

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT OF GEORGIA

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**ABOUT:** *Georgia On My Mind* is a monthly publication presented by the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Georgia on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Did you find a mistake in the newsletter? Or do you have a suggestion for next month (due on the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month)? If yes, you can send your request and information to [Department@alageorgia.com](mailto:Department@alageorgia.com) or [PublicRelations@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:PublicRelations@ALAGeorgia.com).  
**DISCLAIMER:** Every attempt has been made to ensure accuracy of information and links shared in this edition. Many individuals contribute to this newsletter and sometimes there may be an OOPS! Kindly send an email to one of the addresses above and let our team know of any mistake you find. If more than two months have passed since the issue date of this edition, no guarantee is provided that the links in this edition are accurate. All efforts were made at the time of publication to ensure accurate links.

## NEWS TO USE

### SPRING CONFERENCE DATES

Save March 21-23, 2025 to come together in Service Not Self. DEC meeting is 3/20. The Memorial Service and Poppy Anchor Dedication Program is Sunday 3/23. Join us to thank the 11<sup>th</sup> District for building the Poppy Anchor and for the Dedication. See this link for the registration form and details.

<https://georgialeion.org/events/department-of-georgia-spring-conference-2024-25/>

### MEMBERSHIP

Wow! Membership continues to be AMPED UP! As of December 11, 2024, Georgia is 4<sup>th</sup> in the Southern Division and 27<sup>th</sup> in the Nation. This is because of YOU and our unit membership teams! Congratulations to the 13 National 100% Goal Units! Four more join the list since our last newsletter. WAY TO GO!

506	Rome	11/20/24
130	Fortson	12/04/24
30	Albany	12/04/24
122	Cairo	12/12/24

Take the opportunity to review the **BLOG, 'A lasting impact'** written by ALA National Membership Chair, April Sinclair posted on Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. This should inspire and encourage you and provide a glimpse into why it's so important to ***"Renew now, not later!"*** [www.ALAForVeterans.org/Blog/A-lasting-impact](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org/Blog/A-lasting-impact) *"..... be intentional about your membership and make a conscious effort to recognize and remember your why. Let's be humbled in honoring our ancestry with their membership eligibility."*

### THE LATEST GENERATION

So much is coming up in our Children & Youth programming. **Is your unit and district ready to rumble and participate?** Check out the challenges on page 3 and details on pages 12-13.

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS



## 2024-2025 LEADERSHIP

President..... Cheryl Waybright  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President ..... Gail Ramey  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President ..... Pam Eckler  
 Historian ..... Debbie Hoopingarner  
 Chaplain ..... Gloria Chambers  
 Secretary/Treasurer..... Patty Hawkins  
 NEC ..... Susan Hall  
 NEC Alternate ..... Pat Morgan

### Sergeants at Arms

Captain.....Melanie Eckler  
                   Cricket Agee, Melinda Gaskins  
                   Lindsey Coats, Melissa Patten  
 Page ..... Thea Fultz

## MISSION COMMITTEES

Veterans Affairs ..... Mirima Stein  
 National Security..... Laura Miller  
 Americanism ..... Kris Ann Alexander  
 Children & Youth..... Gabriele Barnett  
 Community Service..... Sharon Wilson  
 Education..... Dr. Cindy Swartz  
 Girls State ..... Deedy Harrell  
 Junior Activities..... Kalyn Slagle  
 Legislative ..... Vacant  
 Poppy..... Cathy Hedges

## SUPPORT COMMITTEES

AEF..... Vacant  
 Awards & Recognition .. Linda Brock  
 Convention ..... 9th District  
 Credentials..... Phyllis Jones &  
                                   Sabrina Brown Putney, Co-Chairs  
 Finance ..... Susan Hall, Chair  
                                   Ruth Ann Shelby & Sarah Zingarelli  
 Human Resources..... Sheila Tinsley, Chair  
                                   Gabriele Barnett & Pam Eckler  
 Leadership/Yearbook.... Gail Ramey  
 Membership ..... Pam Eckler  
 Past President Parley & Member of the Year  
                                   Cheryl Jackson-Sinkler  
 Poppy Anchor ..... 11th District  
     Launching..... Unit 184 (1st District)  
     Orders..... Patty Hawkins  
 Public Relations..... Courtney Waybright  
 Resolutions ..... Dr. Joann Meadows  
 Risk & Compliance ..... Kathy Merritt, Chair  
                                   Anitia Owens & Lisa Marie Papp  
 Scrapbook..... Melinda Gaskins  
 Unit Development & Revitalization  
     Gail Ramey & Pam Eckler, Jennie Chandler



**Cheryl Waybright**  
**President 2024-2025**

**#AMPUPMISSION**



**WOW! Can you believe it?** Our year-end holidays are here, and the New Year is coming up fast. I hope each of you are working in time for yourself and family among all the incredible time and talent you give to the ALA and our mission. **It truly is an amazing and hectic time of year.**

**Membership, membership, membership.** Our front row ticket to **thrive in twenty-twenty-five** is to renew, recruit and rejoin members and express gratitude for all they bring to our mission. Review the Department Membership Report that Chair Eckler sends each week and push for renewals. **Enthusiasm is key!**

Our members have been volunteering A LOT since our last newsletter. Many worked in a little R&R time at **LEGION DAY at the Georgia Festival of Trees** on November 30. The Department showed out and there were tons of members smiling and great opportunities to share information about our MISSION. Thanks to all who came out to support the programs and a **special shout-out to Cathy Hedges for her significant coordination and contribution of the Patriotic Poppy Christmas Tree. AH-mazing!**

We **remembered the greatest generation** and the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7<sup>th</sup>. A quote from the U.S. Pacific Fleet’s commander, Admiral Stephen Koehler to the audience that day at Pearl Harbor *“victory in World War II was not preordained nor an accident. It happened because our greatest generation responded to with tenacity. **They set standards for excellence to which we strive to emulate today.**”*

Today, we embrace the **LATEST GENERATION, OUR YOUTH.** Can we AMP UP our intensity in programming in the areas of Children & Youth, Education, Girls State and Juniors? See the checklist next page and pages 12-13. **ARE YOU IN? GO!**

Our VA&R Reps, Deps, Units, and members were busy hosting gift shops the first week of December. Please see our private Facebook group for amazing moments of our teams giving it their all to give our veterans a holiday to remember.

Our **Hospital Visits** wrapped up for 2024 in Augusta. Miriam Stein and Gabriele Barnett coordinated an incredible visit at the

## CHALLENGES FOR OUR LATEST GENERATION

Embracing the latest generation requires our units to step up and promote our youth programs.

See more details with schedule and links on page 13. Information on the Youth Hero and Youth Good Deed Awards and the Child Well-Being Foundation can be found on page 12.

