Public Relations Useful Links

www.legion-aux.org/ - Log into your member login.

National ALA website has all of the listed useful links and templates to aid you in promoting your events, meetings and getting you out there into the public eye.

Useful templates include

- Flyer and newsletter pdfs and word docs ready to use
- Media Templates for Holiday events, Poppies, Girls State and National Awards
- Poster Templates for holidays, events and promotions
- Parade and building banners
- Donation can labels and donation letter templates
- Power Point templates for presentations with emblems

The PR Tool Kit (downloadable from National Site):

- PR guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment
- ALA Declaration Flyer
- ALA Declaration Color Sign
- Media Templates and samples
- ALA Emblem Use Approval Request Form
- ALA Branding information

A Closer Look at the ALA Branding Guide

You see red and yellow throughout the building. You can picture the big golden arches. You go there to get food served quickly.

You know the place being described is McDonald's. You know all of this because of intentional and effective branding.

Our American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) brand is our identity. It's our reputation, our promise. It's how the public recognizes us. It's our big picture and our message..

We, as an organization, need to focus on our branding and use that brand to educate the public on who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Because the American Legion Auxiliary's units and departments are spread across the United States and its territories, we need to develop a strong and cohesive brand.

We want to enhance our identity, maintain and build upon consistency, and simplify and update our look and feel. By producing materials that are uniquely ours, the American Legion Auxiliary will easily be recognizable no matter where material is produced or in what format it's published.

The ALA Branding Guide was recently updated and is a great learning tool for members when producing ALA-related materials. The guide covers a wide variety of topics — the ALA emblem and its usage, branding style, photography, video, design, social media, website, editorial, brand promise, and voice.

Here are a few highlights covered in the guide:

Emblem

– Use of the American Legion Auxiliary emblem is controlled by the national organization. All requests for approval to use the emblem must first be sent to the department secretary. The request letter must state who will perform the duplicating (manufacturer), the name of the product, its intended use, and the exact amount being ordered. Additional quantities require new authority. The department secretary indicates her acknowledgement and affixes her signature before forwarding the request to the national secretary.

– The American Legion Auxiliary emblem should always be prominently displayed at the top of any production with nothing placed above it. Except in some rare instances, the American flag is permissible to be placed above our emblem.

– There are five color versions of the American Legion Auxiliary emblem available for use: the four-color, two-color, one-color, grayscale (black), and reversed emblem.

Font

– Approved ALA typefaces: The American Legion Auxiliary has chosen the Adobe Garamond Pro and Helvetica type families because of their clean, professional appearances, and readability. If your computer does not come with Adobe Garamond Pro, we recommend similar fonts from the Garamond family such as Garamond or ITC Garamond, or other substitutions can be used such as Palatino, Minion Pro, or Times New Roman. A substitution for Helvetica is Arial.

– Boldface type should be used only for titles, headlines, to make words stand out, and, very rarely, for emphatic use.

– Use font sizes from 9-pt. to 14-pt. for most standard size documents.

Photography

– Try to use photos with smiling, positive people engaging in our mission. Use subject matter that will resonate well with our audience.

– Include a wide range of demographics and ethnicities.

– Pictures should be provided in maximum resolution in JPEG format with captions provided.

– Don't cut people off at the edge of a photo.

-Ensure good lighting. Do not use photos that are too dark.

Design

– Image resolution is either dots per inch (dpi) or pixels per inch (ppi). Computer displays, for example, operate upwards of 100 ppi. For sharp, high-quality press printing, 300 dpi is optimum for both color and grayscale images.

- Computers, digital cameras, and scanners save files in red, green, blue (RGB) colors, whereas press printing is most often done in a four-color process — cyan, magenta, yellow, black (CMYK).
-

Social media

– **Facebook:** It's great for posting a variety of content, including videos, photos, blogs, links, and general updates.

– **Twitter:** It allows for short text updates (240 characters or fewer) with videos, photos, and links. Twitter is ideal for sharing news quickly and easily interacting with others.

– **Instagram:** Users are only able to post videos and photos. Instagram is an ideal platform to promote events and volunteer activities.

– **Snapchat:** This is a strictly visual form of social media. It does not have a hashtag option or allow for sharing, so only users who have added you are able to view your content. This social media platform is great for capturing moments during events like ALA Girls State.

Having a cohesive ALA brand is important for many reasons: It heightens public awareness of our organization, increases our credibility with professionalism, and differentiates us from similar organizations.

