



DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION
SEPTEMBER 2024 BULLETIN



Hello Gunnery Sergeants, Staff Sergeants, and Interested Readers!

As we begin the 2024-25 Auxiliary year we need to review the components of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation program for a better understanding of the opportunities available to ALA members in order to effectively work this program.

When speaking about VA&R the question is often asked, what can members do to better serve our veterans? One of the main components of VA&R is **Service to Veterans (Outside of VA Facilities)**. The following information is taken from the ALA National Program Engagement Plan for VA&R and offers many ideas on how the reader can get involved and better serve our national heroes.

- Support veteran caregivers, family members, and survivors in your local community.
 - ✓ Provide a spa day or caregiver day out for community veteran caregivers.
 - ✓ Connect caregivers with outside organizations that offer support, such as the Military and Veteran Caregiver Network.
 - ✓ Offer to sit with a veteran while the caregiver runs errands.
 - ✓ Offer to run errands for a caregiver.
 - ✓ Prepare information for units concerning the needs of caregiver support.
 - ✓ Offer to provide meals, or arrange a meal train for the families of hospitalized or recently deceased veterans.
 - ✓ Connect the families of recently deceased veterans to outside resources to ensure they get the support they need. For example, TAPS or the local service officers.
 - ✓ Contact an American Legion Service Officer at your post and offer to be on the list of people to call when a veteran's family needs help.
- Look for ways in your community to ensure the ever-changing demographics of veterans and their families are supported.
 - ✓ If your area has many working-age veterans or veterans with families:
 - ✓ Take part in a veteran job fair by organizing or working at an informational table.
 - ✓ Promote local veteran-centric job fairs in your community. Support The American Legion by helping host a local job fair at your post home or community center.
 - ✓ Buy school supplies, host a baby shower, or send care packages to veterans' children who are headed to college.
- If your area has older or homebound veterans:

- ✓ Adopt a local veteran — find a veteran in your community who faces loneliness and isolation. Offer care and support, such as morale phone calls, running errands, and ensuring they are receiving proper nutrition.
- ✓ Transportation of veterans to appointments or running errands.
- ✓ Look for Community Veteran Engagement Boards in your area (CVEBs) and provide support in the form of information, donations, or volunteers to the events in your area.
- ✓ Become the catalyst to find needs and encourage members to help veterans in their community.
- ✓ Promote volunteer opportunities in veteran-centric activities in community settings.
- ✓ Utilize websites, newsletters, and other media to promote your events and gain community support.
- ✓ Report your ALA Service to Veterans hours to your unit.

The Auxiliary has many members who are already engaging in one or more of the above suggested tasks but are not reporting the activity to their Unit/ District VA&R Chairmen. **Please remember that ALL of the activities noted above are reportable under this program**, so kindly keep track of your volunteer time, dollars spent, and miles driven, and share them with your Unit/District Chairmen for inclusion in their mid-year and year-end reports.

Other components of the VA&R program will be addressed in future bulletins.

2024 September and October Military Dates to Remember

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| September 1-30 | National Suicide Prevention Month |
| | National Service Dog Month |
| September 2 | Labor Day |
| | V-J Day (Victory over Japan) |
| September 11 | Patriot Day |
| September 18 | United States Air Force Birthday |
| | Air National Guard Birthday |
| September 20 | National POW/MIA Recognition Day |
| September 29 | Gold Star Mother's Day |
| | VFW Day |
| October 13 | United States Navy Birthday |
| October 26 | Day of the Deployed |
| October 27 | Navy Day |

Oorah!

Master Sergeant Susan Baker, VA&R Chair

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