

CREATIVE ARTS FOR VETERANS

2025-2026 YEAR END REPORT

The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Arizona, held three Creative Arts Festivals. Veterans, their families, and friends, attended the Phoenix Creative Arts Festival on May 7, 2026. It was an honor to Chair this important program for the third year and see the value of the American Legion Auxiliary's continued contribution. Three Arizona winners were from Phoenix. The works of Daniel Combs and Felix Fortuna will be judged at our National Creative Arts Festival on June 9-14, 2026, in Columbia, SC, Department will cover hotel accommodations and ALA Unit 41 will provide funds for meal expenses for the Veteran, Daniel Combs, attending the National Competition. Charcuterie boards with fruits, cheese and crackers, home baked pastries, and Sparkling Juice were provided again this year. The Phoenix VA is looking for a larger space for next year's Festival.

The Creative Arts Festival in Tucson was held on August 15, 2025. Veterans, guests, and staff enjoyed the display boards for the Creative Writing. Crackers, cheese, and non-alcoholic "wine" was provided for attendees. After the Creative Arts Festival, the winning art was on display at the Tucson Mall for the public's enjoyment.

The Prescott VCAF was held September 5-7, 2025, at the Yavapai County Fair for the third year. The three days allowed visitors at the County Fair to view and enjoy the creative works of the local Veterans. Cake was served during the awards presentation.

This is such an important program which helps boost confidence in our Veterans. I was touched by the emotions expressed by those attending the festivals and seeing the accomplishments of the participants.

Of 84 Units, only 29 submitted year-end reports and reported donations totaling \$6,395.55. Our donations are vital to the program as the American Legion is the only co-sponsor with the Department of Foreign Affairs. Units reported 162 volunteer hours and various fundraising events such as raffles, talent show, fashion show, jewelry sales, rummage sales, a fair, food sales, cupcake and cookie decorating classes.

Unfortunately, one donating Unit did not qualify for an award due to not ordering Poppies as required.

A few units provided art supplies to the V.A. in lieu of a monetary donation and one Unit provided \$200 to assist the Veteran traveling to the National competition in Columbia, SC.

For Service, Not Self,

Anita Ritter

ALA Creative Arts Chair, 2025-2026

Department of Arizona