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ALA eNEWS: *CONNECTING WITH YOU MONTHLY*



MAY 2026

The National Poppy Day® 5K is in full bloom! Spread the fun and share your photos on social media

It's the month of the poppy! Throughout May until National Poppy Day® on May 22, a virtual 5K is being held to raise awareness and support for the meaning behind the poppy. Participants are encouraged to participate however they can and to wear poppy gear.



Take loads of pictures and share them on social media to help the poppy take root in the U.S. While sharing, don't forget to post 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 certification of completion to fill out and print.

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

Innovate yourself and your unit with these ALA Academy courses

Prepared to Serve: CERT, Disaster Response, and the ALA National Security Mission

When: May 19 @ noon ET

Learn more about CERT Training and its role in disaster response. Learn how your unit can support your community after a national disaster. Identify the needs and opportunities for collaboration with other organizations in your community

To register, click [here](#).

Involving Juniors in Poppy, Americanism, and other ALA programs

When: May 26 @ noon ET

This workshop is designed to teach unit members how to engage Junior members in ALA programs, particularly Poppy and Americanism. Upon successful completion of this workshop, participants should be able to:

- Know which programs and activities in which to include Juniors
- How to include Juniors
- Why it's important to include Juniors

To register, click [here](#).

SmileAssociate Goes National: A New Fundraising Opportunity for Every ALA Entity

When: June 9 @ noon ET

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. National Headquarters will provide oversight, quarterly reporting, and promotional 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.

To register, click [here](#).



Get recognized for your AEF contributions and share with ALA National Headquarters

The ALA recognizes outstanding generosity to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) each year through national awards that highlight the collective impact of members, units, and departments in supporting Auxiliary members in times of need. Awards are based on donations received at National Headquarters between June 1 and May 31, with honors presented to the unit contributing the largest total annual amount on a per capita basis, as well as to the department with both the highest overall giving and the highest per capita contributions. Individual member donations count toward their unit totals, and unit contributions in turn support their department's totals, demonstrating the power of participation at every level. To be included in the 2025-2026 AEF awards, all donations must be received at National Headquarters by May 31. For questions or more information, please contact AEF@ALAforVeterans.org.

American Legion Family Day Citation signed by national leadership to commemorate Family Day events

With American Legion Family Day festivities coming to an end, American Legion Family leadership encourages all family members to share their events. Share how all factions of the Legion Family were represented and worked together for your American Legion Family Day on April 25 or within the month of April. Submit your Legion Family event by June 1 at 5 p.m. ET.

To submit your information, click [here](#). To get answers for your questions, email communityservice@ALAforVeterans.org. For more information on American Legion Family Day and its impact, go [here](#).



Go for gold, ALA departments: The ALA Foundation 2026 award season is approaching

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation once again will recognize outstanding departments with two special honors in 2026. The Donor Champion Award will be presented to the department with the highest per capita giving to the Foundation, while the Veterans Champion Award will recognize the department with the greatest number of approved grants supporting veterans and their families.

Both awards will be determined based on grants awarded and donations received from June 1 through May 31. Departments are encouraged to continue supporting the Foundation's mission and applying for grants that make a meaningful difference in the lives of veterans, military, and their families.

Honor an extraordinary servicemember: Nominations accepted now for ALA Salute to Servicemembers Award

We made it easy to submit for the Salute to Servicemembers Award! An ALA member/entity simply makes the nomination to effectively tell the story of why they feel this person is head and shoulders above their peers and worthy of this award.

A narrative of no more than 1,000 words, a picture of the servicemember (preferably their official military photograph), and the endorsement from their command group are the only requirements.

The nomination form is live now, and you have until June 1 to complete. [Click here to fill out the form!](#) This award acknowledges the servicemember's contributions that go beyond their military career, displaying their impact on their community. The goal is to have every branch of the military represented: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force, along with the National Guard/Reserve.

Less than two months left to join 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](#).

Watch National President Pam Ray's [video](#) for ideas on the community service category!

Want more than a T-shirt? Click [here](#) to look at other USA 250 Challenge merch!

Special awards available for fundraising!

To keep the USA 250 momentum going, The American Legion has awards 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 Dan Wiley.

