

# PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRENTS



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Annual reporting: helping committee members tell their stories
- Start your OEY PR report early
- Planning March events with purpose
- The anatomy of a press release
- Legion Family Day



[PublicRelations@alafl.org](mailto:PublicRelations@alafl.org)

On **March 15, 1919**, The American Legion was born, a promise forged by veterans determined to continue serving their country and their communities. More than a century later, that mission is still alive, and so is our **Passion for Veterans**.

This is the perfect time to reflect, refocus, and finish strong. Every program supported, every veteran assisted, every difference made in your community, it all matters. Now is the time to begin preparing your end-of-year reports. Don't just submit numbers; **tell your story** (narrative). Highlight the lives touched, the partnerships built, and the impact made.

Our reports are more than paperwork; they are proof of purpose, our history, and our story. They show how our passion turns into action and how our action strengthens communities.

District 16 President Cheryl Adams recently hosted a webinar about **Reporting and Impact Forms** with passionate presenters Jan Farrington and Mary Kelly-Perkins, watch it [here](#). Another video that you will find helpful on how to write reports can be found [here](#). The 2026 ALA FL Reporting Manual is [here](#). Please feel free to contact Jan or Mary with your questions:

Jan [jpfarrington117@gmail.com](mailto:jpfarrington117@gmail.com) 603-381-3493

Mary [aladeptpres0910@yahoo.com](mailto:aladeptpres0910@yahoo.com) 813-508-3822

Let's honor our founding by doing what we do best: **serving with heart, leading with integrity, and kindness**. Making sure the story of our mission is told well.

## #HeartsAsOne

## EOY REPORTING: HELPING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS TELL THEIR STORY

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CAPC

Over the next couple of months, your Unit will start working on their end-of-year reporting. There's no doubt - reporting season can feel overwhelming for committee chairs. Downloading forms, answering questions, gathering photos, and summarizing a year's worth of work is no small task - especially for volunteers juggling many responsibilities. That's where PR chairpersons can make a real difference.

As your unit's PR chairperson, you're not just someone who writes well - you're a storyteller. You know how to turn activities, events, and outcomes into clear, meaningful narratives that show impact. By partnering with committee chairs, you can help them translate what they did into why it mattered.

This might mean interviewing a chair for 15 minutes, helping draft a short paragraph that highlights results and selecting strong photos to include. Or it might mean volunteering to edit the report that your committee chair wrote so accomplishments are more clear and accurate.

These reports don't just check a box. They help tell the organization's full story at the national level so that the American Legion Auxiliary can continue to make a positive impact with veterans and families. These reports also preserve the work done all year long.

March is the perfect time to reach out, offer support, and collaborate with your unit's committee chairs on their reports. When PR chairpersons step in to help, everyone wins - and the impact of each committee shines a little brighter.

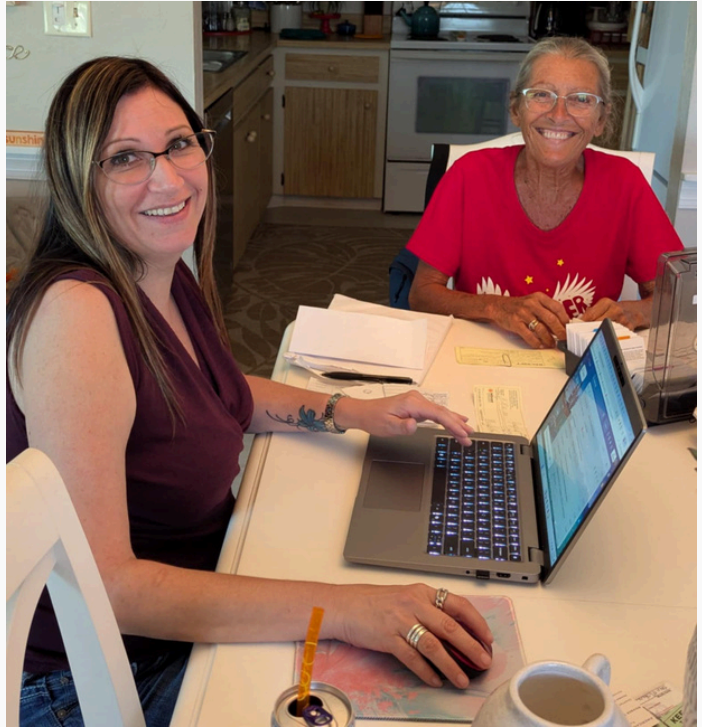


Photo from Facebook: ALA-D13-fl



## START YOUR EOY PR REPORT EARLY! YOUR WORK DESERVES THE SPOTLIGHT



By Erin Hoffer, APR, CAPC

Now is the perfect time for PR chairpersons to start on their end-of-year report, which are due on April 1st.

Waiting until the deadline can turn a meaningful story into a rushed checklist – but starting now gives you time to clearly show the impact your Unit has made.

Begin by downloading the report and reviewing what's required. The 500-word narrative is your chance to tell a complete story. Be sure to include:

- How your Unit's social media presence grew
- The mission-related interviews and articles you've written
- The programs you've highlighted—such as ALA Academy, VCAF/NVCAF, POW/MIA Awareness, and Be the One.

Don't forget to document branding efforts like ALA apparel, RED Shirt Fridays, and any creative ideas that helped reinforce the mission. Volunteer work and donations to other organizations also demonstrate reach and community impact.

