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ALA eNEWS: *CONNECTING WITH YOU MONTHLY*



APRIL 2026

Honoring female veterans with ALA-sponsored Lone Eagle Honor Flight

This month, female veterans will be flying from nationwide to Washington, D.C. to be recognized for their military service and visit various memorials and monuments through an ALA-sponsored Lone Eagle Honor Flight.

A Lone Eagle flight differs from a traditional Honor Flight where veterans leave and arrive on the same flight, by ensuring all eligible veterans can participate in the experience, regardless of their geographic location.

The sponsored flight came from the ALA and Honor Flight Inc.'s formal partnership in 2021 to help support Honor Flight Inc.'s mission of celebrating America's veterans by inviting them to a special day of honor at our nation's memorials and monuments. The official collaboration allows units and departments to directly donate funds generated from poppy distributions to Honor Flight hubs.

ALA National President Pam Ray formed a sentimental attachment to the Honor Flight program after attending a flight with her father, a U.S. Army veteran, in 2010. The genuine connection with Honor Flight's mission helped inspire this ALA-sponsored flight.



National President Pam Ray's message about the ,

AmericanLegionAux



Watch on

Stay updated on this all-female veteran Lone Eagle Honor Flight through our social media:

Make sure you're connected to our social media accounts for updates on this historic ALA experience:

- Facebook: [@ALAforVeterans](#)
- Instagram: [@ALAforVeterans](#)

Read more about this upcoming flight on the [ALA blog!](#)

Get packing for Project Ruck Sack

The ALA's Project Ruck Sack program is a perfect opportunity for Auxiliary volunteers to connect with youth in their communities. This ALA Children & Youth initiative aims to make a positive difference in children's lives by putting together comfort items, toys, and supplies for community youth and including the items in ALA drawstring bags in two cool designs. Place orders in quantities of 10, 25, or 50. Order [here!](#)



Need ideas on how to organize for this project? [Go to this how-to flyer.](#)

Ready, set, poppy! It's time to get active for National Poppy Day®

To honor those who have served and died for the United States, The American Legion Family petitioned Congress for National Poppy Day®. Celebrated Friday prior to Memorial Day, the Legion Family honors the sacrifices of our servicemembers and

veterans by wearing a red poppy. The poppy has been recognized and worn by Americans as a symbol of sacrifice since World War I.

National Poppy Day® is May 22 this year. Leading up to this significant day, a virtual 5K will happen throughout the month to raise awareness and support.

ALA members are encouraged to participate however they're able to: walking, running, swimming, biking, etc.! Be creative!



To participate, make an encouraged \$25 donation to your local unit or state department Poppy Fund. Complete the 5K (3.1 miles) in whatever activity you choose between May 1-22. Be sure you're branded, wear your poppy gear, and take loads of pictures!

Registration closes April 30. For the first **700 registrants**, race medals are available. To register, go [here](#)!

Don't forget to post and share in the [American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program Facebook group](#).

Email high-resolution, actual-size pictures to Poppy@ALAforVeterans.org. Once you've emailed, you will receive a certificate of completion to fill out and print.

Keep an eye on our ALA social media accounts @ALAforVeterans for more about the 5K! Let's make this an unforgettable National Poppy Day!

To learn more about National Poppy Day®, go [here](#)!

To read more about the National Poppy Day® Virtual 5K, go to the [ALA blog!](#)

Unlock the full potential of your ALA membership with these upcoming ALA Academy webinars

Building a Strong Membership Strategy — Engagement, Retention, and Year-Round Planning

When: April 14 @ 7 p.m. ET

Looking for fresh ideas to strengthen membership in your unit beyond “dues time”? In this ALA Academy Live webinar, ALA national membership leaders share practical strategies to help units engage members year-round, improve retention, and build a welcoming culture focused on mission and connection.

[Register here!](#)

Promoting The American Legion Legislative Priorities and Engaging ALA Members in Local Advocacy

When: April 21 @ noon ET

Learn about The American Legion’s current legislative agenda priorities and how ALA volunteers can amplify and support those priorities on a local level. In this ALA Academy Live webinar, member and community engagement in advocacy efforts utilizing the Grassroots Action Center will be discussed, as well as understanding the importance of grassroots efforts in affecting change. Use this webinar to help explore ways to motivate and educate members on legislative issues.

