



 **AMERICAN
LEGION**



American Legion Post 1995 September 9th, 2025 - Defender Newsletter

Monthly Military Quote

"The soldier is the Army. No army is better than its soldiers. The Soldier is also a citizen. In fact, the highest obligation and privilege of citizenship is that of bearing arms for one's country." George S. Patton Jr.

Military Photo of the Month



This photo is of deployed soldiers with gifted Hawaiian shirts

HAWAIIAN SHIRT DAY

If you have a Hawaiian shirt, wear it to our September meeting for a group photo

Newsletter Index:

- Commander's Comments - Pages 2-4
- Legislative News - Page 4
- Annual Reports - Page 5
- American Legion National Convention – Pages 6-7
- VA Health Care and Benefits - Page 7
- Post Everlasting - Page 4
- American Legion Basball - Page 5
- American Legion 250 Challenge - Pages 5-6
- Membership Update - Page 8

- Military Meters and Demographics – Page 9-10
- Veterans Connect Program – Page 7
- Helmets for Heros – Pages 10-11
- Vietnam War Exhibit – Page 11
- Mission BBQ / Gold Star Families Special Invitation – Page 11
- Post Information/Media – Page 12
- Post Calendars Aug and Sep – Pages 14 -15
- Auxiliary – Page 16

Post 176 is hosting a Remembrance Service on Thursday, September 11th, 2025.
Assembly starts at 6:30 pm at 6520 Amherst Avenue , Springfield, VA 22150

Commander's Corner

National Convention — The American Legion held its 106th National Convention in Tampa, Florida from Thursday August 21st to Thursday August 28th. Our Post and the 17th District were represented by me in my role as a Delegate (I got promoted!). Steve Hunter, serving as Sergeant-at-Arms represented the Department of Virginia as a Delegate. Virginia held its Caucus on Monday morning and there was a General Session on Tuesday where the Scout of the Year, the oratorical champion, the national rifle champion, LEO, and Firefighter of the Year all were recognized. Tuesday evening, we dined at the National Commander's banquet wearing our Jimmy Buffett style Aloha shirts. Wednesday the General Session passed national resolutions and heard committee reports. In the afternoon session on Wednesday the new national Commander, Dan Wiley of Kansas, and his staff were elected.



American Legion Convention Pins

Legion College Plans – The Department decided to change the way, and where, our Legion Family Leadership College will be offered to our Legionnaires. The National Convention gave me the opportunity to speak to the Department Chairman of the college, Mike Kimlick, and the Northern Region Vice Commander, George Navas, about their vision for conducting the college going forward. While plans have not been finalized there are some things you should know. The new delivery model is now delegated to the three regions in the state. Our region, the Northern Region, will hold its college in mid-March 2026. Two options under consideration for hosting the college in our area are the larger Posts of 176 in Springfield or Post 177 in Fairfax. The third option is further south at Post 175 in Mechanicsville. By making the locations more convenient the desire is to increase participation and attendance. As soon as the details firm up, I will publish them in the newsletter.



Department of Virginia American Legion College Hat Pin with Years attended

“No One Expected This” – At the National Security conference of the National Convention Steve Hunter and I heard presentations from the Chief of the US Border Patrol, the chief of intelligence of the Space Command and from the head of the information arm of the Defense Pow/MIA Accounting Agency. However, one of the most impactful presentations was by three regular Legionnaires on the Disaster Preparedness Panel. They represented three Legion Posts central to recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene, the Pacific Palisades wildfire in California, and the flooding in Kerrville, Texas. All of them said their Posts served as a hub for information and assistance distribution in their devastated communities. I intend to extend the partnership we had with Fairfax Post 177 in responding to future disaster recovery efforts. I would like every Post 1995 member to let me know if they have a chainsaw. Yes, I really want to know. There will be more information to follow.