In the meantime, here are the 2024-2025 challenges from our National organization:

- Submit at least one Youth Hero Award.
- Submit at least one Youth Good Deed Award.
- Recruit at least one participant to the GA Oratorical competition at your unit/district.
- Recruit at least one applicant for an Education Scholarships – stretch and recruit an applicant in each category!
- Recruit at least one Americanism Essay participant. Stretch and recruit one participant for each level.
- Recruit at least one Poppy Poster contestant. Stretch and recruit a participant for each level.
- Recruit one or more girls to attend GA Girls State 2025
- Recruit one or more Junior members to attend the March Conference.
- Send at least one member to Junior Summer Camp.

We would love to see the summary by each unit on the annual report to the Department President and Historian so the information can be rolled up in the annual department report to National.

Carl Vinson VA and Blue Goose and our Department Commander Jim Fultz, 11th District Commander Tomasena Sanderlin, and 11<sup>th</sup> District President Phyllis Jones put on a well-coordinated program hosting the Leading Candidate for National Commander 2025-2026 Dan Riley from Kansas with the Georgia Riders leading the way all over Augusta. Mr. Riley shared that he was thrilled to see the Georgia FAMILY at work in serving the mission of the organization. *V-DAY... do you know what that acronym stands for in The American Legion?*

**Wreaths Across America on December 14, 2024** was another chance for us to respect, honor and remember people that joined forces to protect and defend the freedom of our nation. Photos will be shared in our January newsletter; this edition was assembled before 12/14. Share what you did to our private Facebook group! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/alaga>

As we relax over the next few weeks the best we can, let's **calibrate** our units, districts, and the department to make sure we are **on track for reporting all the amazing things we are doing at the unit level**. All units should be gathering information to prepare reports in each committee. Our department committee chairs want to hear from you! April is a busy month - it is the Month of the Military Child. Start reports ASAP and do not procrastinate, including Prayer Books, History Books and nominations for awards and youth programs. Also, Unit and District Yearbooks are due February 15<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Ramey.

**Department Committee Chairs need each unit to submit by May 1<sup>st</sup>** so they can prepare and submit the Department report to National by May 15<sup>th</sup> and enter units, individuals, and the department to National for awards. Help them by sharing YOUR awesomeness that occurs between May 1 2024 to April 30, 2025. Copy the Department Historian and me on all your reports to be included in the Department History Book and the annual report to National .More coming next months on these and **Impact Reports**. Be included. Some great resources for Committee Chairs can be found in the [Committee Chair Presentation](#) (←click there) and [Committee Chair Resources](#) (←click there). **ALL Committee Chairs are encouraged to review this material.**

I appreciate all your efforts to renew and recruit members so we can **#AmpUpMission!** **THANK YOU for all you do to support and promote the ALA.**

I hope you each have an amazing holiday full of fun and rejuvenating rest as we really thrive in twenty-twenty five!

Please reach out with any question – no matter position, level, or location – I am here to serve you. Just ask.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND MERRY NEW YEAR TO ALL!**

Cheryl Waybright

404-625-6708 ★ [Cheryl@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:Cheryl@ALAGeorgia.com)



## KEY DATES

FIRST OF EVERY MONTH  
IS **BE THE ONE** DAY!

EVERY FRIDAY IS **RED** Shirt Friday

Remembering **E**veryone **D**eployed-Wear Red!

### **December 2024**

#### **Universal Human Rights Month**

- 16 ..... U.S. National Guard Birthday (1636)
- ..... Desert Storm (Persian Gulf) began (1991)
- 20 ..... United States Space Force (USSF) Birthday
- 25 ..... Christmas and Hanukkah
- 26 ..... Kwanzaa
- 31 ..... New Year's Eve

### **January 2025**

#### **Human Trafficking Awareness Month**

- 1 ..... New Year's Day
- 11 ..... Leadership Workshop Unit 233, Loganville
- 6 ..... World Day of War Orphans
- 16-18 .... National Commander Visit to GA
- 17-20 .... SAL Annual Meeting and Polar Plunge
- 20 ..... Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

### **February 2025**

#### **Americanism Month**

#### **Black History Month**

#### **Go Red for Women: American Heart Month**

- 1 ..... National Freedom Day (1865)
- 2 ..... Groundhog Day (85% Membership Goal!)
- ..... Army Nurse Corp (1901)
- 3 ..... Four Chaplains Day (1943)
- 2/4 ..... USO Birthday (1941)
- 8 ..... Leadership Workshop Unit 160, Smyrna
- 9-15 ..... National Salute to Veteran Patients Week
- 13 ..... Marine Corps Women's Reserve (1943)
- 14 ..... Valentine's Day
- 15 ..... Remember the Maine Day (USS Maine)
- 17 ..... President's Day
- 2/19 ..... Anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima
- 2/19 ..... Coast Guard Birthday
- 23 ..... Mt. Suribachi U.S. Flag Raising (1945)
- 27 ..... Persian Gulf Cease-Fire Day (1991)
- 28-3/30 Ramadan

### **Months to Plan for beyond February**

April – Month of the Military Child

**MAY 1 – Reports are Due!**

May – National Military Appreciation Month

May – Month of the Military Caregiver

*In case you were wondering.... From page 3, V-DAY in the American Legion is a great acronym to remember our CORE Mission FOUR PILLARS.*

**V** = Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

**D** = Defense (National Security)

**A** = Americanism

**Y** = Children and Youth

## SECRETARY/ TREASURER

Patty Hawkins



As the holidays are approaching and the year is coming to a close, we remember all the changes we have been through, some good and some not so good. We have persevered through some challenges and survived. We are not living life if we do not grow.

Hopefully, you have made some new friends and kept the older ones. Family and friends are what make life wonderful. So, let's try to remember the ones who are having a challenging time and see if we can help them. It doesn't have to be monetary, but just a phone call to check to see how they are doing. It will make them appreciate the effort. Sharing comes in many ways, just reach out and let them know they matter.

**Sending you warm wishes for a wonderful holiday and a successful year ahead!** Joyful greetings from all of us at the ALA Department Headquarters. May your holidays be bright, cheerful, and full of memorable moments! We wish you a holiday season that's as joyful and warm as the work we've shared together this year.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your Department Staff Patty Hawkins & Krista Massengale**

Patty Hawkins

678-289-8446 ★ [secamlegaux@bellsouth.net](mailto:secamlegaux@bellsouth.net)



**Don't forget the Unit TO DO List... Items have been added!**

- Membership Dues:** All Department, District and Unit Officers should have paid their 2025 membership dues by now.
- Obligations: Please don't wait, send them now!**
- Plans** for Americanism Month and Children & Youth Activities!
- Reporting Plans – confirm who is doing what!**
- Advocate!** (see page 11)
- Volunteer Hours:** It doesn't hurt to start collecting hours and information for impact and year end reports now going back to May 1. We are half way through the reporting year!
- Compliance Items:** Has your unit filed your 990 form? Check your fiscal year and stay (or get into) Compliance. See page 9 and 19-20. Have you updated your filing with the Georgia Secretary of State to include your new officers?

