

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY, DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS

PO BOX 1629, LITTLE ELM, TX 75068

BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN

214-733-7945

SECRETARY@ALATEXAS.ORG

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## INFORMATION FROM HEADQUARTERS

### MAY

- 1ST-31ST NATIONAL MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH
- 1ST SILVER STAR SERVICE BANNER DAY
- 9TH NATIONAL HOME FRONT HEROES DAY
- 9TH NATIONAL MILITARY SPOUSE APPRECIATION DAY
- 11TH MOTHER'S DAY
- 13TH CHILDREN OF FALLEN PATRIOTS DAY
- 15TH PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY
- 17TH ARMED FORCES DAY
- 23RD NATIONAL POPPY DAY
- 26TH MEMORIAL DAY

### JUNE

- 1ST-30TH NATIONAL PTSD AWARENESS MONTH
- 6TH D-DAY
- 14TH ARMY BIRTHDAY
- 14TH FLAG DAY
- 15TH FATHERS DAY
- 19TH JUNETEENTH
- 27TH NATIONAL PTSD AWARENESS DAY
- 30TH ADVANCED REGISTRATION CLOSES



# AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

As summer surrounds us with its warmth and vibrant energy, we find ourselves in a season of both reflection and anticipation. Much like the butterfly – a symbol of transformation and renewal – our organization has grown, evolved, and taken flight in new and inspiring ways over the past year.

Each of you has played a vital role in that journey. Whether volunteering at local events, supporting our veterans through outreach and service, or simply offering a kind word when it was needed most, you have helped shape a year filled with purpose and progress.

Now, as we prepare to bring this organizational year to a close, we look ahead to one of our most anticipated events: the Department Convention this July in Austin. It will be a time to gather, reconnect, and celebrate all that we have achieved – and all that we are becoming. We are especially honored to welcome our National President, Trish Ward, to the convention, a visit that reflects the strength and dedication of our department. Her presence will be a special highlight as we share our stories, honor our mission, and look toward the future with renewed purpose.

Just as butterflies emerge from their cocoons transformed and ready to soar, so too does our organization continue to evolve – stronger, more vibrant, and more united than ever. Let this summer be a reminder that growth often comes from change, and beauty from perseverance.

Thank you for being the wings behind our mission. Enjoy this season of warmth, gratitude, and hope – and I look forward to seeing many of you in Austin.

Advocating for Change  
One Veteran at a Time  
Sharon Phelps, President  
ALA Department of Texas 2024-2025



# Our National Anthem "The Star-Spangled Banner" Department Americanism Chairman Challenge



## Here is your "CHALLENGE"

The best overall creative video will receive a trophy from your National Americanism Committee Team. One winner from each Division, Deadline to submit Video July 30, 2025, Include your – Department Americanism Chair Name and Division, All videos will be posted when received Divisional Chairman will pick the "Best Overall Video" in their Division Winners will be announced at your National Divisional Caucus. National Americanism Chair will pick the overall video from the five Divisions. The winning Department will be announced on the National Convention floor. All videos must be shared on American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Program National Facebook page. This challenge is to take place at your Department Convention.

### Visual quality

"Make sure your video is clean" means to ensure that your video footage is visually clear, with no unnecessary distractions or blemishes, including things like background clutter, shaky camera movements, poor lighting, audio noise, or any visual elements that might detract from the main focus of the video Sharp focus: Ensure your subject is in focus throughout the video. Proper lighting: Use adequate lighting to avoid excessive shadows or blown-out highlights. Steady camera: Minimize camera shake by using tripod or stabilization techniques. Clean background: Keep the background clutter-free and relevant to the content.

### Audio quality

Clear sound: Record audio with minimal background noise. Proper microphone placement: Position the microphone close to the sound source for optimal audio capture.

### Example

Involve The American Legion, SAL and Juniors. "Think out of the box".

### Be Creative

Get your singing voices ready...

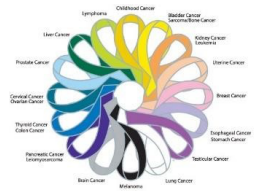


2024 - 2025 Americanism Committee

# American Legion Auxiliary



## Cancer Research Program



**May - June**

**2024-2025**

*Cancer by Cause for May are:*

**BLADDER, BRAIN, SKIN**

*Cancer by Cause for June are:*

**CANCER SURVIVORS**

At this time of year, we look at the weather so that we can plant our gardens and watch all the blooms that make us smile.