Virginia Form 100 Success –After many months of diligent effort by our Adjutant, Steve Hunter, and Finance Officer, Tommy Joplin, we have received the blessing by the state of Virginia to fundraise legally, Late last year we paid a \$10 fee to submit a Virginia Form 100 to notify the Department of Agriculture, Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs that Post 1995 wanted to raise money for our community support activities like Boys State scholarships. This required us to submit 10 documents as attachments. Yes, that means a document per dollar of the fee. Our first submission was only 60% successful and we had to produce other documents or expand on the information we had provided. We held our breath after our second submission, and....on August 12th, MS Harrington wrote “ we have reviewed your completed Form 100-G (veterans service organization) and found your organization to be exempt from the registration requirements of Section 75-60 (a)(8).” You get the idea. This is official permission for us to raise funds in Virginia for the stated purposes of our organization. This is a big win for Post 1995.

Video Productions Skills Still Needed – Fairfax County runs both a TV and radio station. This public access TV and radio is available to us as a county based non-profit to get the

message of our activities out to the public. This could also be a valuable and low-cost recruiting outlet for us. However, we need someone with TV production skills to lead this effort. We would mostly use professionally prepared content produced by the national headquarters and we can add very simple and brief content about Post 1995. Fairfax Public Access would provide most of the help to get us on the air. We just need someone to be our point of contact for two hours per quarter to get us on the air. If you have video productions experience, please write to me at rsyoung47@gmail.com so I can provide you more information.

BE the ONE – Download the App!! You can carry a suicide prevention tool with you on your phone. Type in cssrs.columbia.edu to your Google machine and you will go to the Columbia Lighthouse Project. They are the Legion's partner for prevention, and you can find the Columbia questionnaire and more helpful and proven tools to assist you in dealing with someone contemplating harming themselves. There you will find the App to download to your phone. Take this step today. Then LISTEN when a Veteran needs to talk. Remember: dial 988 then #1 to ask for help for yourself or another Vet. Additional resources are available from the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#).

POST EVERLASTING – William O. Denham III

It is with great sadness that we report that Legionnaire William Denham, a U.S. Army Veteran and Post 1995 member reported to Post Everlasting. His funeral service will be conducted at Trinity Church, Gainesville at 10:30 on Tuesday, September 16th. Interment to follow at Quantico National Cemetery. A reception and celebration of life will be held at Pierce Funeral Home in Manassas thereafter. Here is a [LINK](#) to his obituary notice.

American Legion's Legislative Advocacy

The American Legion legislative advocacy on your behave has a long history of promoting military and Veteran interests that have been transformative to countless Veterans. This is an area where all Legionnaires can help by learning more about Legion's legislative priorities and simply by answering calls to contact your Congressional members for issues you also support. Post 1995 does not have a legislative chairperson, if you have an interest in serving in this capacity to help keep the Post better informed about legislation at both the National and State level, then let us know. We can put you in contact with resources and other Legionnaires who can help.

Legion website for Legislative advocacy:

<https://www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative>

The American Legion's legislative handbook: Includes the Legion's legislative division's mission and direct link to the [handbook](#) for download .

Auxiliary Grassroots Action Center: <https://www.legion-aux.org/grassroots-action-center>

American Legion Baseball World Series and Congressional Resolution

Post 280's (Chesapeake, VA) baseball team won the 2025 World Series tournament in Shelby, NC on August 19th. See this link for the story: [LINK](#) and this [LINK](#) if you are interested in learning more about the entire tournament. There is a House resolution to honor American Legion Baseball's centennial, to learn more open this [LINK](#).

Military Challenge Question

During WWII, which military branch(es) were under the control of the War Department?

Please send your best guess to David Benson at warren.d.benson@gmail.com. The first correct response will receive challenge coin.

Annual Post Reports

Requesting all Post members keep a running tally document recording your daily volunteering in your community. We combine all input into our annual reports each Spring that are submitted to the Department of Virginia who in turn combines all submitted Post reports within Virginia to National who uses the reports in its advocacy with Congress. These help to tell the story of how American Legion members are contributing to making our country better and how we support fellow Veterans. Reports are broken out in three areas: (Americanism, Children and Youth, and Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation. A fourth report is a numbers tally from the three form/narrative reports. Post 1995 have won the Department's Americanism Report three years in a row. I would like to continue that effort, but we need more members to report. I will request your volunteer hours and charitable contributions next April (2026) covering the period from May 1 2025 to 31 April 2026.

National Membership Impact Report for August 2025

<https://www.legion.org/about/reports/membership-impact>

Legion Family USA 250 Challenge

The American Legion Family is honoring the nation's 250th birthday with a commitment to embracing physical activity, supporting mental health, and serving its communities.



