Consider a day of volunteering for veterans' homes, shelters, or care facilities.

When we collaborate, we not only increase visibility but also demonstrate our **shared passion for veterans, military, and their families**. Tagging partners on social media, including them in press releases, and thanking them publicly strengthens the bond.

Challenge your unit to **create one new partnership**, whether with a veterans' group, a school, or a civic organization. Every connection is another way to live out our mission and carry the ALA's passion further.





CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS: NAVIGATING A SPOOKY SITUATION

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CAPC

In PR, our role is to tell our story when things are good. After all, public relations is about developing positive relationships with those who matter most, and we do that best through story telling.

But what happens when something goes bump? A scary complaint goes viral. A negative rumor starts to ruin relationships. Suddenly, the house feels haunted. This is where crisis communications begin.

Here are some steps PR chairpersons can take for crisis communications.

Step 1: Monitor the Shadows. Like a paranormal investigator, your first job is to listen. Set up alerts, scan social media, and check the news. Talk to your unit members and your Post Family members. What's being said? Who's saying it? Is it a creaky floorboard or a full-blown poltergeist? Early detection helps you gauge the threat and prepare accordingly.

Step 2: Light the Lantern with Crafted Messages. In a haunted house, silence is terrifying. In a PR crisis, it's deadly. Craft a clear, calm message that acknowledges the issue, expresses empathy, and outlines next steps. Avoid jargon. Instead, speak like a human. Transparency builds trust, even in the dark.

Step 3: Guide the Message Delivery. Reporters are knocking. Stakeholders (i.e. Post family members) are peeking through the windows. It's your job to guide the message so that it reaches them. Designate a spokesperson (often, this is the Unit President), prep talking points, and respond promptly. If you don't control the narrative, someone else will - and they might bring pitchforks!

Step 4: Seal the Portal and Follow-Up.

Once the crisis subsides, don't just board up the attic and hope for the best. Conduct a status check. What worked? What didn't? Update your crisis plan and share learnings with your team. Every haunted house has a history - make sure yours includes how you banished the ghosts.

Crisis communications can feel spooky. But with the right tools, you'll be the one holding the flashlight, guiding your unit through the fog. Because when things go bump in the ALA brand,

you don't run. You respond.





HOW TO WRITE A GREAT STORY

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CAPC

Every November, around the world, the writing community celebrates National Novel Writing Month. The challenge is simple: at 12:01 a.m. on November 1, you start writing. And you don't stop until 11:59 p.m. on November 30. The call to action? Write a 50,000-word novel in a single month.

While we, as PR Chairpersons, won't be writing a novel in a single month, we do write stories. Whether you're pitching to the media, writing a press release or crafting social content, a well-told story can transform facts into feelings and brands into movements. But what makes a story great? Here's your beginner's guide to writing one that resonates.

Start with a Strong Hook. Great stories grab attention from the first line. Lead with a surprising stat, a compelling quote, or a vivid image. Think: "She joined 5 years ago after attending a pork chop dinner. Now she's the unit president." Your opening should spark curiosity and emotion.

Know Your Audience. Tailor your tone, language, and angle to the people you're trying to reach. Are they unit members? Legion members? Potential members? Media?

Find the Human Element. People connect with people. When possible, highlight individuals that are behind the story that you are telling. Their experiences add authenticity and people will relate to them. For example, spotlight the cook behind your unit's spaghetti dinner.

Build a Clear Structure. Use the classic story arc: beginning (setup), middle (conflict or challenge), and end (resolution or impact). This will help readers follow and remember your message.

Keep It Concise and Visual. Avoid jargon. Use active verbs and sensory details.

End with a Purpose. Wrap up with a call to action, a reflection, or a forward-looking statement. What should the reader feel, do, or remember?

Great PR stories aren't just informative - they're memorable. They make people care. So, this November, grab your pen (or keyboard), and start crafting stories that move the needle and the heart.

Writing Resource

Looking for more? Roy Peter Clark's book, "[Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer](#)" is a great resource.





