



American Legion
Auxiliary

The Auxiliary News Hub

Official Publication of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of California

Mission Statement

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

Vision Statement

The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace and security.

Purposes

In fulfillment of our mission, the American Legion Auxiliary adheres to the following purposes:

- To support and advocate for veterans, military, and their families
- To support the initiatives and programs of The American Legion
- To foster patriotism and responsible citizenship
- To award scholarships and promote quality education and literacy
- To provide educational and leadership opportunities that uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy and encourage good citizenship and patriotism in government
- To increase our capacity to deliver our mission by providing volunteer opportunities within our communities
- To empower our membership to achieve personal fulfillment through *Service, Not Self*

WHY USE ALA MIS



In today’s fast-paced digital world, adapting to new technologies is essential for the American Legion Auxiliary’s aim to provide seamless services. This was the focal point of our recent 5th Area Meeting at Post 79, where the main topic of discussion was streamlining the process of online membership. The discussions were framed around understanding the needs of members while ensuring that the membership (ALA MIS) system is easy to use, secure, and reliable.

This meeting highlighted the significant benefits of processing membership online. Here is the key takeaway from this meeting:

Enhanced Accessibility: The Membership Chair can update, manage accounts at their convenience.

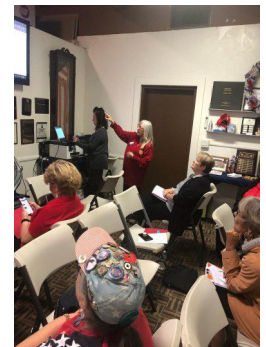
Streamlined Payments: Able to process payments quickly and safely.

Recognizing the increasing demand for convenience and speed, it was clear that moving membership processing online (ALA MIS) helps to streamline payments, manage membership updates, anytime and from anywhere.

ALA MIS will empower both the ALA and its members, offering more convenience, and security. In a world where convenience is king, ALA MIS is a clear step toward a more dynamic and forward-thinking future. This meeting was a reminder of the importance of collaboration in driving positive change. By embracing technology, the ALA is positioning itself to better serve our members, both now and in the future.



Article Submitted By:
Donna L. Smith
Department Membership Chair



2024-2025 Officers

President	Linda Hayes
Vice President	Susan Baker
Secretary	Liz Doidge
Treasurer	Katherine Tellyer
Chaplain	Melanie Taylor
Historian	Erika Hernandez
Parliamentarian	Anita Biggs
Sgt-at-Arms	Sam Marsteller
Asst. Sgt-at-Arms	Krista Young
Finance Chair	Teresa Lugo-Nunez
Finance Sr	Ann Sanchez
Finance Jr	Sharon Moore
NEC	Kathie Martinez
NEC Alt.	Dee Ann Graham
Advisory	Dee Ann Graham
	Kathie Martinez
	Glenda Schultz

2024-2025 Chairmen and Committees

Americanism	Robin Falkenberg
Aux. Emergency Fund	Suzanne Winters
Children and Youth	Tracy Varnell-Fercho
Community Service	Rebecca Glenn
Constitution/Bylaws	Cassandra Brown
Convention Chm.	Linda Fercho
Convention Co-Chair	Terry Oclaray
Conv. Com Chair	Anita Biggs
Credentials	Madeleine Reed
Distinguished Guest	Linda Workman
Editor	Barb Toth
Education	Donna Mattox
Elections	Linda Karnstedt
Girls State Advisor	Nancy Brown-Park
Girls State Chairman	Caroline Miller
Junior Activities	Lucy Hunt
Junior Conf. Director	Martha Romano
Leadership	Diana Livas
Legislative	Glenda Schultz
Membership	Donna Smith
Music	Yve Evans-Hanna
National Security	Linda Lara-Guzman
Past Presidents Parley	DeeAnn Graham
Poppy	Gabriella Ramos
Public Relations	Rosemary Barron
Resolutions	Linda Fercho
UD&R North	Joan Cannon
UD&R South	Kathie Martinez
Veterans Affairs	Susan Baker
Ways & Means Chair	Marcia Monroe
Webmaster	Lyle Workman

A Leadership training was organized by District 28 President, Linda Lara Guzman and was held at Marinas Post 694 on Sunday, December 8, 2024. District 28 Officers, Chairmen, Unit Presidents, and members attended and participated in a six-hour training session where lots of information was shared, earning them their Department Leadership Certification card from Department Leadership Chairman Diana Livas.



