

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
November 2025
By 2nd vice – Lynda Griffin



Veterans Day is just several days away. What do you typically do on this special day? Make it more than just a day off from work or school. Take an hour or two to volunteer on behalf of veterans who placed their very lives on the line to protect and ensure our freedom. It's impossible to compensate them for their great personal sacrifice, but we can demonstrate deep appreciation for all they've done by sharing a little bit of ourselves. Here are five meaningful ways to volunteer on Veterans Day.

1. **Be an active listener.** Veterans are often expert story tellers. They have journeyed to places you may never see, often in a time you can't imagine. They have a lifetime of wisdom and experience, and if they're willing to share their journey with you, most likely you'll be the one to come away with a gift you never imagined. As you prepare to listen, keep these tips in mind:
 1. Give your veteran your undivided attention.
 2. Lean into the conversation, giving them nonverbal cues that you're really engaged.
 3. Be sensitive to questions our veteran may not want to answer.
 4. Refuse to be judgmental.
2. **Celebrate with veterans.** Show your support and encourage veterans on their day by participating in festivities. Take time to research what activities are happening locally in honor of their day. Then go out and participate.
 1. Stand in the crowd and enthusiastically cheer your veterans on during a parade.
 2. Congratulate them on their service by introducing yourself.
 3. Thank them personally for their service during the celebrations in your community.
3. **Make it personal.** If you know a veteran, ask them what they need. They may need transportation to and from community activities on Veterans Day. They might like for you to drop off or pick up their mail, stop by the grocery store for a few things they need, or mow their lawn. If they are reluctant to share a need, feel free to ask a friend, caregiver or loved one how you could meet a need. (Whatever you commit to, make sure you deliver on your promise that day or the next few days.)

4. **.Pick up their tab.** If you see a veteran in line at the coffee shop or out at a restaurant, pay for their drink or meal. Those serving them are more than happy to bring you the check and it's a nice surprise to honor them for their service.
5. **Write a personal thank you.** As you have the opportunity to get to know some of our veterans, express your thanks in a letter or notecard. Try to mention something about them that personal and relevant to your time together, even if it was a short hello. Then share how much you appreciate their.

Mark Your Calendars

National Wreaths Across America Day this year is December 13th. The cutoff dates for sponsoring wreaths vary by location. Find your area's date at <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/Resources/VolunteerResourcePage> so you don't miss your opportunity to sponsor a wreath to honor a hero. In case you missed the Wreaths Across America live webinar in September, the recording is available to view at your convenience through the ALA Academy.

2025-2026 ALA Mission Training & National Junior Meetings January 31: Las Vegas

Let us all remember the ALA Mission Statement in everything we do!

In the spirit of Service, Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.

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It was really nice seeing everyone at Fall Conference, and if you were not able to make it, you missed a good time. We are now in the Holiday Session and that means Gift Shop Time.

ALA Christmas Gift Shops vary from location to location and department to department. Traditionally, American Legion Auxiliary volunteers and units and departments work together to collect donations or purchase items that are considered suitable gifts a hospitalized veteran can give to a family member or love one. Gift Shops may be in a specific location, may take the form of a gift cart, or may travel from one physical location to another. At a VAMC, the rep or Chief of Voluntary Services is the best source for the history and tradition of this program at that facility. With the wave of new veterans entering the VA system, these gift shops will become more critical than in years past. Gift Shop sponsors should consider offering more age-appropriate gifts that will appeal to young families and small children.

Tucson Gift Shop Information

December 3 – 5, 2025

VA Southern Arizona Healthcare System Auditorium
3601 S. 6th Ave. Tucson, AZ 85723

Set-up Tuesday December 2, 2025 12:00pm – 4:00pm

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony: December 3, 2025 8:45am

Phoenix Gift Shop Information

December 1-3, 2025 8:00am – 4:00pm

American Legion Post 1

364 N. 7th Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85007

Prescott Gift Shop Information

Information is coming

Please check out the National VA&R Newsletter attached to this month's Bulletin.

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Buddy checks have been vital in the winter months especially, when focus shifts to mental health and well-being during the holidays and shorter days. The Buddy Check is a peer-to-peer initiative where members reach out to fellow members (by phone, text, or visit) to check on their well-being, foster connection, and guide those in need to services, or help. Here are a few ways to get involved:

- Gather up a team to call, or if possible, personally visit members and former members of the American Legion Auxiliary to make that Buddy Check. Sometimes that personal touch is all that is needed to lift their spirits.
- Make a list of local resources that includes services like financial aid, employment opportunities, veterans' services, home and auto repair, caregiver services and any other known benevolent resources for veterans and their families.

Sample Buddy Check Phone Script
(The American Legion - Buddy Checks within your Unit.

Hello, my name is **[INSERT YOUR NAME]** and I'm calling to see if there is anything that your American Legion Family can assist you or your family with. I may be able to direct you to resources that aid in critical matters such as health care, counseling, financial assistance, and VA claims if you need them, or know someone who does. It is my honor to continue serving this nation by serving those who served, so if you ever need anything from The American Legion Family, do not hesitate to ask. We may not personally be able to solve your problem, but we can get you to the right resources. Thanks again for your service. If you need anything, call me anytime at **[PHONE NUMBER]** or email me at **[EMAIL ADDRESS]** Let's stay in touch!

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