



*A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*

November 2025

Issue # 3

**FROM THE 2025-2026 NATIONAL CHAIR OF THE VA&R PROGRAM**

## Upcoming Events

### **2025-2026 ALA Mission Training & National Junior Meetings**

**November 15: Albany - SOLD OUT**

**November 15: Minneapolis**

**January 31: Las Vegas**

**January 31: Indianapolis**

**February 7: Atlanta**

Register at <https://www.legion-aux.org/Meetings/Mission-Training>

## Focus on Women Veterans

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there are over 2.1 million women veterans in the United States, and they are the fastest growing cohort within the veteran population. In 2000, they comprised 4% of all veterans, in 2023 they made up 11.3%, and they are projected to account for approximately 17.2% by 2043. These women have served across all military branches, are racially and ethnically diverse, and represent a wide range of ages. Almost 1 million are between 20 and 49, with 1.1 million over the age of 50. About 22.5% are 65 or older, with 2.2% being 85 or older.

What that tells us is that with such a diverse group, there are many ways to recognize and honor their service. Wondering how your Unit can focus on women veterans? First find out who they are in your community. Once you learn that, you can determine what activities or events would be best suited. Some ideas are more broadly applicable while some others are specific to a particular group.

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## Volunteering at VA Medical Centers

Volunteers are vital to optimizing the experience of our Veterans at VA Medical Centers nationwide. By donating your time and talents, you can make a difference to their hospital stays, or make their visits to clinics less stressful. Essential services are provided by VA, but by volunteering and donating, you are helping to provide more than that, either through direct patient support or indirectly through staff support. Direct support may include escorting patients or family members from place to place, visiting to provide social interaction, providing refreshments in waiting areas, or helping with food selections or recreational activities like Bingo or Movie Night parties. Volunteers can provide indirect support through assisting staff in offices with filing or answering phones or other administrative duties as appropriate.

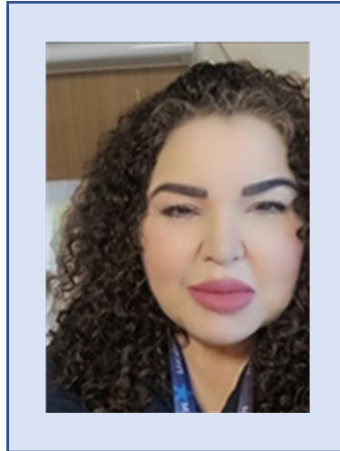
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# Member Spotlight

Sabina Iniguez is a member of Thunderbird Unit 41 in Phoenix, AZ who truly knows the meaning of *Service, Not Self*. She is passionate about honoring the sacrifice of those who have served and are currently serving and supporting them and their families. She volunteers at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center at least three times per week. It is said that the veterans light up when they see her coming and miss her whenever she is not with them. She has been known to say she misses them just as much on those days as well.

*Send us your nominee for the next Member Spotlight!*



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## Volunteering at VA Medical Centers

There are also specific programs and activities that ALA members can take part in, and some of those include *Clothes Closet* programs that provide clean and gently used clothing to Veterans in need, National *Salute to Veteran Patients*, the *Red Coat Ambassador* program, Chaplain services, patient transport and feeding, *Christmas Shops* and *Christmas Wrap* events, and local *Veterans Creative Arts Festivals*. It is important to remember that not all opportunities are available at all VA Medical Centers, but it is easy to find out which ones are available to you from your local VAMC's Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE).

So, how can you get involved? Visit the VA volunteer website at [https://www.cdceportal.va.gov/volunteer\\_at\\_facility/](https://www.cdceportal.va.gov/volunteer_at_facility/) and complete the online application to volunteer and someone from the local CDCE staff will contact you, or you can contact the CDCE office at a VAMC near you for an application form. Either way will initiate the process that will include an interview to determine what volunteer assignment you are best suited for, an orientation, and general on-boarding.

A wide variety of opportunities available at VA Medical Centers allows individuals to volunteer when and how they are best suited to give back to America's heroes with a welcoming presence.

Lisa Chaplin  
VA&R Chair

Darlene Allen  
Committee Member

**On behalf of the VA&R Committee, we wish you a  
Happy Thanksgiving!**  
*Lisa Chaplin*

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Things to consider that have a successful track record in multiple locations:

- Learn how to support women in veterans' shelters.
- Host a Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon at your Post home.
- Coordinate with your local VAMC Women Veterans Program Manager to learn what the specific needs of their women veterans might be. It may be as simple as a need for "white noise" devices in exam rooms to enhance privacy when discussing sensitive subjects with their healthcare providers.
- Collaborate with your local VA Maternity Care Coordinator to host a Baby Shower.
- Include women veterans in all veterans recognition events.

Lisa Chaplin    Chris Harvey  
VA&R Chair    NW Division Chair

## The 2025-2026 VA&R Committee

Dr. Lisa Chaplin, Chair (VA)  
[lisachaplin@lexacom.net](mailto:lisachaplin@lexacom.net)

Pat Kranzow, Vice Chair (IL)  
[pkranzow@att.net](mailto:pkranzow@att.net)

Darlene Allen, Committee Member (NM)  
[da\\_abq@yahoo.com](mailto:da_abq@yahoo.com)

Gwenda Shroeder-Zulch  
Central Division Chair (OH)  
[gweniesue@yahoo.com](mailto:gweniesue@yahoo.com)

Lauren Lloyd  
Eastern Division Chair (DC)  
[laurenloyd@gmail.com](mailto:laurenloyd@gmail.com)

Chris Harvey  
Northwestern Division Chair (CO)  
[harvett@yahoo.com](mailto:harvett@yahoo.com)

MaryAnn Paul  
Southern Division Chair (TX)  
[mapminmol@gmail.com](mailto:mapminmol@gmail.com)

Elaine Roach (WA)  
Western Division Chair  
[livehappy73e@gmail.com](mailto:livehappy73e@gmail.com)

Chrystal Daulton, Director of Programs  
VA&R Liaison (IN)  
[CDaulton@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:CDaulton@ALAforVeterans.org)  
[VAR@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:VAR@ALAforVeterans.org)