Article and Photo Credit: Carissa Nicole Tovar McCann



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OFFERS FREE LIFETIME PASSES TO CURRENT MILITARY, U.S. VETERANS, AND GOLD STAR FAMILY MEMBERS

In November 2022 the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management: Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers all began an expansion of their annual free pass for currently serving troops and their families by offering free lifetime entrance passes to U.S. Veterans and Gold Star family members. The pass also gives discounted amenity fees in some locations. These free passes are a way to thank US military members for their support of our country and to encourage them to explore recreational opportunities on their public lands and waters.

While not all parks or visitor areas require an entrance fee, many do. For example, Yosemite National Park charges a \$35 entrance fee per vehicle, while Craters of the Moon National Monument charges \$20. Other locations charge for entering museums or curation areas in visitor centers. For example, the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center in the Chugach National Forest, Alaska, charges \$5 per adult to access film and exhibits. Such fees are waived for holders of the lifetime pass, as well as those with the free active-duty America The Beautiful military pass or other passes sold or awarded by the agencies.

The pass for Veterans and Gold Star families covers the holder and any accompanying passengers in a private vehicle at sites that charge per car, or the pass owner and up to three adults age 16 and over at sites that charge per person.

Gold Star Families are the next of kin of a member of the US Armed Forces who lost his or her life in a “qualifying situation,” such as a war, an international terrorist attack, or a military operation outside of the United States while serving with the US Armed Forces. Eligibility requirements are in section 3.2 of Department of Defense Instruction 1348.36. If you are a member of a Gold Star Family, you will need to bring a Gold Star Voucher to present to park staff. To obtain the voucher visit www.nps.gov/planyourvisit.

The veteran can pick up a Military Lifetime Pass for free in person at many national parks and federal recreation sites. To obtain the pass, veterans must provide one of the following:

- Department of Defense Identification Card (DD Form 2, DD Form 2765, or Next Generation USID replacement)
- Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)
- Veteran ID Card (The Department of Veterans affairs (VA) only provides a digital version)
- Veteran designation on a state-issued US driver’s license or identification card

Passes may also be ordered online via the [U.S. Geological Survey Store](http://www.usgs.gov). Passes ordered online carry a \$10 processing and shipping fee. The reader should be aware that passes ordered online are not digital passes and may take weeks to ship. Passes received in person are free. Visit www.store.usgs.gov/recreational-passes to order online.

Susan Baker, VA&R Chairman



IN SERVICE, NOT SELF HELPING OUR BLUE STAR MOTHERS

Contributing our time to the “Blue Star Mothers”.
We made 100 care packages for troops.



THANK YOU:

*Auxiliary District 28 President Linda Lara Guzman
American Legion Post & Auxiliary 593 in Prunedale
Auxiliary Unit 81 Gonzalez
Auxiliary Unit 69 Hollister
Also, VFW Aux 9242 and VFW Aux 6949 Spreckles*



HERE'S WHAT'S NEW WITH TEMECULA/MURRIETA ALA UNIT 852

Happy Greetings! I wanted to share a bit about what American Legion Auxiliary Unit 852 has been up to! Our president was able to attend the Department Convention held in Visalia in June of this year. It was a great experience to meet the Department officers and gain a better understanding of our organization. She saw some familiar faces, and even shared a name and birthday with another attendee.



Our post commander and our auxiliary president attended the Moreno Valley 4th of July parade to proudly represent our Post 852 Legionnaires, Auxiliary Members and Riders!



Our president and the commander of our post attended the American Legion Baseball banquet, where a donation was given by Leonard Phillips in honor of his late wife, our former president, Mindy Phillips.



As a service to our community, we routinely hold flag retirements on Saturdays. In our area, we are not allowed to burn flags unless they are 100% cotton, so we collect flags from our local library and fire station, and respectfully disassemble them, so that they can be disposed of. We invite our local high schoolers to earn their community service hours by participating.

We are small, but mighty and we are excited to make a difference in our community, and in the lives of our veterans and active-duty families!