The USA 250 Challenge encourages American Legion Family members, other veterans, and all Americans to participate, and even raise additional money to support our disabled veterans and families in need through The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

American Legion National Commander James LaCoursiere launched the USA 250 Challenge on July 3, 2025. The year-long initiative offers three categories — fitness, mental wellness, and community service — to engage more American Legion Family members and others to participate.

Participants may engage in one, two or all three activities as an individual or as part of a team like an American Legion post, American Legion Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron and/or an American Legion Riders chapter.

For a \$30 registration fee, participants will receive their choice of a USA 250 Challenge tech shirt. The proceeds will go to the Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF).

Register [HERE](#)

To learn more about this challenge/Fund raiser, see this [LINK](#) Click on this [LINK](#) to learn how you can track your activities on the challenge website:

American Legion National Convention, Tampa Florida, August 21-28



2025-2026 National American Legion Commander Dan Wiley

Dan K. Wiley was elected national commander of The American Legion on August 28, 2025, in Tampa, during the 106th National Convention.

As national commander, Wiley is a strong advocate for The American Legion's Be the One mission to prevent Veteran suicide. He emphasizes inclusivity in the American Legion Family through the theme, Better Together!

Featured Guest Speakers at the National Convention:

Veterans Affairs Secretary, Doug Collins: Here's the [LINK](#) to his presentation

Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard: Here's the [LINK](#) to her presentation.

Author Robert Edsel - Monument Men: Here's the [LINK](#) to his presentation

Mr. Edsel wrote five books about WWII to include Monument Men which was turned into the movie of the same name. His books and stories are interesting and heartfelt. His other books include Saving Italy, Rescuing Da Vinci, the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History and most recently Remember US. Here's [LINK](#) to his books:

This last book tells the story of the Dutch honoring our fallen soldiers/airmen. He further suggests that we should consider a grave adoption program here to through the Monuments Men Foundation. Here is a [LINK](#) to an NBC news report about the movie when it premiered in 2014.

This [LINK](#) provides access to all the recorded presentations during the general sessions. There were many small committee meetings, training sessions, and a claim clinic to fill in the convention days.

VA Health Care and Benefits

A Close Look at Veteran Health Care Coverage

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is a health care system, not an insurance program. Many veterans enrolled in VHA keep private or government-subsidized insurance so they can choose where to seek care. (In 2023, about 84 percent of VHA enrollees reported having some form of insurance coverage.) RAND's Erin Taylor recently examined how insurance coverage interacts with VHA care and identified situations that could lead to duplicative payments. For the full article, see this [LINK](#).

Do Veterans Benefits Expire? Yes, some do!

To learn more visit this [Link](#). (Source: military.com, 18 August 2025)

Your 2025 State Veteran Benefits

Direct link to Virginia State Veteran benefits website: [LINK](#):

For other states, see this [LINK](#). (Source: military.com, 18 August 2025)

Sign over a portion of your VA benefits? Nope, that's a scam

Whether you served for four, ten, or twenty years, Veterans pension and disability benefits might be an important — often essential — part of your life after the military. That is why scammers call, email, or message to “help” you apply for them. But what they are really after is your money. These “advisors” make promises they cannot keep and charge filing fees for services that are always free through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Spot

scams during the VA benefits claims process to avoid them. [LINK](#) (Source: FTC, BCP Staff, February 26, 2025)

Membership Update

We currently are at 73.98% of our 2026 membership goal of 196 members with 145 countable members. Some transfer Post members are not countable for 2026 as they renewed before being transferred, so they are not countable towards our membership goal until 2027. Instead of increasing our goal for 2026, it actually went down by two...not sure why.

New Post Members:

I am happy to report that at least 24 members of Post 141 (administrative) in Richmond have agreed to transfer to our Post. I wish to welcome our newest members: Al Costantine, Jerome Long, Robert Mansfield, Cecil (Jay) Carroll, Mark Rogers, and Eric Kelly,

Membership Renewals:

I thank all those who have renewed for 2026 already as we are off to a good start. We are in third place in the District for membership and in the top 10% for the Department. If you have not renewed, you may renew by sending back one of the renewal letters National sends out or going online at [Renew \(mylegion.org\)](https://mylegion.org). It is your choice, but doing so online is quick, simple, and saves you the cost of a stamp and you get your new membership card a bit faster. Should you have any questions about your membership, please call or email the post's adjutant/membership chairperson.