Unfortunately, Cancer is not something that makes us smile. Here is what you can do to help eliminate this horrible disease. Please contact members of your family and friends to donate to this cause so that the researchers at MD Anderson can find cures for the multitude of cancers that plague each and every one of us in one way or another.

Researchers goal = END CANCER.

JEWELRY: I will have a table at the Department Convention in July to be able to purchase earrings, necklaces and of course bracelets. I will also have other merchandise that are cancer related for purchase.

ALL PROCEEDS go to the Texas Cancer Research Program, University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Science at M.D. Anderson Hospital in Houston.

Please don't forget to send a narrative or the attached short reporting form to your Division Committee and to Ann Pugliano.

Thanks for all your hard work for this great program.

# American Legion Auxiliary

If your Unit does not want to create a narrative, please fill out the following:

## **CANCER RESEARCH REPORTING FORM 2024-2025**

Did your **Unit** donate to the Cancer Research Program in 2024-2025?

(YES)

(NO)

**Unit Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Did your **Unit** submit a narrative for the Cancer Research Program?

(YES)

(NO)

**Unit Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** The Cancer Research Program is a Texas based one of a kind program, and is not reported to National, therefore please include your volunteer hours on your Education reporting form.

### **2024-2025 Cancer Research Committee:**

Division 1 Ann Pugliano, Chair  
[apug52@yahoo.com](mailto:apug52@yahoo.com)

Division 2 Penny Honaker  
[pennyhoaker9@gmail.com](mailto:pennyhoaker9@gmail.com)

Division 3 Melba Villareal  
[harlingenunit205@gmail.com](mailto:harlingenunit205@gmail.com)

Division 4 Lori Docter  
[vickidocter@yahoo.com](mailto:vickidocter@yahoo.com)

**REMEMBER ALL DONATIONS COUNT**  
*Together, let's find a cure*

## *Passing on our Texas History*

How do we accomplish this you ask???

In our Book of Reports. This is accomplished by all of us working together as a team in the following way.

We will be looking for narratives from:

Department Officers (elected and appointed)

Division Presidents

District Presidents

Department Committee Chairs

VA Medical Center and Outpatient Clinic Reps

Please submit:

In word format (no PDF or phone camera photos, please!)

12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial style font

This is your history in narrative format – This publication is what you’ll share about your year in the capacity you have served.

Please tell your history in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person – 3<sup>rd</sup> person uses pronouns such as he, she, it or they – as if someone is observing and describing what they see. Good resource is a past Book of Reports.

We’ll love to read your histories! Let’s be mindful, though, that we’ll need to keep the size of our Book of Reports “manageable”

Best input method?

Send your history via email as an attachment to [maranda12@verizon.net](mailto:maranda12@verizon.net). Ask someone to help if you can’t do so! – contact me at the below text/phone and a mailing address will be provided if needed, (reference the Blue Book as well).

Due Date?

Look forward to seeing your history report by May 20<sup>th</sup> and no later than May 30<sup>th</sup> please.

Thank you all. You are all awesome!!

Sharon Shumate – Elam  
American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of Texas  
Historian, 2024 – 2025  
[maranda12@verizon.net](mailto:maranda12@verizon.net)  
(cell/text) (214)-789-4883

## Advocating for Our Veterans: The Crucial Role of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Texas Legislative Committee

The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Department of Texas is not merely a volunteer organization; it is a vibrant entity driven by a profound sense of duty to support veterans and their families. One of the most pivotal facets of the ALA's mission is its Legislative Committee, a dedicated group that continually advocates for policies affecting the lives of those who have bravely served our country. The importance of this advocacy cannot be overstated, as it plays a critical role in shaping the future for veterans in Texas and across the nation.

At its core, the purpose of the Legislative Committee is to ensure that the voices of veterans and their families are heard in the halls of legislation. The committee actively engages with lawmakers, urging them to prioritize veteran-related issues such as healthcare, education, and job training programs. With many veterans facing significant challenges after returning from service—such as mental health crises, unemployment, and inadequate healthcare access—the need for legislative advocacy is urgent and undeniable.