Submitted by:
Traci Killion,
ALA Unit 852 President

JUNIORS ARE ON THE MOVE FROM SOUTHERN CA TO NORTHERN CA

As the holidays roll in, The Ticket Master was busy delivering stocking across California to our juniors. The juniors decorated and stuffed stockings to deliver to the Veteran patients of the spinal ward at the Long Beach VA Hospital, giving stockings to Veterans, and their families. They also participated in Wreaths Across America. Department Honorary Junior President Olivia Thuney also participated in a Veteran’s Day ceremony at Camp Hamilton Veterans Memorial Park and received special honors recognition. Seniors, thank you so much for all your support. Our juniors are doing an amazing job!



Submitted By
Lucy Hunt
Junior Activities Chairman
American Legion Auxiliary
Department of California

HAPPENING IN DISTRICT 26



Madam Mayor

On December 9, 2024, Auxiliary member Stacy Jimenez was elected by the **City Council of Foster City** for a one-year term as the 2025 Mayor. Stacy is one of the inaugural members of Unit 105, which was chartered in 2020. Her Veteran lineage dates back to the American Revolution. Stacy served on U105's California Girls State selection panel in 2021, 2022, and 2023. For the past two years at Post 105's Veterans Day Ceremony, Stacy bestowed our Girls State Citizens with their graduation stoles. Stacy holds a degree in Politics from UCLA and a Juris Doctorate from University of San Francisco.

Pictured: Suzy Niederhofer, Art Kiesel, Stacy Jimenez, Patrick Sullivan, and Phoebe Venkat.

CHRISTMAS CHEER IN DISTRICT 26



Unit 105 gathered for lunch, gift exchange and cheer. No talk of 'work.' Best wishes for a great 2025 for the Auxiliary.



Unit 105 sisters Joyce, Arlene, Peggy and Pauline distributed College Park GS Troop 61749's handmade holiday cards at the annual "A Veterans Christmas" luncheon at the San Mateo Elks Lodge.

Unit 238 'Wraps Up the Year'



Members of Unit 238 Pacifica gathered for their holiday potluck dinner. The night included wrapping gifts for VA-Menlo Park resident patients and Pomeroy Recreation & Rehabilitation Center in San Francisco. Pomeroy offers support to those with developmental disabilities and those with traumatic brain injuries.



U105 VA&R Deputy Carol B delivered the VA short-term patient gift bags to VA's Rec Therapist Rishoo.

Submitted By:
Peggy Toye, D26 President



Gonzales hosted a "Hometown Heroes Ceremony" honoring 27 local veterans and active-duty service members. The signs display their names and branches with honor. The event was presented by American Legion Post 81, District 28 and the City of Gonzales. This event highlighted the community's appreciation for those who served. Giving back to those who gave so much! In attendance was the Auxiliary Unit 81 members. Gonzales City Councilmember and Aux Unit 81 Officer, Liz Silva was interviewed by **KSBW TV Action News 8**. It was an emotional day for all involved.



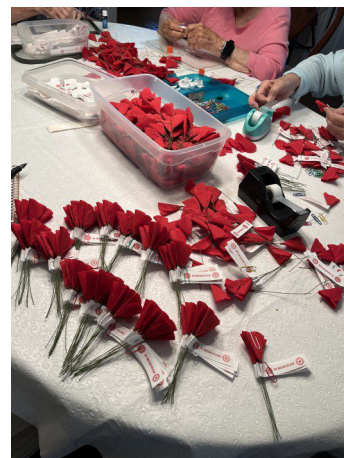
Submitted By:
Rosemary Barron
Public Relations, Dept of CA

Unit 327 has something to cheer about, they get things done! If you want to make a Poppy properly, come visit this unit. They meet once a week, on Wednesday, at their club house or at a member's home at 9 AM sharp.

They have 6-8 members a week and they get right to work with their Poppy production. Last year they made 31,000 Poppies for their District, which is District 29, and for the Department of California. Communication with their department and district is so important, proper Poppy count helps with prompt distribution to all units. Storage for producing the Poppies is a member's bedroom with all supplies and boxes to distribute. No "She Shed" for these ladies. Taking Poppies home and prepping for the next week can be tedious, but they do all they can to make this work.