Multi-Year Memberships Are Now Available - As some are aware, the Legion now has a three-year renewal option. The benefit of renewing for three years and paying in advance is that you avoid any dues increase over the next three years and getting renewal notifications. While there is no discount for the multi-year membership, you are locked in at the current dues amount, even if the fee increases during this time. For details on this new option visit this Legion website:

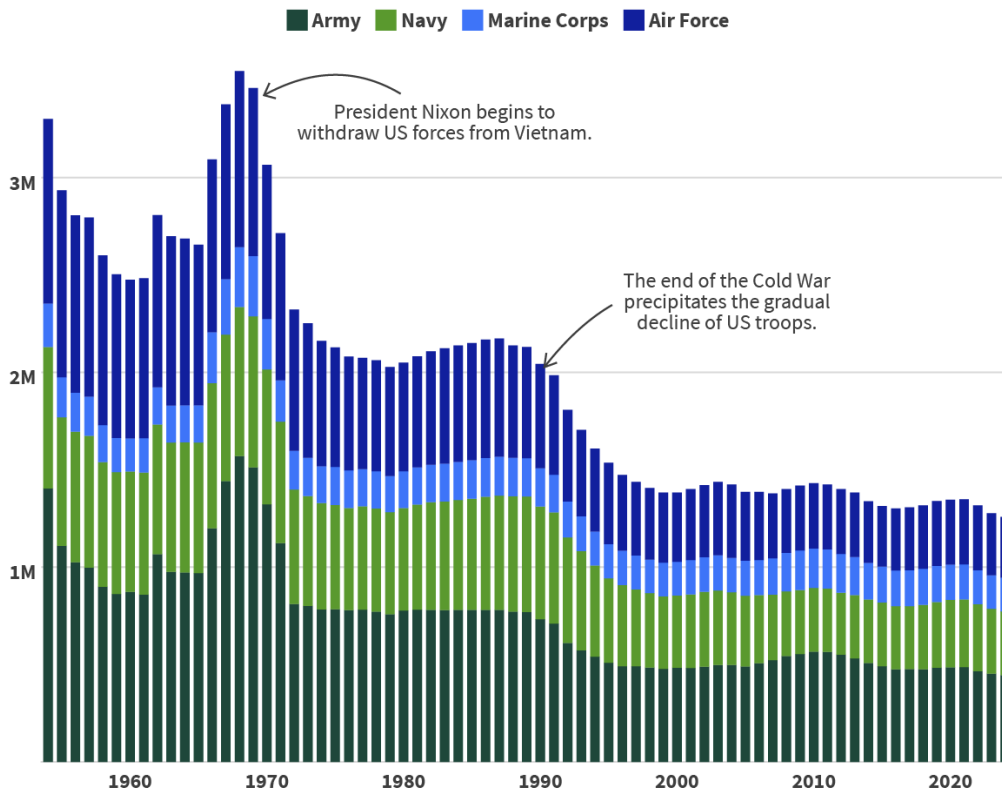
<https://www.legion.org/membership/260621/american-legion-multiyear-membership-here>

PUFL Memberships - PLFL members pay a one-time fee for a lifetime American Legion membership. You never have to pay yearly dues and future increases, which will come over the years. For those considering getting a Paid Up For Life membership, an added incentive would be a \$100 discount, but you must call National and request availability of it. The kicker, however, is that you must pay all of it with a credit card or check in a single payment. This option is not available with their payment plan. If you are interested in a PUFL membership, call 1-800-433-3318. Also be aware that it still may not be an option throughout the year.

The US military in metrics and demographics

Active duty military troops

1954–2024



Source: Defense Manpower Data Center

USA Facts

The US military had about [2.1 million troops](#) as of March 2025, a force that has gradually declined since the late 1980s. Nearly two-thirds of military members are on active duty, stationed in the US and abroad. Let's get to know the military from different data angles.