This is just a snapshot of the many helpful tips available to help you in this guide. To download the full ALA Branding Guide, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org and search "ALA Branding Guide."

Big tips for better ALA branding

As American Legion Auxiliary members prepare for the centennial celebration of our organization, it's vital to focus on our brand and building brand loyalty for the future of the ALA and our longstanding mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families.

Branding is more than just wearing an Auxiliary T-shirt to a unit event or community function. The ALA brand is what others think of us when they see us in our ALA attire. They see the ALA name, but they remember our attitudes and how we act. They associate the name American Legion Auxiliary and our conduct with the ALA brand.

In short, YOU are the ALA brand and can help our organization build brand loyalty among current and future members by making small branding changes that add up to big differences.

Below are a handful of ways you can use branding to bolster ALA Centennial Strategic Plan Goal 5 (With The American Legion, Build Brand Loyalty) and Goal 1 (Enhance Membership Strength):

- **Social media:** Name your social media page or group so it clearly identifies your ALA entity (department, unit, program, etc.). For example, a Facebook page named American Legion Auxiliary Unit 43 provides no clue into what state or region it's in. A better profile name is American Legion Auxiliary Unit 43, La Grande, Oregon.
- **Website:** Design your unit/department website to be similar to the ALA national website and/or use red, white, and blue colors that are consistent with the overall look of our brand versus a website with a lime green or hot pink background, for example. We are the world's largest women's patriotic service organization! Have a consistent look and feel between your website, social media, and other branded materials for the benefit of both members and nonmembers.
- **Email signature:** Close your email messages with a signature that has a professional, readable font and includes all the necessary contact information where prospective members and the public can reach you conveniently and quickly (i.e.; name, ALA title/position — remember to include the administrative year – phone number, fax number if applicable, and unit/department website address). Avoid using animated GIFs and other clipart images that are otherwise distracting.
- **Emblem:** Use the ALA emblem consistently, and follow the ALA Branding Guide. In the end, your efforts will help with overall recognition of our organization. If the emblem is distorted, stretched, or manipulated in any way, it makes it difficult for both members and the public to identify who we are. Log in to the Members Only section at ALAforVeterans.org to download a free copy of the ALA Branding Guide for more information on emblem usage.
- **Proper name for a premier program:** Use "ALA" in front of all ALA Girls State references so it's clearly identified as an American Legion Auxiliary program. Many alumnae do not know the American Legion Auxiliary presents ALA Girls State. Let's make sure our ALA Girls State program branding becomes a strong opportunity to recruit new members as well as alumnae of the program to become donors. Brand our program proudly!
- **Apparel:** With any apparel items, maximize your print area! Having shirts or accessories created to complement your upcoming ALA activity or event? Ask your artwork vendor what your print area is, and fill it up with the ALA emblem so you are easily recognizable as a member. Arizona ALA Unit 62 had artist aprons made as part of an American Legion Auxiliary Foundation grant benefiting women veterans, so ALA National Headquarters advised members to use a large, round Auxiliary logo as opposed to a small, horizontal version for maximum emblem exposure on the aprons.

With these tips, and support from the ALA Branding Guide, your unit and department can become better brand ambassadors to help members, prospective members, and the public move forward with a clearer picture of who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Our brand is our identity, our message, our reputation, and our future. How we display it and how we behave every day, good or bad, reflects on our brand — it has a lasting impact and affects how others perceive us and view the ALA.

The newest ALA Academy course, ALA Branding and Why It Matters to Me, is now available! Learn more about branding and its role in the future of the ALA. Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org to log in and get started today!

This article was originally published in the November Auxiliary magazine.

American Legion Auxiliary

In the Spirit of Service Not Self for Veterans, God and Country

Approval Request – American Legion Auxiliary
Emblem Use

The American Legion owns the names and trademarks of the American Legion Auxiliary. The American Legion Auxiliary is entrusted by The American Legion with protecting the name and official marks of the ALA. Use of the emblem must be approved by American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. If approval is granted, it is a one-time, limited use. The following information must be completed in full and **submitted to your department secretary.**

Requesting Member Name & Unit & Email:

Manufacturer/Vendor Name:

Vendor Address:

City: State: Zip:

Vendor Contact Email:

Type of Product(s) Emblem is to be used on:

Intended use:

Exact Quantity of Item(s) to be Ordered*:

**Ordering new quantities requires a new authorization.*

A sample, photo, link to your website or vendor mark-up of the American Legion Auxiliary emblem use must be attached.

