

Community Emergency Readiness Team (CERT) Volunteers & Training

Submitted by Central Division Chairman April Kollmorgen

With the change in weather also comes a change in focus. Every year, you probably hear about Emergency Preparedness and see lots of ads for “making your plan”. Maybe it’s because the weather has changed in the area, and the wind has already brought down a couple of tree branches, but it’s time to think about what to do in case of an emergency.

Through The Ready Campaign, numerous resources and training opportunities are available to help you develop and implement your emergency plans. Visit <https://www.ready.gov> to make your plan. It can be as simple as a hand-drawn map of your street with meeting places in case of a house fire. Or you can have a kit for power loss, or a major emergency, like non-perishable food and water. The needs will vary based on where you live and what disasters may happen. Don’t forget about your pets and food and water for them too! It’s a good time to make sure you know where any important documents are, too.

For over 20 years, Ready has been promoting preparedness through public involvement. If you would like to go a step further, you can take the CERT (Community Emergency Readiness Training) and become a CERT Volunteer. The CERT Basic Training is available in each State, so you will need to check your State’s Emergency Site for specific information. CERTs are all locally based, but the State generally has all the information in one place.

What can CERT volunteers do during emergencies?

- Provide basic first aid
- Check on neighbors
- Support local emergency centers
- Connect disaster survivors to resources
- Serve meals
- Distribute information to the public
- Staff lost child booths at booths and at disaster preparedness events during non-emergency community events

Who can be a volunteer on a CERT?

- CERT instructors believe that *everyone* can serve their communities before, during and after a disaster. CERT is open to adults and teens of all ages and abilities.
- Anyone 18 or older can take a basic CERT training. Teens between 13-17 can participate with written permission from their parent or guardian. Youths between 11 and 12 must obtain written permission from their parent or guardian and the parent or guardian must accompany them to CERT trainings and events.

Salute to Servicemembers Award 2026

Submitted by National Vice-Chairman Jammie Phillips

It is never too early to begin planning for your unit's nomination for the Salute to Servicemembers Award. This award is one of the highlights of each year's National Convention and serves as a wonderful way to honor our men and women in uniform. Last year's National Security Vice-Chairman, PNP Lisa Williamson, worked diligently to increase the number of nominations for the Salute to Servicemembers Award, achieving a remarkable 500% increase. This year, she has challenged us not only to surpass the 34 nominations received in 2024-2025 but also to secure a nomination for the one branch that has yet to receive an award—the Space Force. Are YOU up for the challenge? You can find the Salute to Servicemembers Award Nomination form and detailed information at <https://member.legion-aux.org/Salute-to-Servicemembers-Award-Form>

Deadline is June 1st, 2026!

National Security Resources

Facebook – Follow us on Facebook! Don’t forget to answer the questions...
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/915563745139663/>

National Security email address
nationalsecurity@ALAforVeterans.org

CERT Continued.....

How do I become part of a CERT?

The first step to becoming a CERT volunteer is to complete a CERT basic class. Then you can join a CERT team in your area. Start with this Independent Study as an introduction. <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/individuals-communities/preparedness-activities-webinars/community-emergency-response-team>. Then, find a class in your local area. If there is not one in your area, it is possible you can also request one through your State Emergency Department.

There is also a National CERT Association that you can join to connect with and support others. <https://nationalcert.org>

Share with your Departments and Units. Share with your friends and neighbors – a little prep now could mean a lot later. We all pray you don't have to use the knowledge and skills learned through CERT and Emergency Preparedness, but if you do need to use them, use them well.

OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

"Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) is an officially recognized program of The American Legion Charities Inc., and its purpose is to assist wounded, injured, or ill active-duty military personnel and veterans by providing morale-enhancing gifts to warrior transition units, VA, and DoD medical care facilities, military installations, and 501 (c)(3) and (c)(19) organizations which are part of The American Legion Family or such nonprofit entities sponsored by an American Legion entity." *Cited from The American Legion Website.*

"While the care at many military hospitals and warrior transition units is extraordinary, The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors program was created to provide nonessential items that help wounded warriors recover but don't usually show up as a budget line on government spreadsheets." *Cited from TAL Website.*

Supporting the health and morale of active service members and Veterans is vital to this program. The American Legion provides aid and comfort through various initiatives, demonstrating ongoing support for those who serve our nation.

Recognizing the importance of family in recovery, event grants allow for family participation. These grants fund outings to amusement parks and outdoor activities, encouraging recipients to take a break from medical challenges and spend quality time with their loved ones.

How the ALA can help

The American Legion encourages monetary donations since most military and VA medical centers cannot store large care packages. This allows us to quickly purchase and deliver essential items to our wounded warriors and veterans.

If your Unit is holding a fundraiser, please consider donating to the OCW (Ongoing Care for Warriors).

OCW Continued.....

Checks may be mailed to:

*Operation Comfort Warriors
The American Legion
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, IN 4621*

Donations can be made electronically on their website as well.

As always, every dollar of every donation made benefits OCW. The American Legion covers all associated costs, administrative or otherwise.

Check out more on Operation Comfort Warrior at

<https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/operation-comfort-warriors>

*** All information from this article is cited from The American Legion website, www.legion.org.*

*Respectfully submitted by
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ALA 2025-26 National Security
Eastern Division Chairwoman*



**NATIONAL DAY
OF THE
DEPLOYED**
OCTOBER 26, 2025