

Greetings Everyone!

As the year charges forward, we are coming up on our dreaded "reporting season" I see Auxiliary Leaders cringe when they say things like, "I hate calling and nagging units for their numbers." "We have 35 units, and I only get reports from 3." Units are reluctant to talk about themselves, they want it to "be about the people, and not about us."

Once you get someone on the phone, they can be vague. You ask them what they did this year for such and such a program? Did you do any fundraisers? How about adopting a family for a holiday? The phone call seems more like an interrogation and can seem like an unpleasant experience.

Does any of this sound familiar? How can you make reporting a joy instead of chore? Here is my approach.

Tell me a story about how your unit helped children and youth this year. How much joy did you bring into your life and the lives of others as you served them? What was the happy ending to your story? These stories should be the basis of any report you compile. As you hear the story, ask questions about how many Auxiliary members were involved and how much time it took. By the time they get through talking, you should have an idea of some numbers that can be filled in to eventually make it to the National Year-End Impact Report.

When you make a year-end report at your Department Convention, you will have the best stories to retell. You will be excited! Your enthusiasm will be infectious! Look at the things we did. Here are some ideas of what you may consider doing in the future. We celebrate the joy and happiness we brought to the world.

Other questions to ask:

- Did you see any opportunities to award a Youth Hero or Good Deed Award?
- What fun things did you do for Purple Up Day?
- What did your unit do to celebrate to the Month of the Military Child?
- How did your unit help a family in need this year?
- When was the last time your unit presented the Military Child Table Ceremony?



Don't forget that there are programs outside of Children and Youth that may cross over to you. Did any children enter the Poppy Poster Contest or an Americanism Essay contest? What kinds of service did your Juniors perform this year?

Awards

Let's talk about awards for a minute. I find that some Units or Departments might be reluctant to nominate themselves for a National Award. Why? They may feel that they are just patting themselves on the back rather than gaining recognition for hard work and a job well done.

Please, please, please...help us celebrate the accomplishments of the American Legion Auxiliary by nominating deserving Units and yourselves for jobs well done. We want the National Convention to be a "Greatest Hits" compilation hopefully featuring some fabulous stories from the Western Division.

Reporting is about the stories we tell. Each tale is woven into a tapestry of compassion, service and joy. The people we serve, the lives we improve and joy we share are what the American Legion Family special.

Thank you for all of your hard work, dedication and encouragement!

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Department Highlight

Candi from New Mexico thought of a way to have more units report to her. She gave away small prizes for reporting and every unit that reported got entered into a drawing for a gift basket she put together. What won't people do for good coffee?

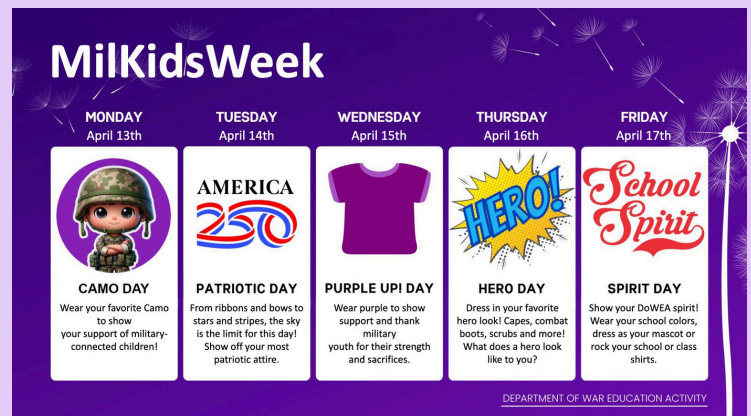
What are other ways you can think of to get more unit participation in reporting?



Realizing Reconnection through Resilience

The life of a military-connected child is one of constant change. In addition to the typical stressors of being a kid, a military child faces a unique set of challenges, including separation during deployment and being relocated across the country – or even the world.

Being a military child means always having to adjust and adapt to an array of changes, and that's not an easy task! Understanding how to support children during these challenges begins with paying close attention to their behavior and emotions and using available resources when needed. Help them realize what they are feeling and create a supportive environment to reconnect and share those feelings. Talking to someone is a critical first step toward wellness and resilience.



Ways to Celebrate

- Wear purple on Purple Up Day
- Web Site Feature
- Publicize Installation/Community Events
- Salute to Military Children at Sporting Events
- Teachers Salute Military Children