Department Secretary Signature State Date

Department Secretary: submit completed form to emblem@ALAforVeterans.org

Updated September 2020

Better branding:
Why your website design, content matters

A great way to let the public know more about your American Legion Auxiliary unit is through a website.

Many ALA units have websites. If an interested community member wants to know more and clicks on a link to go to your page, what do they often see? A website that lacks Auxiliary branding, leaving the viewer with no clear indication of who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

But, this can change!

By making a few simple adjustments to your website, you can better educate the public about the Auxiliary, which could result in more members, volunteers, and donors, leading to a bigger difference made in our communities across the country.

DESIGN/APPEARANCE

Color scheme

The American Legion Auxiliary is a patriotic veterans support organization. Website colors that reflect this branding would be red, white, and blue — a visual way to give the viewer a quick idea of our organization before reading any text. If your webpage has hot pink, lime green, or teal colors, for example, it doesn't give the sense that you're part of a service organization dedicated to veterans, military, and their families. Some simple color changes will go a long way in helping website viewers better identify what our organization is about.

ALA emblem on homepage

It's very important for the American Legion Auxiliary emblem appear up front and on the homepage of your website to immediately identify that it's a website of an Auxiliary unit. Prominent placement of the emblem will help people associate who we are with what we do. Also, make sure the emblem is large so a person doesn't have to search for it. Display the emblem proudly!

Take it a step further and use the emblem on each page throughout your website, so if someone first comes to your site through a page other than the homepage, they still see the emblem and know you are with the American Legion Auxiliary.

CONTENT

Who we are

Once someone looks at your website, they will start delving into your content. It's important to have who we are, what we do, and why we matter front and center. People don't like to click on multiple tabs to search and may give up if it's too cumbersome.

Need content ideas for your homepage so it's immediately clear who the Auxiliary is and what we do?

- Mission statement: in the spirit of Service Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.
- Vision statement: The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace, and security.
- The world's largest patriotic service organization: For nearly a century, the American Legion

Auxiliary has been serving, helping, and meeting the needs of our nation's veterans, military, and their families — both here and abroad.

Also be sure to include tabs at the top of your homepage for important pages such as "About Us," "Programs," and "Membership/How to Join."

Links to ALA national documents

It's great when units have important documents from ALA National Headquarters on their websites. But, a word of caution — don't download a national document onto your website because if it gets revised, you will allow an old version to circulate. Rather, include a link to the document's location on the national website. That way, if there are any revisions, your website links to the newest version.

Contact information

If someone is interested in joining, volunteering, or donating to your ALA unit, be sure to always have contact information that is up to date and visible on your website. You don't want to lose out on any opportunities because your contact information was inaccurate or difficult to find!

TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

It's important to efficiently utilize social media to share the ALA's message of who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Here are a few general best practices for social media when posting about the American Legion Auxiliary on pages the public sees, such as your unit/district/ department pages:

Think before you post

Use common sense. Think twice before posting something that may hurt the image of the American Legion Auxiliary or compromise your privacy, and never post confidential or proprietary information. Be aware that courts may judge certain material as proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous, or obscene.

Start talking … er, posting

Social media is meant to be social — think of it as an ongoing conversation. Engage with others by including a call to action such as sharing, retweeting, liking, or commenting on your posts to encourage social sharing. Comment where appropriate to keep the conversation going.

Know the etiquette

Ever get an email written in uppercase letters and find yourself taken aback? In social media, there are also cultural norms, expectations, and conventions that govern user interactions. Failure to observe them may compromise your credibility or make you come across as a negative person when that never may have been your intention.

Get the ALA out there

Talk about the American Legion Auxiliary, our programs, volunteers projects, and mission. Share examples of activities going on in your unit or department, keep your content fresh, and update it often.

Graphics help get you noticed

Your followers see a lot of text when they sign in to Facebook or Twitter — you want to stand out! Research has shown that using visuals such as photos and videos with social media posts greatly increases engagement. See what software is available online — apps like Canva offer free, attractive templates to design, collaborate, and share on social media.

Celebrate!

Share good news, celebrate milestones, congratulate members, and post other happy occasions. Audiences want to celebrate your victories with you, no matter how small.

Social Media Do's and Don'ts

Did you know there are 2.3 billion+ monthly active users on Facebook? What a great platform for us to promote our American Legion Auxiliary brand and the great work we do! Listed below are lots of do's and a few don'ts that will assist you in creating the best social media page ever.