- Of the military personnel, nearly 1.3 million are active-duty troops, and about 765,000 are National Guard/Reserves.
- By 2024, [active-duty military personnel](#) were down 48.5% from their record high during the Vietnam War in 1968. They dropped again in 1991 at the end of the Cold War. Troop levels have remained relatively stable since then, even during conflicts in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003.

- From 2010 to 2023, racial diversity rose in the Army (2.9 percentage points) and the Air Force (4.2 percentage points). It fell in the Navy (-0.5 percentage points) and Marine Corps (-1.3 percentage points).
- As of 2023, [women](#) comprised 17.7% of all active-duty military personnel, totaling 225,119 members. That's up from 2005, when the share of women actively serving in all military branches was 14.6%.
- In March, about 177,000 troops, or 13.6% of active-duty troops, were stationed abroad (including US territories). Most were in Germany (about 35,000 troops) and Japan (53,000).

California, Virginia, and Texas each had more than 100,000 troops assigned to bases in their state, accounting for 34.5% of active-duty troops. Twenty-three states, including Washington, DC, have more than 10,000. For more details see this [LINK](#) (Source: USAFacts, August 18, 2025)

The Veterans Connect Program

The Veterans Connect program recruits Veteran volunteer drivers to provide transportation to elderly Veterans in Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties. Volunteer drivers, Veterans, and military supporters alike, use their own vehicles to offer “*more than just a ride*” to nearby veterans in need. The program works closely with NV Rides and many local service organizations who receive ride requests from local Veterans. Far too many Veterans in Northern Virginia need help with rides to access healthcare, food banks/grocery stores, and other important appointments. With the help of volunteer rivers, we can combat this growing transportation crisis and help those veterans most in need.

Thank you for your support helping to promote this program, and for sharing our critical need for volunteer drivers.

To learn more, please contact: **Luke Frazza** - Program Outreach Manager lfrazza@datatrans.org or **703-819-3459**.



Helmets for Heroes

The new Department of Virginia's Commander will continue the Helmets for Heroes project from last year. It raises funds for the Legion's Veterans and Children Foundation. The helmets are actually “piggy banks” for donations. This is a yearlong effort with the collected funds being donated to National at the 2025 National Convention in Tampa. If you have a location that would support this project, let me know as I have ten. A helmet will be at all Post events for your contributions.



Learn more here: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/military-crisis-line/>

News You Can Use:

Gold Star Families – Special Invitation from Mission BBQ?

Mission BBQ Chantilly will be hosting a Gold Star Family Luncheon on September 28th and is reaching out to any Gold Star family. This in-store event is specifically for gold star family members only. Contact Lauren Mostrous, Community Ambassador, Mission BBQ in Chantilly. **To attend, please contact Lauren Mostrous (community22033@mission-bbq.com) and provide her with the names of people attending along with your email address and phone number to receive their special invitation.**

Vietnam War Exhibit Coming to Northern Virginia

See this [LINK](#) is to a Connection newspaper article on the exhibit at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center in Fairfax City. Here's a direct [LINK](#) to the museum. The exhibition is available for viewing between September 17th to October 27th. The paper article includes a

photo of a “Blood chit.” These were typically used by air crewmen who were downed in hostile territory to facilitate their repatriation to friendly forces. They offered a financial incentive. Here is an [example](#): (Source Connection newspaper, August 20, 2025)

Final Thought: *“The only way to win is to fight the battle in the mind”*

Jim Rohn (Author and motivational speaker, 1930-2009)

Free Flags - The Post has a considerable number of lightly used U.S. flags of assorted sizes from 3’x 5” to 5’x 9’-5” available to any Post member who needs to replace their house flag. All you need to do is let the Adjutant know what size you need and attend the next meeting after your request. These flags were turned in for retirement by community members for our annual flag retirement ceremony this past November and previous years, however due to their good condition they are not yet ready for retirement. The Post’s collection (not giveaways) also includes some unique flags such as 45- and 48-star flags (possible museum donations), and copies of the Grand Union, Bennington, and Betsy Ross flags.

Comments/Submissions to the Editor - Comments about this newsletter relative to its contents and/or presentation style are always welcomed. We also encourage submissions from Post members relative to anything related to the American Legion and/or what we as Legionnaires are doing to serve our communities. If you have missed previous issues of the Post’s newsletters, let me know and I can forward any month want.