It is not one person's responsibility to take care of unit business. It takes all the officers and volunteers to get it done. We are there to help each other.

## LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

January 11.....Unit 233, Loganville  
February 8..... Unit 160, Smyrna  
March 8.....Unit 172, Warner Robins  
April 12.....Unit 30, Albany

**ALL SESSIONS: Registration begins at 9:30 am, the program starts at 10:00 am.**

*All the Leadership Workshop topics were woven into the agenda of the Fall Conference and may be included in the Spring Conference. Do not miss the change to network and learn!*

## NATIONAL MISSION DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Resources: Slide Presentation – Click [HERE](#)  
The slide deck is full of awesome information about mission and our amazing organization.



Georgia was in the House November 16<sup>th</sup> with seven GA members attending. Pictured above: PR Chair Courtney Waybright, GA President Cheryl Waybright, National President Trish Ward; GA 1<sup>st</sup> VP Gail Ramey and Unit 127 President Melody Chance.

Useful information is available at the **NATIONAL ALA ACADEMY**. Have questions? Review one of the sessions on the subject you are interested in.



### ALA Academy

The ALA Academy provides tools to members to help grow the Auxiliary's mission, and the organization as a team.

<https://member.legion-aux.org/member/online-training>

## First Vice President – LEADERSHIP

Gail Ramey



Hello Everyone,

The holidays are upon us!

I do hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and is ready for Christmas. I hope all of you will enjoy the time you are spending with family and friends.

### National Mission Training in Nashville on November 16<sup>th</sup> was impressive!

National President Trish Ward was one of the presenters, she stressed EVOLVING and supporting all elected leaders. Having attended several mission training courses, this was by far the best one EVER! Going to Mission Training is expensive but it truly is worth going, I always learn something new. Start saving now and plan to go next year. Or head to Des Moines 1/25/25 or on 2/1/25, go to Las Vegas or Boston. Link: <https://member.legion-aux.org/meetings/mission-training/> See the box to the left for a link to the Mission Training slide deck and a photo of some of the attendees from Georgia.

I attended the Atlanta Christmas Gift Shop December 2 - 5, the first gift shop since before covid. Overall, it went well. We also helped homeless Veterans with supplies to transition to housing. I attended the hospital visit at the Augusta Uptown VA on Friday December 6. There were morning and afternoon sessions, and we toured the new nursing facility which will house about 100 patients when it opens. Several VA staff, doctors and nurses provided information updates of activity at the Augusta VA. It was an extremely rewarding week.

**LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS:** No Leadership Workshops were conducted in November or December. We will be at Loganville, Unit 233 on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Dates for upcoming workshops are in the top box to the left. **Please remember, every workshop is open to anyone who wants to attend no matter where you live.**

**YEARBOOKS** are due February 15, 2025 for units and districts. The rules are at <https://www.aladeptga.com/forms-1>

Don't forget about the free ALA Academy training. Log into the National website, click on EVENTS, the ALA ACADEMY. See the link in the box to the left.

Please feel free to call me with any questions or concerns. If I do not answer, please leave a message and I will call you back.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

Gail Ramey

770-262-2524 ★ [leadership@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:leadership@ALAGeorgia.com)

## STAY CONNECTED

### DEPARTMENT WEBSITE:

<https://www.aladdeptga.com/>

- Need a form?  
<https://www.aladdeptga.com/forms-1>
- Need to find a department leader?  
[https://www.aladdeptga.com/about\\_us](https://www.aladdeptga.com/about_us)
- Or a department committee chair?  
<https://www.aladdeptga.com/committee-chairpersons>
- ...or Department Governing Documents?  
<https://www.aladdeptga.com/governing-documents>

### GEORGIA GIRLS STATE

[www.georgiagirlsstate.org/](http://www.georgiagirlsstate.org/)

### DEPARTMENT PUBLIC FACEBOOK PAGES

Follow both!

<https://www.facebook.com/ALADeptofGA>

<https://www.facebook.com/ALAGeorgiaPresident/>

### DEPARTMENT PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUP

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/alaga>

In this group you can ask questions and post information about your unit and districts.

### DEPARTMENT EMAILS

Secretary/Treas.: [secamlegaux@bellsouth.net](mailto:secamlegaux@bellsouth.net)

Membership Clerk: [amlegaux@bellsouth.net](mailto:amlegaux@bellsouth.net)

President: [Cheryl@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:Cheryl@ALAGeorgia.com)

Leadership: [Leadership@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:Leadership@ALAGeorgia.com)

Membership: [Membership@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:Membership@ALAGeorgia.com)

Historian: [Historian@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:Historian@ALAGeorgia.com)

Chaplain: [Chaplain@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:Chaplain@ALAGeorgia.com)

PR: [PublicRelations@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:PublicRelations@ALAGeorgia.com)

Newsletter: [Department@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:Department@ALAGeorgia.com)

### NATIONAL ALA TOOLS

American Legion Auxiliary National Website

<https://www.legion-aux.org/home>

ALA MEMBER Website

<https://member.legion-aux.org/>

ALA BLOG <https://www.legion-aux.org/blog>

**Serving the ALA Mission through Our Programs – Program Engagement Plans:**

<https://member.legion-aux.org/member/program-engagement-plans>

## Second Vice President - MEMBERSHIP

Pam Eckler



As of today [Dec. 11], the Southern Division is in fourth place regarding membership goals. It has been a long time since the Southern Division has been that low, but that also tells me Georgia is not the only State to be slow on their renewals. Now is the time to reach out to all your Unit's members to wish them "Happy Holidays," and to remind them December 31<sup>st</sup> is not that far away.

As you know by now, Georgia did not meet the National goal of 75% by Pearl Harbor Day, but I believe with everything in me, we can make 85% by Groundhog Day. There are still Department awards remaining for units with over one hundred members, and the District President's race is too close to call. Everything will depend on what Units and District Presidents can make it to 85% by February 2, 2025.

The National Membership Chair, April Sinclair, shared a quote that resonated with many of us regarding membership and how to achieve our goals. **It is all about enthusiasm!**

*"Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success.*

*When you do a thing, do it with all your might. Put your whole soul into it. Stamp it with your own personality. Be active, energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you will accomplish your objective. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

I would like to wish all of you holidays full of fun, laughter, and memories that will bring you through 2025. Be proud of what you have done thus far for the American Legion Auxiliary, and with enthusiasm I have no doubt you will continue to reach goals for your Unit, District and Department.

Pam Eckler

670-780-8622 ★ [membership@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:membership@ALAGeorgia.com)





## ALA CHALLENGE DECK

Discover ways to get involved in your community and make a real difference in the lives of local veterans **BY USING THE ALA CHALLENGE DECK.**

To reinvigorate units and boost community participation, National President Trish Ward and the 2024-2025 national chairs developed the ALA Challenge Deck. This 46-card deck includes descriptions and links to additional resources for all the ALA's programs, like Americanism and Children & Youth.