DO:

- Create a page with a name that is easy to remember and that reflects our brand. For example, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 201, Sayville, Ky. lets them know who you are and where you are. Another page name to consider is: ALA Unit 201, Sayville, Ky. Always put our location because each state could have the same unit number.
- Always put our emblem on the page correctly and in a prominent position. (See emblem usage for guidelines, found on the national website under Public Relations)
- Tell our story by promoting positive pictures and words explaining your activities.
- Before creating a page, make sure there isn't a page already established for your purpose. If there is a page, find the administrator of the page so you can gain access. When a person searches for your page, they shouldn't see several pages with the same or almost identical names. This causes confusion and is more prevalent than you think.
- If you are the administrator for a social media account and step down or take another position, transfer the administrator rights to the new person to ensure continuity.
- Complete the "about page" and "our story" page to further communicate our mission.
- Refresh your page on a consistent basis with pictures, stories, quotes, and positive American Legion Family items that will draw the viewer in and make them want to visit often.
- Share your page with friends, family, and others to promote our organization.
- It is better to use only a select few pictures that are in focus and clearly show the event and what it was about than to use many photos that are just candid shots with no particular meaning.
- Visit and like the national American Legion Auxiliary Public Relations page at www.Facebook.com/groups/ALApublicrelations.

DON'T:

- Don't post pictures that show American Legion Family members drinking alcohol.
- Don't post rants or criticisms of members or other organizations.
- Don't create a page and then never update it. A Facebook page is an ongoing history of your organization.
- Don't post pictures of events without a title. Make sure you post your unit name, number, city, and state. Someone from Ohio could be viewing something from a unit in North Carolina, but have no clue where it is based on only a unit number.
- Don't forget to SMILE in your pictures and put your best Auxiliary face forward.
- Don't use site for your personal use — for instance to promote your business. You can do that on your own Facebook page. The PR page is to tell about the great works of the Auxiliary.

Tips on how to take high-quality, publishable photos

American Legion Auxiliary members are serving our veterans, military, and their families every day, working these mission-in-action moments to show who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

One of the best ways to show what this organization is all about is through photos of mission moments, such as ALA volunteers handing out items to veterans at a stand down, awarding a deserving child our Youth Hero Award, or contacting legislators to advocate for veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

ALA National Headquarters and local media outlets want these photos of the ALA in action. Unfortunately, many photos submitted are not usable for print publication — some are out of focus, others are too light or too dark, and some have inappropriate subject matter, or other issues that render the photo unusable.

Examples of inappropriate subject matter include:

- Alcoholic drinks in photos
- Signs advertising alcohol
- Using alcohol boxes to store items for care package distribution or donations to homeless shelters

It's very important when taking a photo to look at the background and what all would be in the shot. It's OK to move items out of the way or re-angle yourself to take the photo.

The goal is to help all members capture photos that show an ALA 'Service Not Self' mindset. Below are a few tidbits to point you in the right direction when it comes to showcasing our organization visually.

Steps for Selecting Photographs

- Does the photo illustrate mission movement?
- Is what's happening in the picture authentic and positive?
- Are the subjects being genuine?
- Can our audience and/or the public relate to the picture quickly and with ease?
- Is the photo free of items such as alcoholic beverages or political signs?

When submitting photos, it's important to show and not tell, which can be illustrated through action shots. Be sure to take photos of members working the mission, whether that's painting a fence for a community service project, scooping out mashed potatoes at a dinner fundraiser, or helping a veteran visit various stations at a job fair — showing action is key.

You can still take those ceremonial shots with the traditional grip-and-grin pose for your own records, but be sure to send the mission-in-action shots to national and local media outlets.

Hi-resolution photos matter

Most news media outlets want to have hi resolution images for printing. This means 300dpi or greater

and a large photo if possible. Most cameras today can be set for hi resolution shooting as well as specific dpi. If you are using your camera phone to take pics please make sure to send the image at full size to the media outlet. Do not use funny filters or snap chat filters with your images. Clean, clear and crisp photos are always best.

Use our branding whenever possible

Whenever possible, try to include ALA branded elements in photos (shirts, hats, pins, etc). This helps the public easily identify which organization is hosting the event or activity.

Bonus tip: Wear ALA-branded clothing to a non-Auxiliary event in your community to represent the organization. You may end up being in the event photos/video taken by your local media, or even better, you may get a member out of it who asks about the ALA and is eligible to join, all because you're wearing a branded shirt!

Don't be afraid to ask for pics from media

If you have a great, mission-focused event and you weren't able to take your own photos, but a photographer from a media outlet was there, be sure to reach out to that person for reprint permissions so you can share the image with National Headquarters, on your social media pages, or in your newsletters. Don't miss out on an opportunity to showcase our organization!