[Register here!](#)

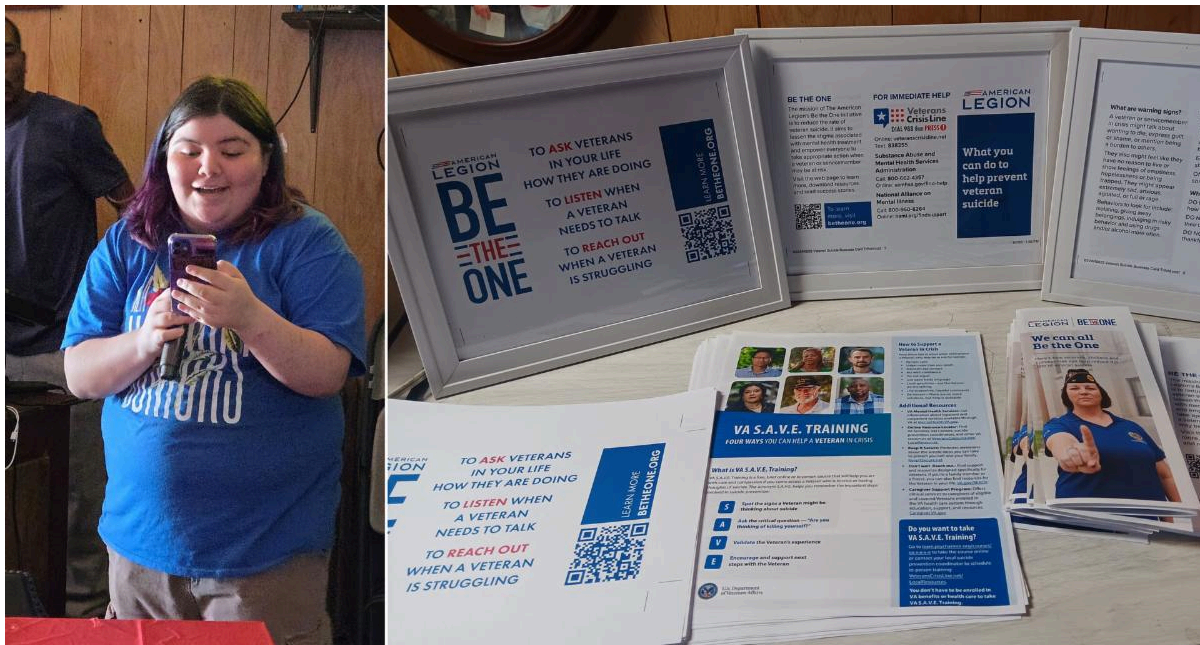
Celebrating America's 250th Birthday

When: May 12 @ noon ET

Who doesn’t love a birthday celebration? This July 4, America is celebrating its semi-quincentennial — its 250th birthday! Join us as we commemorate our nation’s past and its future. Happy birthday, America!

[Register here!](#)

ALA Junior member organizes Be the One fundraiser



American Legion Auxiliary Junior member Elizabeth Carmichael hoped to raise \$300 during her March 29 fundraiser to promote The American Legion’s Be the One veteran suicide prevention program.

But the 15-year-old member of unit 716 in Los Alamitos, Calif., blew past that goal. Carmichael’s fundraiser has raised more than \$1,200 for Be the One, a cause that is special for someone who has been active in The American Legion Family for years.

To read more, go [here!](#)

There's still time to join and be active in the USA 250 Challenge

Join this challenge culminating with America's birthday on July 4. Participants have three areas — fitness, mental wellness, and/or community service — they can engage in as part of a team, like an ALA unit, or as an individual. You can do one category or go the extra mile and do all three!

[Register here](#) for \$30 and get a USA 250 Legion Family T-shirt and donate to a good cause. For more information on ways to fulfill the categories, go to [the USA 250 Challenge website](#).