[Learn more about the ALA Challenge Deck here and get yours today!](#)

When you (or your unit) donate \$35 or more to the **Veteran Projects Fund**, you will receive the 46-card deck. Learn more about the ALA Challenge Deck at <https://www.legion-aux.org/ALA-Challenge-Deck>

Donate online at

<https://donate.legion-aux.org/CSiDonate/Give.aspx/S9FGOOG7#c>

or text CARD to 1-844-940-3450, or mail a check to ALA National Headquarters, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

Please indicate in the memo line of the check that the gift is for the cards. If you have any questions, please contact Development Director Carley Schutz at [cschutz@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:cschutz@ALAforVeterans.org).



## HISTORIAN

Debbie Hoopingarner

**Merry Christmas everyone!**



Hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Are you ready for the last minute rush of activities leading up to Christmas and the New Year?

When you record all your Unit activities, do not forget to include everything that you do with your Legion Family and your District.

In my Unit History Book, the first Christmas event that I will highlight is the Festival of Trees. If you did not attend this event that was held at the Gas South Convention Center in Duluth, GA, you missed a fantastic time. Our Georgia Auxiliary Patriotic & Poppy themed Christmas tree was gorgeous. There were a lot of activities: people were making Christmas ornaments, playing games, watching children perform, and shopping. The most interesting part of the day was watching our own Department President Cheryl Waybright driving the Pink Pig.

It was great seeing the Auxiliary members turn out. I would love to hear from everyone that attended. It would be helpful to me to know how many of our units were represented and the number of members that attended. Please send me a note and some photos!

**HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!**

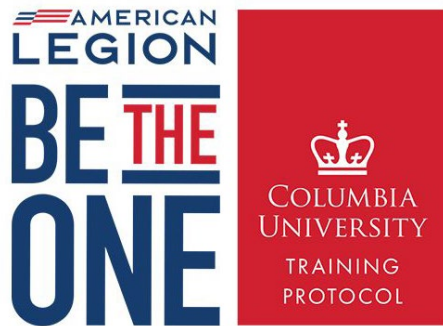
Contact me any time.

Debbie Hoopingarner

317-753-3394 [Historian@alageorgia.com](mailto:Historian@alageorgia.com)

PS: Be sure to send me a note if you or your unit donated and received an ALA Challenge Deck – we want to see pictures on our Facebook of units creating enthusiasm about our MISSION using the decks. Tell us how your unit used the deck!

## BE THE ONE TRAINING



<https://www.legion.org/advocacy/be-the-one>

As part of The American Legion Be the One mission to end veteran suicide, the Legion has joined forces with Columbia University to develop training for those who want to learn more about interacting and responding with veterans who may be in crisis. After the training, participants will be able 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.
- Communicate effectively with an individual who may be at risk of hurting themselves.
- Members of The American Legion Family are encouraged to take part in this training and share the training with their communities. Check back to this page or subscribe to **The American Legion Online Update newsletter** to receive information about new training opportunities as they become available.

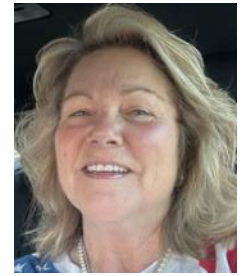
Register to attend an online session at this link: <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/be-the-one/be-the-one-training>

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All attendees will be asked to complete an online survey before the class and upon completion. These surveys help track the effectiveness of the training and allow us to plan for future development.

See leadership video [HERE](#)

## CHAPLAIN

Gloria V. Chambers



Hello everyone!

Wobble baby wobble baby!! Can't we all relate? Thanksgiving ! Awesome food, family ,thankfulness and fellowship, with a harvest of blessings. This article begins with a simple tune I sang in my vehicle on my drive to work one morning.

*"There is sunshine in my soul today, More glorious and bright Than glows in any earthly sky, For Jesus is my light.*

*O there's sunshine, blessed sunshine, While the peaceful, happy moments roll; When Jesus shows His smiling face There is sunshine in my soul."* Lyrics by Eliza Edmunds Hewitt (1851-1920)

**As the warmth of the morning sun fell across the sky , I asked myself, "am I as the sunshine to others?"** Do I bring peace, warmth, and happiness to others? Or am I as a scorching humid hot day? My thoughts drifted – too much of the sun can be harmful. Just as salt. I can be a pinch of salt adding good taste and flavor or be too salty and be useless.

*The LORD whispered unto my spirit you are a vessel; I am the potter. I steady you on the potter's wheel. I hold you in my hands, smoothing the sides, removing the blemishes. I mold peace into you. I strengthen you by holding you with my hands, this brings you purpose and quality. The quality of the clay determines the result. The potter knows the value of the clay. You are my creation! Mold and make me, Master today! Have thine one way, Lord, I pray.*

My dear ones the question is this: Are you sunshine? Warm, loving and bearing kindness. Are you salt? Like a flavor , bringing goodness, healing, and tastefulness. Are you peaceful and content in the potters hands? My challenge to you, be a useful, productive vessel, be a ray of sunshine, be a pinch of salt, allow the Master to mold you and make you after his own will. Stay yielded and still.

My prayers for a safe holiday. Please remember those less fortunate in your thoughts and prayers. Everyone is not jolly during the season of Christmas. Remember the hurting , our veterans , and the children that hope for things they may never see. In closing be mindful in lifting The American Legion, Department of Georgia Chaplain Clarence Sinkler and family in the loss of his sister, Marie Sinkler.

*"O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."*  
Isaiah 64:8

Blessings and joy to all,

Gloria Chambers

912-390-2488 ★ [chaplain@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:chaplain@ALAGeorgia.com)





## COMPLIANCE RESOURCES

**NOT SO FUN FACT:** About half of Georgia's units and districts have lost IRS tax-exempt status. In 2024-2025 the National ALA asks that we to increase our level of compliance.

All Unit and District officers are encouraged to seek information and **ask questions:**

- Does the Unit/District comply with the IRS?
- Is the person designated as the **IRS RESPONSIBLE PARTY** for the Unit/District alive? ... active in the unit? ... able to continue to represent the unit?
- Does the Unit/District have an annual checklist and transition plan for compliance and all things financial?

### Resources:

#### Revocation & Reinstatement Webinar PowerPoint

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:8ca7502c-2dcb-4cd3-b11b-2104c45c3d65>

#### ALA IRS "Cliff Notes"

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:b23585e1-db8f-4eca-a7b4-6996755ab2bf>

#### Important Compliance Information

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:f4f0b4d2-87bb-461a-867c-c4f256360d31>

#### Important Compliance Resources

- <https://www.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Audit/Important-Compliance-Information>
- <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:67c7e057-56fa-4ade-86cb-62ca9ac78a02>

#### Supplemental Instructions

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:f30bf595-1181-47d3-9890-49a4f35e20b1>

### There are two ALA ACADEMY COURSES

**available for all members** to take to be able to ask more questions and help get back into compliance. FREE! Just a bit of time to review and learn.