The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Texas has become a crucial bridge between veterans and policymakers, providing crucial information and insights into the unique challenges veterans face. By staying informed about current legislation and emerging issues, the Legislative Committee can mobilize its grassroots members to advocate for effective solutions. This grassroots involvement is vital; the collective voices of members can lead to meaningful change. When local citizens unite and urge their representatives to support veterans' initiatives, the potential for legislative action increases significantly. Moreover, the ALA's Legislative Committee actively participates in national advocacy initiatives, collaborating with other veteran organizations to amplify their voices. Initiatives such as "Legionnaires on the Hill" allow ALA members to meet directly with lawmakers, ensuring that veteran issues are prioritized at the national level. These personal interactions are powerful and give legislators the human stories behind the statistics, reminding them of the sacrifices made by veterans and the ongoing struggles they endure.

One of the key issues currently at the forefront of the committee's advocacy efforts is ensuring comprehensive mental health support for veterans. With the alarming rates of PTSD, depression, and suicide among veterans, it is imperative that mental health resources remain funded and accessible. The ALA is tirelessly working to influence policies that will allocate resources towards innovative mental health programs and promote awareness of these critical issues within communities. Additionally, education and workforce development for veterans and their families is a focal point of advocacy efforts. Many veterans seek to reintegrate into civilian life but face barriers when pursuing education or job opportunities. The Legislative Committee supports policies that enhance educational benefits and vocational training programs tailored to veterans' unique skills and experiences. This approach not only helps veterans successfully transition into civilian careers but also strengthens the workforce as a whole.

The ongoing advocacy efforts of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Texas Legislative Committee are essential for ensuring that our veterans receive the care, support, and recognition they rightfully deserve. The commitment to hold lawmakers accountable, foster community engagement, and collaborate with fellow organizations exemplifies the strength of grassroots advocacy. It is imperative that we all recognize the importance of supporting these efforts. As citizens, we must take an active role in advocating for our veterans by engaging with the ALA, reaching out to our legislators, and raising awareness about veterans' issues in our communities. It is our collective responsibility to empower organizations like the American Legion Auxiliary to continue their essential work in advocating for those who have given so much in service to our nation. Together, we can ensure that our veterans are not just honored in rhetoric but supported in reality.



## DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS MEMBERSHIP



We are so close!!!! Our 3<sup>rd</sup> milestone of 100% by Memorial Day is just around the corner. As of this writing, we have 63 Units at or over 100%! The Department of Texas is at 89.24% - I am confident that we can still achieve that 100% goal for Madam President.

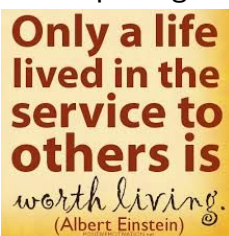
Thank you to the Division and District Presidents who worked with the zero Units to get them back in the running. We have gone from 18 zero Units to 6 – that is AWESOME! We still have a few Units that are under 10 members as well – remember, our governing documents state that a Unit must have a minimum of 10 Senior members to remain a Unit in good standing. If you are a Unit with less than 10 members, we encourage you to reach out to the members in 345 (the Dept Unit – members are not attached to a physical/geographical Unit) and see if they would like to transfer to your Unit. We can provide you with a list of names if you'd like. Often, these are individuals who wanted to make a difference and join a unique organization such as ours, but don't have a Post close by or are unsure where they can go. An incentive might be that your Unit dues are less than they pay for 345! Let us know if we can help you with that.

Another concern is our Units who are being considered for suspension or cancellation – District and Division Presidents should ensure that all efforts have been exhausted to help 'save' these Units (with documentation) before bringing them to the floor. Leadership is here to help – we are happy to come to these Unit's for revitalization discussions or thoughts.

This year we will not have a Membership Luncheon at Department Convention. The cost has been overwhelming (often exceeding \$60 per person). We will however have time set aside to recognize the awards during the business sessions – 100% ribbons, certificates, the Butterfly Story winner (keep them coming!!), and the new "group" awards to those reaching the highest percentage in each group – small, medium, and large – based on your objectives. Though 100% milestone has been set at Memorial Day, we will also recognize those who achieve 100% by June 30<sup>th</sup> so keep those efforts going!

Don't forget - you can post reports, pictures, questions and comments on Facebook by going to <https://www.facebook.com/AlaMembershipinTexas> We would love to see you there!