Editor’s Note: Some of the links to articles are here due to the editor’s opinion of their importance to veterans relative to News You Can Use, of interest to veterans, and/or to inform membership of the post’s activities/meetings/events. The following is always at the bottom of each newsletter.

Department of Virginia Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaLegion/>

Post 1995’s Facebook Page: Currently down

1995 Centreville webpage Post: <https://americanlegionpost1995.org>

17th District X (aka Twitter) Account: <https://twitter.com/va17thdistrict>

Facebook: 17th District’s Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/VALegion17/>), is synchronized to its Twitter page and posts to the 17th District Facebook page are tweeted to the 17th District’s Twitter page.

Comments/Submissions to the Editor - Comments about this newsletter relative to its contents and/or presentation style are always welcomed. We also encourage submissions from Post members relative to anything related to the American Legion and/or what we as

Legionnaires are doing to serve our communities. If you are not active, now would be a good time to learn more about what your Post is doing and how you and we could do more. If you have missed previous issues of the Post's newsletters, let me know and I can forward any month wanted.

Calendars - To view the **National Legion calendar**, visit this website:

<https://www.legion.org/information-center/calendar>

Post Calendars for September and October are on the next pages.

Auxiliary Information follows the calendars

September 2025

Suicide Prevention Month

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 <u>Labor Day</u>	2 <u>V-J Day</u>	3 <u>1783 Treaty of Paris</u>	4	5	6
7	8 <u>USCG Birthday</u>	9 Post Meeting	10	11 <u>911 Purple Heart Day</u>	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 <u>Air Force Birthday</u>	19 <u>POW/MIA Day</u>	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 <u>Gold Star Mothers Day</u>	29 <u>VFW Day</u>	30				

October 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Post Meeting	8	9	10	11
12	13 Navy Birthday	14	15	16	17	18 Centreville Day
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween	

Link Source: Veteran.com

ALA Centreville 1995 News:

Our project for **September meeting will be Birthday Bags** for the WFCM Food Bank. IF you are interested in participating, either bring the finished/filled bag (s) OR donate any contents you may be interested in providing. Contents may include bag, cake mix, frosting, candles, banner, plates, napkin, an aluminum pan or cupcake papers, and a small toy/gift.

Also in September, **members are asked to bring any “sweet treat” recipes** you might like to have included in our December bake sale “Sweet Treats to Remember” cookbook. We plan to create a cookbook for donations along with our baked goodies at our early December Patriot High School Bake Sale. Our plan is to have 20-25 recipes in total.

Our deepest condolences go to Susie Denham for the unexpected/sudden loss of her husband, Bill. Visitation: Monday, September 15th from 6-8 p.m. at Pierce Funeral Home, 9609 Center Street, Manassas, VA. Funeral: Tuesday, September 16th 10:30 a.m. at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Gainesville, VA.

President Patty Caggiano and Karen Hunter attended the July Department of Virginia Convention at Dulles Hilton. We were honored to win awards for Membership, Leadership, National Security, Community Service, Children & Youth, and the Meritorious Citation. Ann Burke was able to join us for the Commander's Banquet. Fran Robison received the Unit Member of the Year Pin. Congratulations, Fran!! The "new" Department President for the Auxiliary is Carol Campbell of Unit 10 in Manassas.

President, Patty Caggiano and Past District President/Treasurer, Karen Hunter both attended the 104th National American Legion Auxiliary Convention in Tampa, FL as delegates. The Department of Virginia was honored to be among 15 Departments nationwide to achieve the Merit Medallion Award. "All of these departments achieved excellence in membership, impact reporting, governance, financial health, and investing in the organization," said 2024-2025 ALA National President Trish Ward.

We now have a 17th District ALA Facebook page to utilize for advertising our events and sharing all the great stuff we do! Please consider joining it!

Ann Burke participated in stuffing backpacks for school youth along with the U.S. Space Force Spouse Group.

Tamara Parks provided patriotic decorations to the Dulles USO for Memorial Day and July 4th.

Our unit participated with the Legion for a Flag Day event at the Chantilly Library on June 14, 2025. Fran Robison donated decorated cupcakes, The Grand Old Flag was read aloud, and youth received coloring sheets and bubble wands.