This Unit stepped up to the plate when Poppy production stopped at the VA Hospital in Long Beach in 2018. "Who was going to make the poppies?" Leisure World to the rescue, and they have been doing this ever since.

The average Poppy maker is in their 80s. With the passing of a member and others with health issues, each year is a challenge. Our members persevere by attending their meetings and making their Poppies with pride. Our department cannot say enough to thank these ladies for their dedication.



Submitted By:
Cynthia Mayfield



Monterey County 14th Annual Veterans Day Parade. Monday, 11/11/24, Salinas, CA. Rain or shine the members of Auxiliary Unit 589, District 28 were in the spirit! Led by Madame President Stella Perez, thanks to all the members that braved the weather conditions. Honoring those that gave and continue to give so much!



On December 17, 2024, members of ALA Unit 31 Sheila Polson, Fran Carr, and Cora Wells dropped off toys for Christmas to the Marina Veteran’s Transition Center. Auxiliary Unit 31, District 28, sponsored the Marina Veterans Transition Center children’s toy donation. All toys were donated by Auxiliary Unit 31 members for this special occasion.

Submitted By:
Rosemary Barron
Public Relations, Dept of CA

Bringing History and Inspiration to Elementary Students



American Legion Post 574, Moreno Valley Legionnaire James Vass



American Legion Unit 574, Moreno Valley Auxiliary LaSharon Perez

Members LaSharon Perez, and James Vass, both Auxiliary members and Legionnaires at American Legion Post 574 in Moreno Valley, recently visited Sugar Hill Elementary School, Moreno Valley to talk with students in grades K-5 about the rich history of March Air Reserve Base (March ARB) and the importance of education. The event was designed to spark pride in the community’s heritage, it’s connection with the base, and to inspire a love for learning.

During the visit, LaSharon and James shared the story of March ARB, a historic landmark that has been a key part of the nation’s military since its founding in 1918 as a World War I training site. They described how the base has grown over the years into a vital hub for the Air Force Reserve and the California Air National Guard.

“March ARB is more than a base,” said James. “It represents teamwork, dedication, and service to our country.” Students were captivated by the stories and eagerly joined in with questions about the base and its role in history.

LaSharon emphasized how education is essential for achieving personal goals. “Education is the foundation for your dreams,” she told the children. “Whether you want to be a teacher, a pilot, or an astronaut, it all starts with learning.”

The visit resonated with both students and teachers. “It’s wonderful to see our kids so engaged and learning about the history of our own community,” said teacher Cindy Ammons, Unit 574 Secretary, and teacher at the school. “The focus on education as a pathway to success was a powerful message.”

LaSharon and James hope to make these visits an annual tradition, fostering a stronger connection between local schools and the community. “If we can inspire even one child to appreciate history or dream bigger, then we’ve made a difference,” LaSharon said.

As the assembly wrapped up, students left with a deeper appreciation for the legacy of March ARB and a reminder that with hard work and education, their potential is limitless.

Submitted By:
 James Vass, Dept. of CA, District 21
 District 21 Public Relations Chair and C&B Chair
 Unit 574 Parliamentarian/PR Chair/C&B Chair/AEF Chair



Save the Date

January

Program Focus:

Legislative/National Security

- 1 *New Year's Day*
- 16 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*
- 17-19 *DEC*

February

Program Focus: Americanism

- 1 *National Mission Training Las Vegas*
- 3 *4 Chaplains Day*
- 12 *Lincoln's Birthday*
- 14 *Valentine's Day*
- 15 *Hub Article Submissions Due*
- 17 *President's Day*
- 22 *Washington's Day*



Note from the Gazette:

The Auxiliary News Hub is the official publication of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of California. The success of the Hub depends on your submissions. Any member can make a submission. So please submit your articles, funny stories, pictures, etc. **Submissions are to be in a Word Document and pictures are to be submitted as a jpeg file.**

Editor reserves the right to edit any submissions. Please keep articles short as space may be limited.

Deadline for the March/ April issue is February 15, 2025.

Email articles, photos and positive suggestions to:

Editor Barb Toth
 editor@calegionaux.org
 babstothaux@yahoo.com

The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.

— Carl Jung —