To see more of the photography guidelines that can help you take better photos to submit to national or your local media, download the ALA Branding Guide at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Showing who we are, what we do, and why we matter is so important for our current members, future members, and financial supporters in our communities. Let's do it right by taking high-quality photos, one of the best ways to showcase the American Legion Auxiliary.

Quick Tips

- Try to capture smiling faces when appropriate.
- Include at least two subjects unless the action in the photograph is done alone.
- Try to capture the moment — get real emotions and interactions, not staged ones.
- People should almost always be the focus.
- Capture intimate moments of interaction between volunteers and those being served.
- Naturalism and realism are important in terms of lighting, setting, interacting, etc.
- Minimal editing is OK for most photographs. Don't make them appear artificial in any way. If the photograph requires too much editing to make it usable, don't use it. And always be respectful when editing.

What Not to Do

- Don't force interactions, emotions, reactions, settings, or smiles.
- Don't crop or cut people off at the edge of a photo.
- Ensure good lighting. Do not use photos that are too dark.
- Don't include tobacco, alcohol, obscene gestures, or brand names/logos/emblems.
- Don't make relationships between subjects appear ambiguous.

TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR UNIT PRESS BOOK

USING PRINT AND DIGITAL MEDIA

- Your books are to be no larger than 12x15 (Scrapbook size). Go all out but make sure it fits your Unit's personality and character.
- Front page of the book MUST have the name and address of the Unit, total membership and Chairman's information. This page can have a background but no stickers.
- Cut out media NICE AND NEAT for best look unless the article or other media is a full page.
- You may decorate but keep it clean and professional.
  BACKGROUNDS AND STICKERS ONLY.
- All of your articles and digital media must be in order by date.
- **All articles must state (1 of) American Legion Family, American Legion Auxiliary, or Unit. Photos are great all the way around as long as a Unit member is in it or it goes with the article. If you can be certain that the Unit was present but not listed please make note.**
- Start your press book early. Don't wait until the last minute. Do it a month at a time and it helps make it easier and less stressful.
- **REMEMBER YOU MAY ONLY USE PHOTOS THAT HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED.**

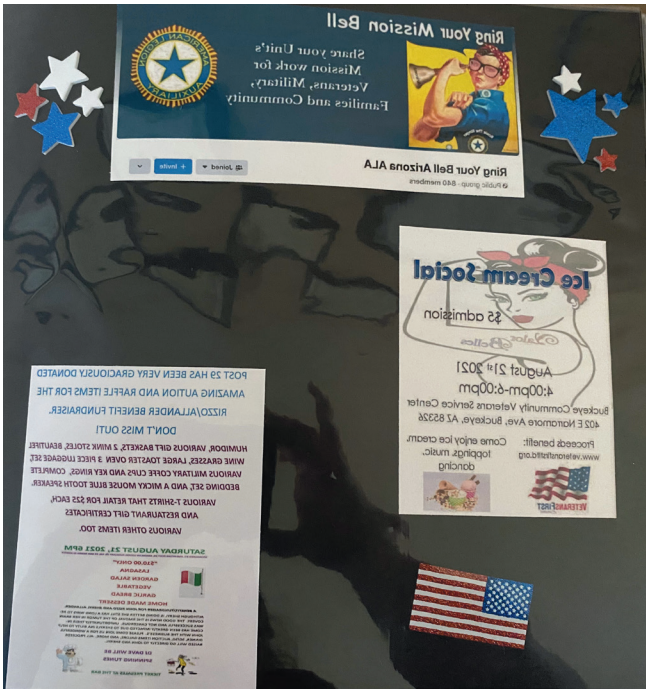
ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF MEDIA FOR YOUR PRESS BOOK

- Newspaper & Magazine Articles
- Fliers, Posters & Hand-Outs
- Bulletins and Newsletters print and online
- Programs from Events
- Written copies or web copies or radio and tv spots
- Social Media Postings of events.
  (Alerting your members to up coming events.)
- Photo copies of all of the above are acceptable as well