Start gathering up to 10 strong, original photos now and set them aside to send when you submit your report.

Taking time to do this well matters. There are several Department of Florida and National Awards that recognize outstanding PR work, and your report is how that work is seen!

### ***District PR Chairpersons:***

*Please, when you send your reports to Department, include all of your Unit's reports in your submission. Your Department PR Committee needs to see the Unit's reports to make award decisions at the unit level.*

Don't miss this opportunity to start early, tell the story right, and let your efforts shine.



## PLANNING MARCH EVENTS WITH PURPOSE

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CAPC



March offers meaningful opportunities to connect your Unit's mission with the military calendar - and you don't need a big budget to make an impact. Thoughtful planning and clear messaging are what matter most.

**K-9 Veterans Day (March 13)** is a great chance to highlight military working dogs and their handlers. Consider a social media spotlight, a short educational post, or photos from a local K-9 unit or memorial.

**Medal of Honor Day (March 25)** calls for a respectful, educational approach. Share the story of a recipient, explain the significance of the medal, or promote a brief moment of remembrance at a meeting or event.

**National Vietnam War Veterans Day (March 29)** is ideal for honoring local Vietnam-era veterans through interviews, thank-you notes, or community recognition posts.

March is also **Women's History Month**, making it the perfect time to spotlight female veterans. Feature their service stories, leadership roles, or volunteer contributions.

For American Legion Auxiliary PR Chairpersons, the key is planning ahead, keeping messages clear, and always leading with respect.



## THE ANATOMY OF A PRESS RELEASE: A SIMPLE BREAKDOWN

*By Erin Hoffer, APR, CAPC*

A press release doesn't have to be intimidating. Think of it as a short, structured story that helps the media quickly understand what happened and why it matters.

No matter what, it should be well written. Reporters and editors may use the news release as a launching point for their own reporting or, in some busy newsrooms, may run your news release verbatim in the publication. Here's a breakdown of the anatomy of a press release.

### **Provide a Simple, Straightforward Headline**

This is your hook. It should clearly state the news - an event, milestone, or announcement - using plain language. If someone only reads the headline, they should still get the point. Don't worry about being cute or catchy in your headline. Most print media will rewrite the headline. Just keep it simple and stick to the facts.

### **Write a Lead Paragraph that States The Facts**

The first paragraph answers the basics: who, what, when, where, and why. Journalists rely on this section to decide if they'll keep reading, so clarity beats cleverness every time.

### **Body Paragraphs to Fully Explain**

Here's where you add helpful details. Include context about the American Legion Auxiliary, the impact of the event, or why it matters to the community. One or two short paragraphs is usually enough.

### **Include a Quote from a Key Person**

A quote adds a human voice. Pick the right person for this, such as your Unit President or Post Commander. If they are unable to provide a quote for you, write one for them and then run it by them to make sure that they approve it or want any edits. (Ethical Tip: Never use a quote that they have not seen and approved.) Quotes help bring emotion and credibility to the story.

### **Provide Your Contact Information**

Always include your name, email, and phone number so reporters know they can reach out to you for more information. Even if you aren't the person to provide that information, be prepared to be their "customer service contact." Once they reach out to you, you can facilitate their connection with the correct person. They will appreciate having someone to help them find the right person.

Simple, clear, and respectful are the ingredients of a strong press release. The American Legion Auxiliary, at the National level, offer several press release templates for common Unit events and programs - including the Poppy Drive, Memorial Day and other events and activities. Be sure to login to your account and check out the resources.

## AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY DAY



By Virna Luke

On **April 25**, we celebrate **Legion Family Day**.

Posts are encouraged to open their doors to the community and proudly showcase the impact of our **Legion Family** (Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders, and the American Legion Auxiliary).

This is an opportunity to highlight what you've accomplished, share why we serve, and shine a light on the "**Be the One**" mission to help prevent veteran suicide. Also to bring our family together - **OneTeam One Dream** - connect and educate our community, how we serve with purpose.

If you missed the recent **ALA Academy Live - How to Plan a Successful American Legion Family Day**, you can read the blog of suggested steps for planning your event [here](#).

**Alexa Freeman - ALA National Communications & Public Relations Strategist**, shared great information about advertising your Legion Family Day.

### **Create Flyers and Posters:**

- Ask local businesses to display your event flyer
- If there are community boards, display your flyer there
- Hand out flyers at community events, wearing your branded apparel and smile.

### **Post on Social Media:**

- Share your flyer/event page on your unit and family pages
- Ask your district and department to share your flyer
- Share on community, city, town social media pages
- Make engaging graphics to share your event

### **More Ideas:**

- Include your Legion Family Day in your newsletter
- Ask to speak in a city council meeting
- Place an ad in the local paper
- Reach out to your local radio and tv stations
- Place a banner outside your post home

**Florida PR** created a template flyer for Legion Family Day, click [here](#) to view and edit to your needs.

American Legion posts are encouraged to share the details of their events before or after the event at [Legiontown.org](http://Legiontown.org).

**Legion Family Day news release template** is available [online](#). If you need help on sharing or writing a press release, PR staff at National stated in the webinar, that they are available to help you. Email [PR@alaforveterans.org](mailto:PR@alaforveterans.org).

***"United in service. United in purpose. United as one Legion Family."***