We are still accepting your **Butterfly Effect / Transformation Story**. We have enjoyed reading them and hope to get more - we know that all of you have an amazing story to tell!!



Division 1 Shay Kuehner (Chair) 817-300-2043 [Shay1956@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Shay1956@sbcglobal.net)  
Division 2 Gillian Woodstrom 281-615-5670 [gwoodstrom@woodborne.com](mailto:gwoodstrom@woodborne.com)  
Division 3 Shelli Creech 210-237-7399 [Atomicglitter84@gmail.com](mailto:Atomicglitter84@gmail.com)  
Division 4 Shawna Dunlap [shawnaleighdunlap@outlook.com](mailto:shawnaleighdunlap@outlook.com)

# The Butterfly Effect – Your Story



The Butterfly Effect is the concept that small actions can have big results, originating from the idea that a butterfly can cause a typhoon simply by flapping its wings! In human terms, we all have the power to make a lasting impact on those around us with small acts of kindness. By joining the American Legion Auxiliary, you are making a positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

What's your **Butterfly Effect Story**? In keeping with President Sharon's butterfly transformation theme, we would love to hear YOUR Transformation Story! **Send us a narrative telling how your membership in the American Legion Auxiliary has 'transformed' you.** From the caterpillar stage (first meeting jitters, 'what's a District?', 'how long can one meeting be?', 'which way do I exit the podium?'); to the cocoon (you've memorized the Preamble, helping around the Post, sharing ideas, making motions); to the beautiful butterfly emerging confident, strong, and empowered (a typhoon!) ready to take on a leadership role, supervise a benefit, or teach a class! How and when did your transformations take place? Who helped you get there and how do you feel now? Your words may encourage others and you could win an awesome prize!



**Narratives will be accepted through May 31<sup>st</sup>.**

**Email to [Shay1956@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Shay1956@sbcglobal.net)**



Poppy  
Committee

We can all make a difference for our veterans and their families...one poppy at a time.

There are many ways individuals and groups can help bring greater awareness of the poppy, whether it be remembering the fallen or honoring the living. Have you considered wearing a poppy to promote conversation and interest even when making a trip to the store? For those who have set up a table at a store front, did you remember to send the business a thank you note (using a poppy card)? Offer to speak at local civic engagements about the meaning and significance of the poppy and how poppy funds help veterans, servicemembers and their families. These are just a few suggestions to always remember and to share information with others.

A special thank you goes out to those units who sent an end-of-year report. There were so many great ideas! Just because the reporting season is over doesn't mean that we can take a break. Keep up the great work!

Can poppies be grown in home gardens?

\*True Fact\*

Yes, poppies can be successfully grown in home gardens. There are various species of poppies that are well-suited for different climates and soil types, so with the right conditions, you can enjoy these beautiful flowers in your own backyard.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Every day is Poppy Day...National Poppy Day is coming soon!*  
**~NATIONAL POPPY DAY IS FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2025~**  
Are you ready?

Our department poppy committee:

- Division 1     Janey Arista, chair
- Division 2     Ann Nicholson
- Division 2     Judy Garrett
- Division 3     Elizabeth Tamayo

- [jgkbar@gmail.com](mailto:jgkbar@gmail.com)
- [annhas92140@yahoo.com](mailto:annhas92140@yahoo.com)
- [madviller@sbcglobal.net](mailto:madviller@sbcglobal.net)
- [etamayo47@yahoo.com](mailto:etamayo47@yahoo.com)



# *Remember your Poppy Day Media Release...*

\* \* \*

## Poppy Day Media Release

Street Address, City, State ZIP Code

[www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org)

(and your unit's website and contact information, if available)

---

[DATE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**American Legion Auxiliary Unit [UNIT #] encourages [INSERT CITY NAME] to  
honor fallen warriors on National Poppy Day®**

[CITY]— Honor our fallen warriors and contribute to the continuing needs of our veterans on National Poppy Day®, May [FRIDAY BEFORE MEMORIAL DAY] from [INSERT TIME a.m./p.m.] at [LOCATION] when members of American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Unit [INSERT UNIT #] distribute red poppies in exchange for a donation. 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.

“Wearing the poppy on National Poppy Day and throughout Memorial Day weekend is one small way to honor and remember our fallen warriors who willingly served our nation and made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom,” said ALA Unit [INSERT UNIT #] President [INSERT NAME]. “We must never forget.”