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SAMPLES

SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMPLES

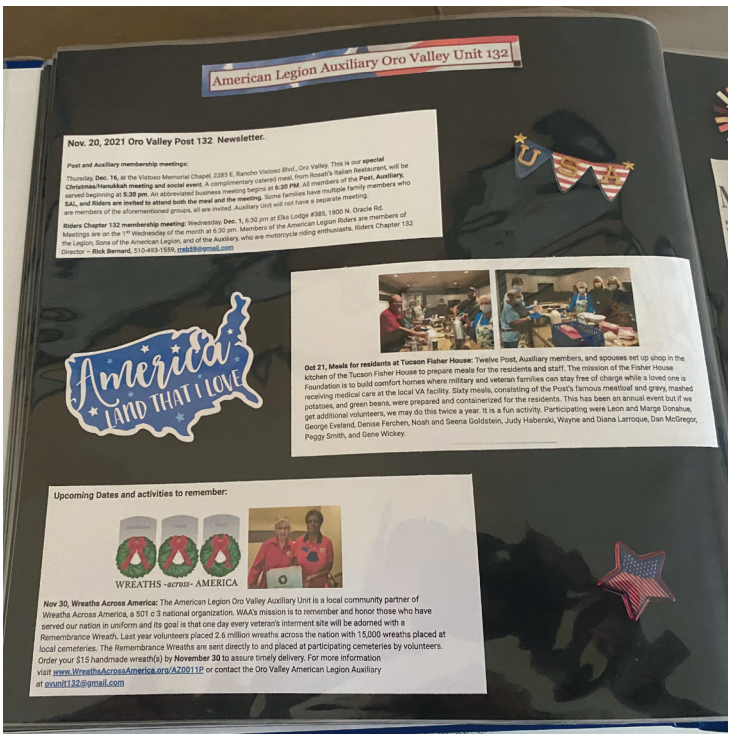
Postings must be an advertisement of an event or an alert to an event with the event details





NEWSLETTER AND ARTICLE EXAMPLES

These can be originals or photo copies but must have folio, date and origination





KITCHEN PUBLICITY PLAQUE membership less than or equal to 150
LUCY QUINN PUBLICITY PLAQUE membership greater than or equal to 151

Department awards to be presented by the Public Relations Chairman.

RULES: FOR PRESS BOOK

1. Inside pages must NOT exceed 12 x 14 inches unless using Scrapbook ordered from National Emblem Sales as pages may vary. Cover may be of your own choosing, as the cover will not be judged.

2. Leave one inch margin on each of the four sides of every page.

3. The first page will be a fly leaf with nothing on it.

4. The second page will have the name of the Unit, the number of the Unit, City and State, followed by the dates of the year involved.

5. Articles must pertain to activities in the Unit, either alone or in cooperation with other organization.

6. The name of your Unit or the number of the Unit, not necessarily both, MUST be mentioned in each article used. Arrange the clippings by date and month according to the date of the issue of the paper in chronological order.

7. Clip the name and date of the paper in which an article appeared and paste (do not scotch tape these) immediately above the article. DO NOT PRINT OR STAMP THIS INFORMATION ON THE PAPER.

8. Please total number of inches of publicity and total number of pictures on the last page of the book.

9. Include all articles concerning both Junior and Senior activities appearing in any newspaper or magazine, if they have either the name or number of the Unit in them.

10. A committee of judges, composed of three persons not affiliated with the American Legion Auxiliary, will be appointed by the Department Chairman. Quality of publicity, not quantity, will be a major factor in judging press books.

11. Press Books must be in to the Department Public Relations Chairman by deadline date.

12. This award shall become the permanent property of the Unit which wins it for three (3) consecutive years. The permanent winner of the plaque will place another one in the field for competition following the above rules. The names of the plaques will remain the same.

(Revised 1992)

MAXINE CHILTON MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Department award to be presented by the Public Relations Chairman.

Report to cover Publicity, Press Book, and written narrative.

The purpose of this award is to stimulate interest in good publicity and public relations, giving recognition to the Unit which makes the MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF ALL AVAILABLE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

1. Any Unit in the Department may receive this award.

2. Plaque shall NOT become the permanent property of any Unit at any time.

3. The judging of the Reports and Press Book shall be made prior to the time of the annual Department Convention. Three (3) judges are to be appointed by the Department Chairman.

4. The entries for this award shall consist of the Press Book which includes newspaper clippings, bulletins to members, etc., and your typewritten narrative of not more than 1,000 words of outstanding activities.

5. Judging will be on originality and quality of material, not on quantity of material.

6. Unit Public Relations narratives competing for the plaque must be in the possession of the Department Chairman by the specified date the Chairman designates.

7. Cover sheet for narrative mush include name of Unit and Number, Department of Arizona, Unit Chairman's name and address. NO Press Book articles will be adhered to any page of the narrative.

(Revised 1997)