- COMPLIANCE MATTERS
- TAX-EXEMPT STATUS: REVOCATION & REINSTATEMENT

GO TO THIS LINK: <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/online-training>



## COMPLIANCE CORNER

### Kathy Merritt, Chair of Risk & Compliance

If you attended the Department Fall Conference, you heard a lot about Compliance.

**But what is compliance?** And why should you care? *Compliance is how we stay right with the law, right with National policies and right with Department policies.*

**But again, who cares?** You should because if you don't, *YOU* could be personally liable. **What?** Yes, you read that correctly, if you aren't right with the law, right with the IRS, then you personally, out of your own personal bank account could be held responsible to pay any fines.

**Well, that was scary!** How do I keep that from happening? Well, that's easy ....get in compliance. Ok, so that might not be that easy, but **your Risk and Compliance team is here to help ...really.**

We know it's easy to say, "get into compliance," but if you are a new President at any level, you don't know where to start because no one probably told you. If you have been a President, you may be in a rut and not realize that you're not in compliance and may not really know where to start either. So, to get you on the path to compliance, your R&C team developed a tool that can help. Is it perfect? No way! But it's a start and it's better than nothing. See pages 19-20.

We created a checklist that is divided into 3 parts, mandatory items, highly encouraged and things to make you shine. Take that checklist and start on the mandatory items. These are the items that are required by law, the IRS, National or the Department. Focus on these items for the next 3 months and you'll be well on your way to compliance.

In this checklist, you are also provided with reference material or links of where to go to accomplish the task. There is a lot of information out there and it can be overwhelming, but the checklist can help focus your efforts.

R&C also developed a Unit Engagement Form for District Presidents to help their units. When the District President visits your unit, this Engagement Form can help focus their visit on items that are mandatory. The District Presidents have access to material that can help your unit, so ask them. They attended the Organizational Meeting on August 10 and a lot of the information they received is useful for coming into compliance.

This is a team effort to bring the Department of Georgia into compliance; so, if you need help ask. We really are here to help and together we can get this done.

Kathy Merritt

[kltravis70@gmail.com](mailto:kltravis70@gmail.com)

## TIPS TO THRIVE IN 24/25

### SHOW GRATITUDE FOR ALL GIFTS

**All members of the ALA possess unique contributions** to offer both the organization and the beneficiaries of our mission programs. The critical question is whether our leaders are receptive to these contributions. At times, these contributions manifest as members being overly vocal, excessively reserved, hyper outcome-oriented, or loudly compassionate. The emphasis on the "excessive" can distract leaders from recognizing the inherent value in our diversity. It is essential to take a moment and pause to reflect.

We must listen, contemplate, and engage beyond the clamor of the "excessive." Are there insights hidden beneath the surface noise? There may be opportunities that challenge conventional thinking. Are you open to embracing differences? Can you attune yourself to the quieter voices among us? Are you making an effort to EVOLVE? By intentionally engaging with volunteers in their current state, we can foster a renewed enthusiasm for our mission.

**Our goal is to harness the strengths of all members.** When we overlook those who are not "in the clique", we risk depleting the potential of our units, district, department and diminishing volunteer enthusiasm. Fact is, the "gifts of the excessive" will eventually end. If this occurs, will we be left with the same individuals? Is that EVOLVING?

For the ALA to flourish, it is imperative that all of us positively support all elected leaders and create opportunities for everyone who wishes to participate. This will lead to growth, evolution, and the fulfillment of our mission. **The ALA's survival hinges on both membership growth and the active service of its members.** Growth often entails leveraging all the talents within the group, even amidst discomfort and uncertainty, and yes, some awkwardness. **It is better to fail forward together and learn than to remain inactive.** Notably, data indicates that "Surprise Success" frequently arises from collaborative efforts, strengthening both teams and relationships.

Let us all move to a mindset where we express gratitude for innovative ideas and let us release the fear of allowing others to take the lead. By embracing uncertainty, we navigate toward new growth. This is better than dismissing fresh perspectives - that stifles enthusiasm and can hinder our organization, leading the ALA toward irrelevance.

## #AMPUPMISSION

### ABOUT MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

As our department officers have been travelling around the state and interacting with units and districts, an interesting topic for discussion has popped up in a few places. **ELIGIBILITY!** YES, there may be an *OOOPS!* situation here and there in our rosters. **MOVING FORWARD** as we recruit new members; **it is imperative that our units and the Post officers that are signing off on membership eligibility are following the eligibility rules exactly as established by The American Legion per IRS guidelines. Remember units are responsible for having only eligible members. Any unit member within the same unit can challenge the membership eligibility of a current member or a person being considered for membership.**

#### Let's be clear on these points:

- **The Greats:** No great granddaughters or great grandmothers are eligible. *Only two levels of consanguinity are permitted: daughter, granddaughter, mother, and grandmother. (It is an IRS regulation we must follow.)*
- **The Steps:** Eligibility does **not** flow through step parents or step children. *(It is an IRS regulation we must follow.)*
- **The Adopted:** **Yes!** Direct AND (*legally*) adopted descendants **are** eligible.
- **The In-Laws:** **No!** Father in-laws or son in-laws cannot be used for eligibility. Remember, DIRECT descendants.
- **SAL spouse, father, father-in-law:** The wives and daughters or granddaughters of S.A.L. members **who are NOT** veterans and who are not members of The American Legion if living are **not** eligible.
- **ALA Spouses:** A member of the ALA must meet eligibility as established in the rules. The **ONLY** males that are eligible for membership in the ALA are the spouses of veterans (female or male) who if alive, are members of The American Legion. *We must stop that rumor that husbands of ALA members who are not veterans are eligible!*
- **Female relatives of Female Veterans:** **Yes!** All sisters, mothers, daughters, granddaughters, and grandmothers, and legally adopted are eligible. If the female veteran if alive, she **MUST** be a member of The American Legion.

## LEGISLATIVE IT IS OUR MISSION TOO!

**Q** What is the one mission program in the ALA that can be done at home using the computer and telephone then reporting on it? And, counting the hours?

**A** **ADVOCACY** of The American Legion's Legislative agenda!

### THE AMERICAN LEGION IS THE VOICE OF U.S. MILITARY VETERANS AND SERVICEMEMBERS.

A resolution-based organization, The American Legion's positions represent the views of its nearly 1.6 million members and shape the organization's legislative priorities for Congress.