With the end of the challenge drawing near, there's still time to make a difference. American Legion National Commander Dan Wiley is calling on The American Legion Family and friends of the Legion Family to raise \$150,000 in donations through the USA 250 Challenge to serve our servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

These funds can be used to help deliver grants to military and veteran parents who face unexpected financial hardships that threaten the stability of their homes and fund training for accredited American Legion service officers who are continuously working more than 750,000 benefits claims for disabled veterans and their families, free of charge.

Read more [here!](#)

Special awards are available for fundraising

To keep the USA 250 momentum going, awards are available for those who hit certain fundraising goals with three fundraising tiers:

- For \$250 in donations raised, participants receive a USA 250 Challenge hat pin.
- For \$500 in donations raised, participants receive a USA 250 Challenge coin and a personalized certificate of appreciation.

For \$2,500 in donations raised, participants receive a personalized plaque signed by American Legion National Commander Wiley.

MEMBER BENEFITS



SmileAssociate benefit expansion to directly support local ALA entities

The American Legion Auxiliary is expanding its partnership with SmileAssociate to give departments, districts, counties, councils, and units a new opportunity to raise funds through everyday Amazon shopping. Each participating ALA entity can now have its own SmileAssociate page, allowing supporters to shop in a way that directly benefits their local Auxiliary programs at no additional cost to them. ALA National Headquarters will provide oversight, quarterly reporting, and support to help drive participation across the organization. Watch for additional details on how your ALA entity can enroll and begin turning routine shopping into meaningful support for our mission. Initial questions can be directed to ALA National Headquarters' Development Division Director Carley Schutz at cschutz@ALAforVeterans.org.



In 2025, American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters awarded \$529,168 to 274 ALA members who were recovering from a natural disaster or facing financial hardship. This assistance was only made possible with your support.

Last year, we gave
\$529,168



In 2025, American Legion National Headquarters awarded \$529,168 to 274 ALA members who were recovering from a natural disaster or facing financial hardship. This assistance can only continue with your support.

Your gift to AEF ensures we have the resources to create impact today and sustain our mission into the future. Text AEF to 1-844-940-3450 or visit <https://donate.legion-aux.org/AEF>.

Introducing FLAGS OF VALOR



The ALA is proud to partner with Flags of Valor, a veteran-owned company creating handcrafted patriotic pieces made in the USA by skilled veterans and artisans. ALA members receive 10% off with code ALA10, and 15% of each purchase supports ALA programs serving veterans, military families, and communities. Shop with purpose and give back by visiting <https://www.flagsofvalor.com/>.

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ShipThrifty.com makes it easy to create and print shipping labels for care packages of any size. American Legion Auxiliary members can save up to 60% on shipping, skip long lines, and securely manage addresses, all with free tools designed for military support efforts.


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Wellcare is proud to be the exclusive Medicare Advantage plan provider for The American Legion Family

You know the value of a trusted partner, and so do we. That's why Wellcare is proud to serve as the Auxiliary's exclusive Medicare Advantage plan provider. Our plans offer \$0 or low monthly plan premiums and go beyond Original Medicare, providing you more benefits you may need — like dental, vision, hearing, benefits and prescription drug coverage while also complementing your existing VA coverage. In addition, we offer My Wellcare Rewards, a program that pays you for your healthy choices. Complete an eligible activity and get rewarded with funds you may redeem toward your Auxiliary membership dues.

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If you have Medicare and Medicaid, limited income, recently lost employer coverage, are turning 65, or you've just moved, you may be eligible for one of many qualifying events that allow you to enroll now.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep your eyes peeled for the May *Auxiliary* magazine! The May edition of our national quarterly magazine is heading to mailboxes in late April and early May. A digital copy will be available on [our website](#). Send us your thoughts on this issue: Email PR@ALAforVeterans.org.

Missed a webinar? Go to ALA Academy to review recordings and see what other webinars are coming up. Click [here!](#)

Have an idea for an Academy Course? Email ALAAcademy@ALAforVeterans.org to send your ideas for potential courses.