THANKS ALL MONTH LONG

By Virna Luke

November is a season of gratitude. It's the perfect opportunity to honor, uplift, and share stories of thankfulness. Here are some social media ideas to engage your members and tell your story:

"I'm Thankful For..."

Invite members to join a month-long gratitude movement by sharing photos holding a simple sign that reads "I'm thankful for..." and filling in the blank. Whether it's a veteran, a caregiver, or a fellow Auxiliary member, these reflections create a powerful chorus of gratitude.

Veterans Day Countdown

Starting November 1st, share daily posts counting down to Veterans Day. Each post can highlight a fact, photo, or quote that reflects the sacrifices and service of our military heroes. By November 11th, your followers will already be deeply connected to the meaning of the day.

Who Are You Thankful For? Challenge

Encourage members to honor the veteran who made them eligible for ALA membership. Post a photo and short story about your special veteran and tag your unit. This not only sparks gratitude but also invites friends and family to see how service and legacy connect generations.

Thankful Member Spotlights

Highlight one of your members each day or week with a short post. For example: *"We're thankful for Kathy, who joined under her father, a Vietnam Veteran, and now she leads our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheons."* These stories celebrate our members and show the difference and impact they make.

Let's let gratitude shine through everything we do this time of year. **May these ideas ignite and inspire** your unit. Let us be thankful every day for our veterans, military, and their families—and for our members who make a difference.

Tip: Make sure to share anything "membership" to [ALAFI Membership](#) #HeartsAsOne



OCTOBER 2025



#PassionForVets

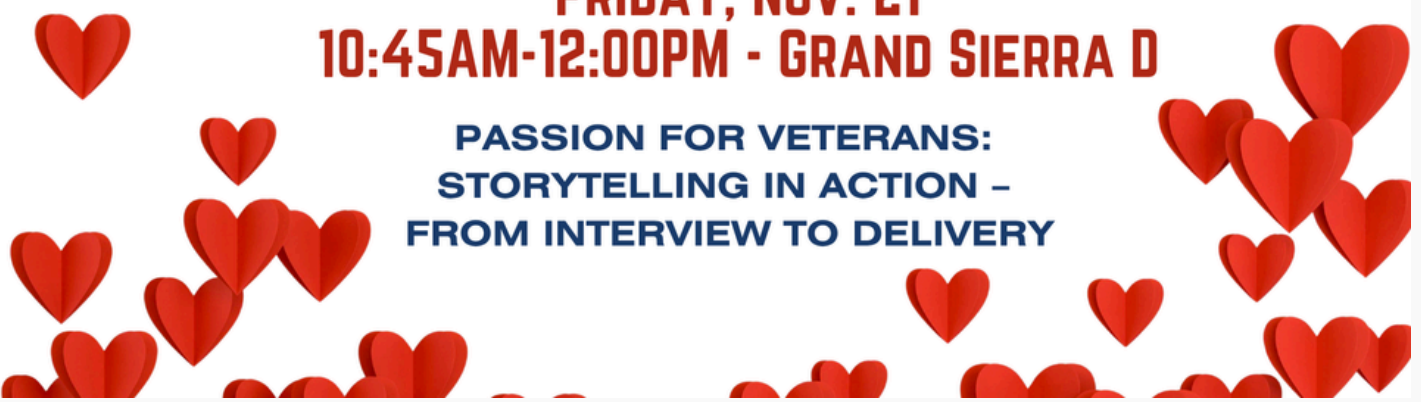
2025 ALA FLORIDA FALL CONFERENCE

Caribe Royale Orlando - 8101 World Center Dr - Orlando, FL 32821

**PR BREAKOUT SESSION
FRIDAY, NOV. 21**

10:45AM-12:00PM - GRAND SIERRA D

**PASSION FOR VETERANS:
STORYTELLING IN ACTION -
FROM INTERVIEW TO DELIVERY**



**AMERICAN
LEGION
FAMILY**

**FALL CONFERENCE
Nov. 21-23, 2025**

CARIBE ROYALE ORLANDO
8101 WORLD CENTER DRIVE, ORLANDO, FL 32821



Fall Conference Info

ALAFL.org