ALA Members are encouraged, actually, **expected** to participate in actively supporting. Just an hour a week (or more when called upon) and members can have a HUGE impact. Our legislators are listening – in public speeches, when giving reasons why they vote for or against bills, they are quoting statistics about the number of calls, online messages, emails, letters, and visits that encouraged them to support or not support different pieces of legislation. YES WE CAN IMPACT... one message, one call at a time.

**THE BEST THING TO DO NOW** Check out the ALA's 2024-2025 Legislative Program overview. It gives all members the basics and is full of great information. Here is the [LINK!](#)

Get connected and join the ALA's official Legislative Facebook group. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative>

**THERE IS AN EASY BUTTON!** Visit the American Legion's Action Center and sign up for legislative alerts, search for legislative initiatives or find elected officials and candidates! It's all right here: <https://www.voterveice.net/AmericanLegion/home>



Congressional Contact Report Form

**Did you know, when you make contact, you should complete a Congressional Contact Report Form.** This is for every member of the ALA family to share with National Headquarters engagement with members of Congress, or their staff, when advocating on behalf of The American Legion. RIGHT. ANOTHER. REPORT TO WRITE! But this is quick and simple and can be done immediately after making contact. Besides being heard, your action can be counted.

<https://www.voterveice.net/AmericanLegion/Surveys/7747/Respond>

How does it all work on the Legion side? If you want to know, <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative/about-the-national-legislative-division>

Get active and encourage others to also by sharing what you learn about what we are advocating for in our Georgia Department private Facebook Group.

Reach out to the Georgia Department President if you have questions about how you can ADVOCATE!

## Legislative

Utilize The American Legion's legislative center, [www.legion.org/legislative](http://www.legion.org/legislative), to obtain information on legislative priorities, calls for immediate action, and connect with representatives.

- Call, email, send letters, and visit your elected representatives at the local, state, and national levels to advocate for or against legislation based on The American Legion's legislative priorities.

### Host a Meet the Candidates Night.

- Invite all candidates involved in a specific election for a question-and-answer session, not a debate. <https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Legislative/How-to-Host-a-Meet-the-Candidate-Night>
- The American Legion Auxiliary is a 501(c)(19) nonprofit organization. All legislative events must be non-partisan to abide by IRS regulations.

Sign up for legislative alerts from The American Legion's Grassroots Action Center: Subscribe to the Legion's Legislative Action Alerts to receive notification when they call on all Legion Family members to take immediate action on a topic: [www.voterveice.net/AmericanLegion/Register](http://www.voterveice.net/AmericanLegion/Register).





## YOUTH HERO AND GOOD DEED AWARDS

**THE CHALLENGE:** National Children & Youth Chair Dr. Lisa Chaplin has challenged every department to submit at least one Good Deed and one Youth Hero Award before June 1, 2025.

As of December 9, 2025, 9 departments have submitted 115 Good Deed awards. OOPS! Georgia is not on that list. *Let's get on that list!*

There's a training session available on ALA Academy about the WHAT, HOW, WHO, WHEN, and WHY of these awards. Check it out at <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/online-training>

Created in 2002 by the National Children & Youth Committee, these awards are presented annually throughout the year to recognize the heroism and helpfulness of youths who have not yet graduated from high school. In the past three years alone, more than 1,000 Youth Hero and Good Deed awards have been presented to deserving youth.

**Local ALA units accept nominations.** We need local ALA units and members to be on the lookout in their communities for youth deserving of these awards. It is very easy to [submit a nomination](#). In May 2023, District 9 President Helen Adams presented a Youth Hero Award – ask her, it is not difficult to do!

### THE AWARD CRITERIA:

**Youth Hero Award** winners receive a medal and a certificate. Youth should demonstrate a physical act of valor.

**Good Deed Award** winners receive a certificate and a letter from the National President. Youth should demonstrate leadership through community service.

**Resources:** <https://www.legion-aux.org/Youth-Hero-Good-Deed-Awards>



## CHILD WELL-BEING FOUNDATION



The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation is now called the Child Well-Being Foundation. The Child Well-Being Foundation will still have the acronym CWF. [Learn more about the foundation.](#)

On October 6, 2024 during the annual Fall Meetings of The American Legion, a motion was made and voted on by the American Legion CWF board of directors to change the name of the foundation to one that encompasses the overall needs of the whole child and all aspects of their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

CWF will continue to provide grants to nonprofits for projects that contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of children. Grants are only given to entities that help U.S. children in a large geographic area; they are not awarded for day-to-day or special operating expenses. Thanks to the generosity of Legion Family and community members, the foundation has awarded over \$21 million in grants since 1954 — giving youth-serving nonprofits across this nation the means to promote and operate their programs, plus educate families and communities about the needs of children.

The full article from October 23, 2024 titled "CWF gets a new name" can be found at this link: <https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/dispatch/2024/october/cwf-gets-a-new-name>

**UNITS of the ALA are encouraged to collect and contribute \$1 per member on the 2024 roster to the CWF.**

## YOUTH PROGRAMMING... NOW IS THE TIME!

**THE CHALLENGE IS ON!** Activities for the holiday season are at their peak. *Whew, do ALA units ever get a break?* **NOW** is the time to take a few minutes and ask unit and district committee chairs and volunteers to **CALIBRATE CALENDARS** for what's coming up!

**February is Americanism Month!** Americanism is an unflinching love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideals, eagerness to defend it against all enemies, individual allegiance to the U.S. flag and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. [See American Legion youth programs](#) and the ALA Engagement Plan – a lot of activities involve youth! <https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Americanism/Get-Involved-Americanism>

**Oratorical Contest:** Information can be found here: <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest>. **Confirm with your post and district commander for contest dates.** Youth must compete at post level to move to district and then at district to move to department... and so on. HINT: Girls State recruits are perfect candidates! For more information reach out to Robert Stites Chair, Department of Georgia Oratorical Committee [revrsal@aol.com](mailto:revrsal@aol.com) or Joe Bishop [scjcb@windstream.net](mailto:scjcb@windstream.net).