ALA COMMITTEE FACEBOOK GROUPS ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION

These national committee groups are spaces on the social media platform for ALA members to discuss or share ideas about topics related to each committee. Groups provide a safe place for organic discussion about your local programs or services and support efforts to grow our organization’s awareness. Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media to join the groups you’re passionate about.

ON THE ALA BLOG

Planning for National Poppy Day

Guest blog post by National Poppy Committee Chair Karen Toll

[Read more](#)



Purple Star Schools program is a great ALA resource

Guest blog post by National Education Committee Member Nancy Babis

[Read more](#)



SAVE THE DATE



April: Month of the Military Child
April: Children & Youth Month
April: National Volunteer Month
April 9: National Former POW Recognition Day
April 19-25: National Volunteer Week
April 14: Air Force Reserve Birthday
April 22: Earth Day
April 23: Army Reserve Birthday
April 25: American Legion Family Day
May 1: Silver Star Banner Day
May 8: Military Spouse Appreciation Day
May 8: VE Day (Victory in Europe Day)
May 10: Mother's Day
May 13: Children of Fallen Patriots Day

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

“I went on an Honor Flight with my mother, a World War II Army nurse. Our local Auxiliary donated to her trip. She was a dual member of The American Legion. Wonderful trip, especially as a woman vet. They were not always recognized.”

— Cathy Buxengard, Minnesota

LEGION FAMILY NEWS

American Legion Riders escorting U.S. flag from Pittsburgh to U.S. capital to celebrate USA 250th

As a part of the United States' 250th birthday, Riders will escort the flag in a one-day trip to Washington, D.C. This flag will have traveled to 26 countries, being flown over U.S. military memorials and cemeteries under the American Battle Monuments Commission's guard. This escort is the final leg in its international tour, Sojourn 250.

Sojourn 250 is looking for 275 riders, and registration will close once that number is hit. There's a registration fee of \$250 per rider and \$50 for passengers. Registration is only online. To register to be one of the escorts, click [here](#). To learn more, go [here](#). If you have any questions, email legionriders@legion.org with the subject line Sojourn 250.

Freshen up your “Old Glory” through Emblem Sales

With America's 250th approaching slowly but surely, check out American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales' U.S. flag varieties to rep the good ole' Red, White, and Blue. Check out what the nation's No. 1 U.S.-made American flags and flag accessories supplier has to offer. To see the catalogue, click [here](#).

Emblem Sales offers **stick flags**, a perfect party favor for parades and Independence Day. These Stars and Stripes are also perfect lawn accessories and are great to use for the **America250's America Waves initiative**. America Waves calls upon Americans everywhere to wave a U.S. flag in unison on the nation's 250th birthday. If you're a history buff, or just need educational materials, Emblem Sales also has various **historical flags**.

Visit the Emblem Sales online store at emblem.legion.org.

Pop in your headphones and listen to The American Legion podcast *Tango Alpha Lima*

This podcast aims to engage veterans and The American Legion Family with authentic stories, education, and entertainment, while also building a virtual community. Available on various listening platforms, such as **Spotify**, **YouTube**, **Amazon Music**, **Apple Podcasts**, and **iHeartRadio**. To learn more about the podcast, [click here](#).

Legion Family Media & Communications Contest deadline approaching

The annual American Legion Media & Communications Contest recognizes the hard work and accomplishments of our American Legion Family members who positively promote and educate the public on the Legion Family on local, district, and department levels. All Legion Family members are encouraged to submit entries into the contest that showcase their work on various media channels.

Rules of the contest:

- All entries must have been published during the 2025 calendar year.
- You may enter submissions in one or multiple categories.
- Each submission costs \$5.
- Deadline for submissions is April 15.
- All entries must be original. Plagiarized entries or content from other publications will result in automatic disqualification.

To enter the contest, [click here](#).

Winners of the contest receive a plaque and are considered for the Innovation Award and Chairman's Award, which includes a plaque and a \$50 Emblem Sales credit.

To learn more about the contest, [click here](#).



ALA Membership

Where does your department stand in Auxiliary membership? [Click here to log in and view the latest reports.](#)

The American Legion Legislative Center

The ALA supports the legislative agenda of The American Legion. [Get involved.](#)



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