MEMBER BENEFITS



Support your local ALA entity directly with this SmileAssociate benefit expansion

The American Legion Auxiliary is introducing a new way for departments, districts, units, and ALA Girls State programs to raise funds through everyday Amazon shopping. Through our partnership with SmileAssociate, each ALA entity now has a dedicated shopping page, allowing supporters to start their purchases through a unique link that generates donations, at no additional cost to them. This simple, passive fundraising opportunity works with shopping habits already in place and provides quarterly contributions along with transparent reporting. By sharing your link and encouraging consistent use, ALA entities can create a steady stream of support for programs that serve veterans, military families, and communities nationwide.

Get started by visiting www.smileassociate.com/alanational and find your ALA entity today! For questions or more information, please contact Carley Schutz at cschutz@ALAforVeterans.org.

MEMORIAL DAY

Let's honor what was given.

Remember the service and
sacrifice of the fallen.



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GOOD TO KNOW

Continued mailing suspension to military and Diplomatic Post Offices (DPO):
All mailing services to several military and DPO ZIP codes have been suspended by

the USPS until further notice. To see the updated suspended codes, go [here](#).

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.

The May Auxiliary magazine has hit mailboxes! Read features about mentoring new leadership and members with multiple memberships in The American Legion Family. A digital copy is available on our [website](#). Tell us your thoughts on this edition by emailing PR@ALAforVeterans.org.



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

Female veterans have experience of a lifetime being honored, recognized for their service

The American Legion Auxiliary-sponsored all-female veteran Lone Eagle Honor Flight traveled to various memorials and monuments in Washington, D.C. with 46 Vietnam and Korean era veterans. Veterans on the trip had the opportunity to make lasting connections with each other and be honored in our nation's capital.

[Read more](#)



Wreaths Across America curriculum aligns with ALA mission

The American Legion Auxiliary has a unique relationship with the Wreaths Across America program. Many American Legion Auxiliary members and their families have participated in the December program of laying wreaths at our servicemembers' gravesites. BUT... did you know there is even more to this amazing organization?



[Read more](#)

SAVE THE DATE



May: Military Appreciation Month
May: Month of the Military Caregiver
May: Military Spouse Appreciation Month
May: Mental Health Awareness Month
May 13: Children of Fallen Patriots Day
May 14: The Stars and Stripes Forever Day
May 15: International Day of Families
May 16: Armed Forces Day
May 22: National Poppy Day
May 25: Memorial Day
June 6: D-Day Anniversary

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

“We always talk about the sacrifice that many military members make, but it’s a sacrifice at so many levels. It’s not just the ultimate sacrifice. There are sacrifices on the family level, being away from your hometown, the time spent in training, and deployments themselves. You’re sacrificing a part of your life to go serve your country, and that’s very real.”

— Austin Holmes, U.S. Navy veteran, entrepreneur, and *OverPressure* podcast host

LEGION FAMILY NEWS

Be the One online training available for the Legion Family

The American Legion is partnering with Columbia University to develop training for American Legion Family members who want to learn more about interacting and responding with veterans who are in crisis.

These trainings will teach participants how to:

- Use the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale to determine at-risk individuals
- Identify risk factors and warning signs
- Outline the types of suicidal ideation and four behaviors that indicate imminent risk
- Effectively communicate with individuals who may be at risk of hurting themselves

Upcoming dates:

- May 14 @ 5 p.m. ET
- May 19 @ 11:30 a.m. ET

To learn more and register, click [here](#).

Download the Be The One Suicide Prevention Mobile App for more resources from this training. The American Legion-sponsored app is a more veteran-focused version of the Columbia Protocol app.

[Go here to download from the Apple Store.](#) [Go here to download from Google Play.](#)

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

As 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, please email legionriders@legion.org with the subject line **Sojourn 250**.

New Legion Meetings app released

American Legion National Headquarters has released a new mobile app for Spring and Fall Meetings and Washington Conference. TAL National Meetings is a smaller-scale version of the national convention app.

[Go here to download from the Apple Store](#). [Go here to download from Google Play](#). To learn more about the features of this app, click [here](#).

Engage with servicemembers, veterans, and their families' stories with 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](#).



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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