**Scholarships:** All the American Legion Auxiliary National Scholarship application links are now open. Applications are submitted online at: <https://www.legion-aux.org/scholarships>. **Deadline - all applications must be in by 5pm on March 1, 2025.** More information is at <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/education/scholarship-resources>. There are two Georgia Scholarships. Information about them can be found in the policy for scholarships at this [LINK](#) or at <https://www.aladepgga.com/governing-documents>. Questions? Reach out to Education Chair Cindy Schwartz at [cindy.rochelle18@gmail.com](mailto:cindy.rochelle18@gmail.com). Check out the National ALA Training Academy for the new course about National scholarships the first week of January. <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/online-training>

**Juniors....** There is rumor there will be activities for juniors at the Spring Conference. Check in with the Department of Georgia Juniors Activities Chair, Kayln Slagle at [kalynslagle@yahoo.com](mailto:kalynslagle@yahoo.com)

**Americanism Essay Contest:** 2024-2025 topic is "What Does America the Beautiful Mean to Me?" This is regarding veterans and our military. Visit the National website's Americanism page for information. <https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Americanism/Get-Involved-Americanism> or <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/americanism> **Essay entries are due to the Department Americanism Chair no later than March 25, 2025.** Send to Krisann Alexander at either 1391 Sims Kidd Rd., Comer, GA 30629, or email: [krisann@windstream.net](mailto:krisann@windstream.net)

It's never too early to start recruiting Girls for **Girls State**. A big tip is to coordinate **within units** to recruit AND promote **ALL the ALA programs for youth listed here** when visiting the schools. Check out the latest [bulletin](#) and [Unit information](#) available on the Georgia Girls State Website. <https://www.georgiagirlsstate.org/>. **DUE DATE: APRIL 20, 2025 Units are to send the fee of \$350.00 per girl** to the American Legion Auxiliary Department Headquarters, 3035 Mt. Zion Road, Stockbridge, GA 30281. Contact Director Deedy Harrell at [georgiagirlsstate@gmail.com](mailto:georgiagirlsstate@gmail.com).

**The Poppy Poster Contest:** The contest rules are available at: <https://www.legion-aux.org/National-Poppy-Poster-Contest> **Poster entries are due to the Department Poppy Chair no later than May 1, 2025.** Each Unit and District should submit only the entries of finalists **and cover sheets** (required by National) for judging. Submit to Cathy Hedges at 401 Rivermist Ct. Bethlehem, GA. 30620 or email to [cathy4hedges@gmail.com](mailto:cathy4hedges@gmail.com). See the article on page 16 for more information and samples of last year's winners.

**THE MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD IS APRIL 2025.** Wear purple April 15 in honor of Purple Up! Day for Military Kids. To plan the month of activities at local schools and with local military families, check out resources on the ALA Engagement page at <https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Children-and-Youth/Get-Involved-Children-Youth> and at <https://militarychild.org/resource/momc-toolkit/month-of-the-military-child-resources/#top-content> for great ideas. Reach out to Department Children & Youth Chair Gabriele Barnett at [barnettgabriele@hotmail.com](mailto:barnettgabriele@hotmail.com) for more information.

**Department of Georgia Juniors Camp** hosted by the Georgia Detachment of the Sons of the American Legion is May 31 – June 5, 2025. Check in with Cliff Hall at [cliff.hall@salgeorgia.org](mailto:cliff.hall@salgeorgia.org) for more information and the Georgia ALA website.



# GEORGIA FESTIVAL OF TREES

The Department of Georgia Legion Family participated in the Georgia Festival of Trees at the Gas South Convention Center on Saturday November 30, 2024. Dubbed **LEGION DAY** by sponsor WellCare, members of the Georgia Legion Family received free admission. They got into the Christmas spirit, shared some laughs, rode the Pink Pig, and increased awareness of our mission with those in attendance. About 2,500 people per day for ten days attended the Festival. The Patriotic Poppy Tree was a hit; many attendees learned more about The Poppy Lady and ALA programs. The Georgia TAL Color Guard and POW MIA teams contributed to the patriotic programming at noon that day. Our Legion FAMILY is lucky to have such comradery and team participation!





# GEORGIA FESTIVAL OF TREES

(Continued)



**#AMPUPMISSION**

The American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of Georgia

3035 Mt Zion Road  
Stockbridge GA 30281

678.289.8446

[www.aladeptga.com](http://www.aladeptga.com)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/alaga](https://www.facebook.com/groups/alaga)

2024-2025 DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT CHERYL WAYBIGHT





## MISSION POPPY GROWTH

Cathy Hedges, Poppy Chair



Our American Legion Auxiliary has a program that promotes student creativity while also reinforcing the significance of the Poppy. It is the time of year where units begin to communicate with the local school officials and their art departments to grow and expand this

program. Where there are schools that will not allow ALA members to visit the schools; turn to youth groups such as home schooled students, church groups, scouts, grandchildren, PTAs, etc. They can help you promote the program.

**Through the Poppy Poster Program**, youth can have fun, use their imagination, and learn about the poppy at the same time. They learn each element of the poppy has significance and how the poppy pays tribute to veterans and supports the living. They can learn the Georgia history of Moina Michael and her plan to use poppy funds to aid veterans in need of rehabilitation.

You can find the Poppy Poster Rules on the ALA Department of Georgia website under **Forms**. You can also log into the ALA member website and go to the Poppy Committee Page for much more information at this link:

<https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/poppy> Remember, you have to use your member ID and password to log into the National site.

Each Unit and District should submit only the entries of finalists **and cover sheets** (required by the National ALA) for judging at the Department level before May 1, 2025 to Cathy Hedges at 401 Rivermist Ct. Bethlehem, GA. 30620 or email to [cathy4hedges@gmail.com](mailto:cathy4hedges@gmail.com)

National ALA will send each Division Winner a \$50.00 Award Check and make a \$50.00 donation in the name of each winner to the Children of Warriors National Scholarship Fund.

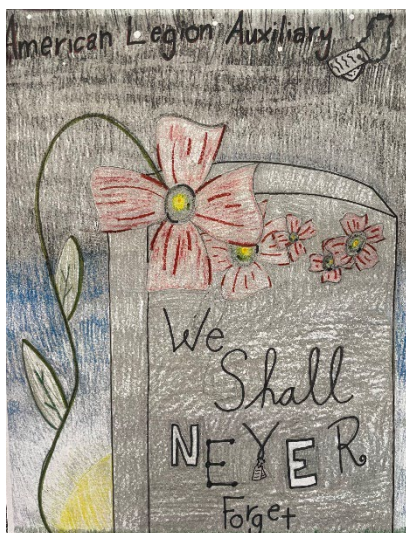
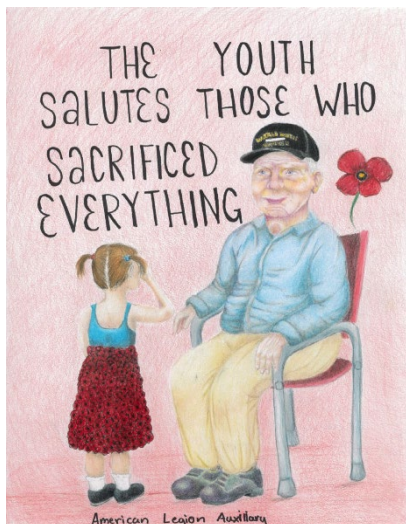
### Symbolism of The American Legion Poppy :

- **RED** petals stand for the vast outpouring of blood.
- The **BLACK** center represents the desolation of battlefields where lives perished to make the USA the "Land of the Free".
- The **GREEN** of the stem represents the new life in meadows, forests, and fields that resulted from the loss of life.
- The **STEM** represents the courage and determination of our fallen warriors.
- The **YELLOW** center stands for hope, like a ray of sunshine for a better future.