When The American Legion Family adopted the poppy as its memorial flower in the early 1920s, the blood-red icon became an enduring symbol of honor for the sacrifices of our veterans from the battlefields of France in World War I to today's conflicts. The American Legion Auxiliary raises millions of dollars each year distributing poppies throughout the nation, with 100 percent of the funds raised going directly to help veterans, military and their families.

For more information, call [preferably a number where media or interested persons can reach someone during day and evening hours].

The American Legion Auxiliary, founded in 1919, is a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. ALA members assist veterans in hospitals, advocate for veteran issues, support therapeutic creative arts festivals, distribute poppies for remembrance, and much more. In addition to serving the military community, the American Legion Auxiliary hosts ALA Girls Nation and the ALA Girls State programs that teach future leaders about government and civic responsibility. Learn more at [www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org) and @ALForVeterans on Instagram and Facebook.



Those of you, who still have pins out on consignment, please do not forget to bring them to Department Convention in July.

When you start packing your suitcases, the first thing you want to remember is to pack the pins that you have not sold, and of course, do not forget to bring the money for the pins that you have sold.

**Pins and money must be turned in at Department Convention at the Ways & Means Table, no later than 3:00pm on Saturday.**

If you are not attending Department Convention, please get everything in the mail to me as soon as your District and/or Division Conventions are over. (Mail by June 23<sup>rd</sup>)

For those who have not paid for or turned in the pins already out on consignment, we cannot issue any new pins on consignment until those pins are paid for or turned in.

Thank you so much for your continued support and cooperation!

----- Cathy Perry -----



# VA & R – Department of Texas May 2025

**The Department of Texas currently needs VAVS volunteers! Below is information and some FAQs. Please reach out to us should you be interested.**

## VAVS (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service)

In April 1946, The American Legion Family joined forces with several other veterans' service organizations, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to form what is known as Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). Today, American Legion Auxiliary volunteers serve alongside members of the community as VAVS volunteers and as volunteers through the Auxiliary's own Service to Veterans program.

VAVS supports VA and VHA (Veterans Health Administration) strategic goals by recruiting, supporting, and retaining a knowledgeable, diverse, and engaged supplemental workforce of volunteers to assist management in the delivery of VA healthcare by improving access to care, assisting with long-term care, improving patient satisfaction and much more. The Auxiliary is not the only group that provides VAVS volunteers, but we do have representatives who serve on VA's National Advisory Committee.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. [How do I sign up to volunteer?](#)
2. [Do I have to have a background check?](#)
3. [How do I involve my family and friends?](#)
4. [Will volunteering help me get hired by VA?](#)
5. [Can I bring my pet to visit the patients?](#)

### 1. How do I sign up to volunteer?

Online: Click on '[Volunteer or Donate](#).' This will take you to a web form page. Complete each field and then click the 'Submit' button. An email is generated to the Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE) Program Manager in your area. Once the email is received, someone from the local VA will contact you to provide you with further information and to possibly set up an appointment for an interview.

In person: Contact your local VA Medical Center's [Center for Development & Civic Engagement](#) office. Inform them of your interest in volunteering. An appointment will be scheduled for you to come in to tour the facility and learn more about the many ways to serve America's heroes.

## 2. Do I have to have a background check?

Depending on the volunteer assignment you may need to go through at least a minimum background check. This may be as simple as a fingerprint check or as detailed as a full background check. Your volunteer assignment will determine the extent of the process. Again, our primary responsibility is the safety of our Veterans. Please call your local Center for Development & Civic Engagement office for further information.

## 3. How do I involve my family and friends?

The Center for Development & Civic Engagement office encourages family volunteering. Contact your local CDCE Program Manager to discuss potential projects for your family and friends.

## 4. Will volunteering help me get hired by VA?

Simply stated, no. CDCE volunteers are to augment and support the work of VA paid staff, to better serve our Veterans. However, being a volunteer looks great on a resume.

## 5. Can I bring my pet to visit the patients?

Pets who visit patients in a medical setting are required to be certified by an official pet therapy certification program. Your pet may be very docile and loving, but a strange surrounding such as a hospital with all the activity and unique smells could cause it to behave erratically. Please call your local CDCE program office for further information.

MaryAnn Paul, Division 1 – Chairman

Pam Burkett, Division 3 – Committee Member