The assembled product, a flower, is a symbol of the Resurrection, which is sure to follow. The rain and warm sun that created terrible conditions in the trenches, made the wild red poppies grow where thousands of lives came to an end.

Pictured to the left are the Poppy Posters from Georgia that won in the Southern Division for the 2023-2024 year and were on display at the National Convention in New Orleans. Top is by A. Moore, Class V and overall Southern Division Winner. Middle is by P. Christensen, Class II winner, and at the bottom is Class III winner by A. Sport.

Cathy Hedges  
[cathy4hedges@gmail.com](mailto:cathy4hedges@gmail.com)





# AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

Want to be featured on this page? Send information before the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month to [Department@alageorgia.com](mailto:Department@alageorgia.com) or to [PublicRelations@ALAGeorgia.com](mailto:PublicRelations@ALAGeorgia.com). Include short write up and a picture.



Left: ALA Chickamauga Unit 217 put together 30 gift baskets for area veterans in Post 217 and the Chickamauga Older American Center and will furnish items to gift bags for veterans at a local assisted living facility and a church.



Right (and photo below it): Dublin GA Carl Vinson VA Holiday Shop: District 8 & District 6 volunteers supported veterans coordinated by Jean Graham.

Below: The Atlanta VA Gift Shop team helped hospitalized patients shop for gifts for family members and themselves. They provided appliances, toys and clothing for Veterans transitioning from unhoused to residences.



Below, Unit 233, Loganville had a ball with its favorite project of the year. Honoring those that served by hosting the Christmas Joy Shoppe at the Georgia War Veterans Home. Playing Santa creates smiles for all.



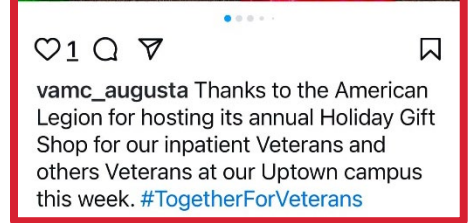


# AROUND THE DEPARTMENT *Continued*

The Augusta GA team hosted an amazing 2024 Holiday Gift Shop Led by Miriam Stein, the team created a magical experience. Below to the right, Miriam is pictured with the Director while commending him on incredible support by the VA and its Chief of Security to ensure an exceptionally smooth event. Oh... and the VA gave the team a shout out on Instagram.



Below, at the VA visit in Augusta, Department Commander Jim Fultz, ALA Department President Cheryl Waybright, Leading Candidate for National Commander 2025-2026, Dan K. Wiley, and SAL Detachment Commander Brian Shedd.!



Below, at The Blue Goose, the Augusta Georgia War Veterans Home, a large contingent of many "FAMILY" members gather to visit veterans and hear about what our Legion Family does to support the facility and residents. *"BETTER TOGETHER - We are family."*





**Unit Annual Checklist  
Department of Georgia  
2024-2025**

**Mandatory Items:**

- ❖ **Registered with IRS and File 990** **DUE: Varies**
  - **Go To:** <https://www.aladdeptga.com/governing-documents> for department guidance
  - **Go To:** <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/obtaining-an-employer-identification-number-for-an-exempt-organization> for information on how to proceed with registration if necessary
  - **Go To:** <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-filing-and-forms> for guidance on filing the required 990
  - **Go To:** <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/return-due-dates-for-exempt-organizations-annual-return> for timing. Check with unit/District Treasurer to get tax year
  - Refer to Department Roadmap for Financial Compliance for additional information
  
- ❖ **Register with Secretary of State** **DUE: 1 Jan – 1 Apr**
  - **Go To:** <https://ecorp.sos.ga.gov/>
  - Refer to Department Roadmap for Financial Compliance for additional information
  
- ❖ **Department Mandatory Obligations:** **DUE: Before 1 Apr**
  - **Go To:** Required Unit Forms at <https://www.aladdeptga.com/forms-1>
  
- ❖ **Record Retention and Disposal (agendas/minutes/etc)** **DUE: Varies and on-going**
  - **Go To:** <https://www.aladdeptga.com/governing-documents> for guidance
  - **Go To:** the ALA National Headquarters Record Retention Schedule for more information <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/guides/constitution-bylaws> Page 101
  
- ❖ **Charitable Gaming (Raffles and Bingo, etc)** **DUE: Oct**
  - Is it current? Renew every year by Oct
  - For Bingo ensure appropriate Sec State certified background checks are accomplished
  - **Go To:** <https://ecorp.sos.ga.gov/>
  - Check with appropriate local officials for approval (ex: Sheriff's Office, etc)
  - File State Sales taxes Go TO: <https://ecorp.sos.ga.gov/>
  
- ❖ **Implement Membership Processing/Reporting Policy** **DUE: At Installation/on-going**
  - **Go To:** for policy and procedures related to membership [https://www.aladdeptga.com/\\_files/ugd/76bc83\\_8c5d6c482ea54fffb4ff796adde39735.pdf](https://www.aladdeptga.com/_files/ugd/76bc83_8c5d6c482ea54fffb4ff796adde39735.pdf)
  - Update ALAMIS annually for access by new officers **DUE: NLT 30 days after election**



**Unit Annual Checklist  
Department of Georgia  
2024-2025**

❖ **Review department Governing Documents**

**DUE:** Within 30 days of installation

- Constitution, ByLaws, Standing Rules, Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics
- Refer to Department Roadmap for Governing Documents
- **Go to:** <https://www.aladdeptga.com/governing-documents>

**Highly Encouraged to have:**

❖ **Familiarize your self with Unit Guide Book**

**Due:** Within 30 days of Installation

- **Go To:** <https://www.aladdeptga.com/ala-guide-books>

❖ **Budget:** successful units have an operating budget

**DUE:** Varies

- **Go To :** Department training program for additional help (See Finance Committee)
- Review monthly bank statements

❖ **Conduct Audit of Unit funds**

**Due: Varies**

- Refer to Department Roadmap for Financial Compliance for additional information

❖ **Familiarize and Utilize as appropriate all Auxiliary Forms**

**Due:** Varies

- Utilize Department Resources on DOG website
- **Go To:** <https://www.aladdeptga.com/forms-1> for more information

**Things that make you a better Unit:**

❖ **Take ALA Training offered through ALA Academy**

- **Go To:** <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/online-training>

❖ **Familiarize yourself with revitalization efforts**

- Refer to the Roadmap for Revitalization and Conflict Resolution
- Good for every unit to look closely at themselves

❖ **Voluntary Contributions**

- Refer to Department Mandatory Obligations and Voluntary Contributions Form

❖ **Unit Facebook Page or Website?**

- Create a Facebook page to communicate with your community(this is free)
- Unit Website? If you don't have one, this could cost money. Partner with your Post if they have one

❖ **Write articles for the local Newspaper**

- Local papers may allow free weekly submissions