



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*

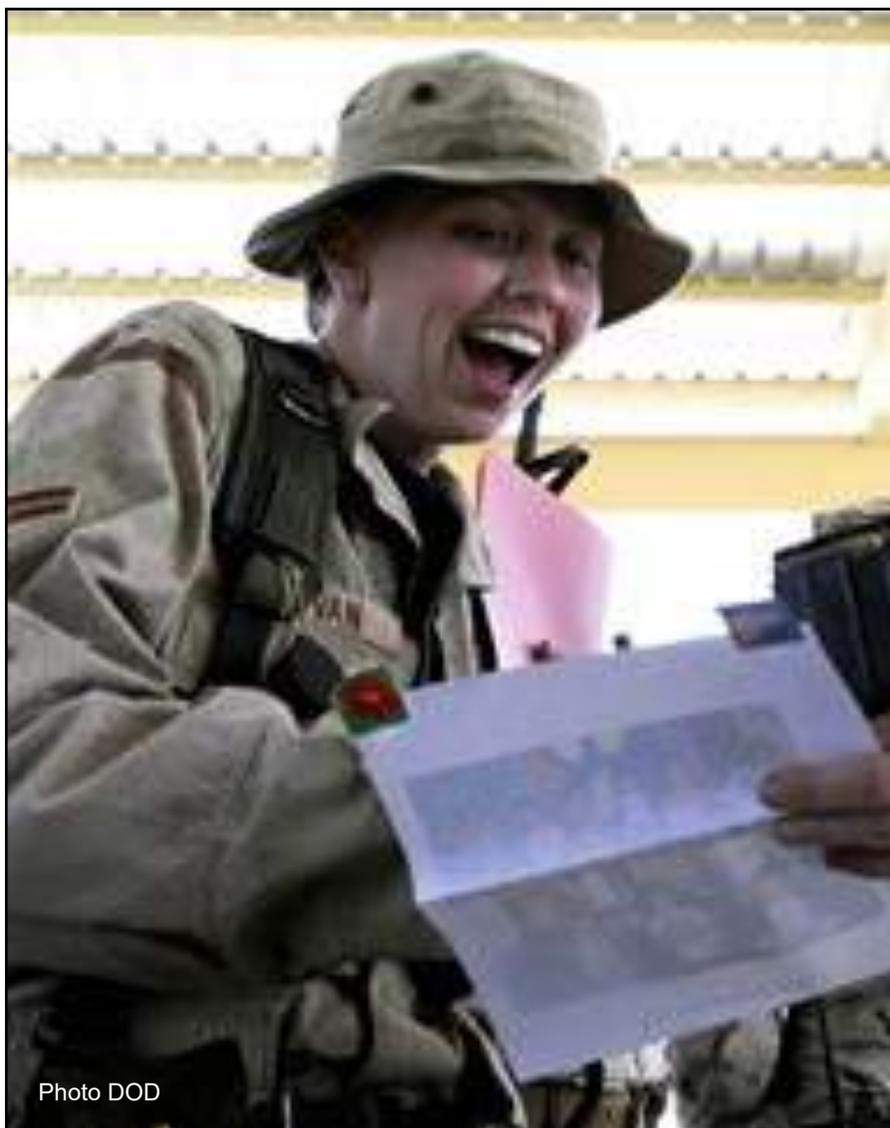


Photo DOD

Valentine's Day Surprise!

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Kathleen Sullivan, stationed at a Southwest Asia air base, is surprised to receive Valentine's Day cards from elementary school students in Texas.



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President's Message

Glenda Schultz



May this New Year bring you opportunities for growth, success, and prosperity.

Please remember to take advantage of one of the American Legion Auxiliary Academy courses, **Be the One: How Auxiliary Members Can Help.**

During this 60-minute course, you will hear from Lisa Williamson, ALA National President; Chanin Nuntavong, The American Legion Executive Director of Government Affairs; Dean Kessel, The American Legion Executive Director Marketing and Communications; and Tiffany Ellet, The American Legion Director of Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation on the importance of destigmatizing asking for help and to encourage The American Legion Family to take action when they believe a veteran or service member is at risk of suicide.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey and thank you for your tireless dedication.

Glenda

The Auxiliary News Hub is the official publication of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of California. Deadline for the April / May / June issue is March 24.

Editor reserves the right to edit any submission for the purpose of publication. Please email all articles, photos, suggestions and (gentle) criticisms to

Editor Nancy Heinisch
editor@calegionaux.org



Proper Parliamentary Procedure and Practices

*Department Parliamentarian
Anita Biggs helps answer
your most perplexing questions*



Q Does Roberts Rules require an agenda?

A Yes. For a proposed agenda to become the official agenda for a meeting, it must be adopted by the membership at the beginning of the meeting.

It is wrong to assume, as many do, that the president “sets the agenda”. It is common for the president to prepare a proposed agenda, but that becomes binding only if it is adopted by the full membership at the meeting.

Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act — January 2023

President Joe Biden signed a provision into law that will make it easier across the board for military spouses to transfer professional licenses when making a military move.

For decades, military spouses have faced hassles in transferring occupational licenses when they move. It’s often expensive and time-consuming, causing large hits to the family income as the spouse waits for

This is the first time a federal law requires states to provide reciprocity in accepting valid occupational licenses from previous jurisdictions. The law also applies to service members.



Defense officials have calculated there are more than 132,000 active-duty spouses in occupations that require licensing, representing about 39% of military spouses in the workforce. Those licenses are required in a wide range of occupations — from realtors to nurses, teachers, cosmetologists and many others. The only profession the new law specifically excludes is the practice of law.

the license to be approved in order to be able to work in the chosen field.

The provision amends the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, and went into effect when the bill was signed into law, according to Noah Sadlier, spokesman for Representative Mike Garcia, R-California, who originally introduced the bill and has pushed for the legislation.

There are basic requirements laid out in the provision, such as the occupational license must be in good standing with the previous licensing authority and actively used in work that’s a similar scope of practice in the two years immediately preceding the relocation.

If there’s an interstate compact in place for the occupational license, and the service member or spouse is licensed and able to operate in multiple jurisdictions through that compact, that compact will take precedence over the federal law.

Karen Jowers, Military Times

Update on Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act

More great news about this important law: when the wife of an Air Force pilot moved with her family from Ohio to Texas, Texas refused to grant her licensure reciprocity to work as a school counselor. **She took them to court, and a federal judge upheld the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act and ordered Texas to comply with the law, a tremendous victory for military families.**

Representative Mike Garcia’s Office

Maintaining a Strong Sisterhood



All American Legion Auxiliary members have a goal to recruit new members.

As with most we start with family and friends. Our family and friends will then get their friends to join. And as expected you will meet strangers at a membership drive or at an auxiliary event of some sort and they will join. Before you know it, you have this sisterhood growing with people you know very well and some you do not know as well.

Every unit's goal is to get to know your members well. Maybe you do not have to be their best friend but there is the bond that you share with our veterans. Do not forget that.

When I recruit new members, I tell them all about the programs that we support. I ask them about the veteran in their family that would make them eligible to join. I also tell them they can make friends for life. I call what we have a sisterhood. I want to share just what a strong sisterhood is and what it means to me. And as with anything in life you need to work at it to make it happen.

A **strong sisterhood** is a bond between women who share similar experiences,

aspirations, and goals. It is formed through trust, loyalty, support, and honest communication. The qualities that make up a strong sisterhood include empathy, understanding, inclusivity, and collaboration.

To cultivate strong qualities of a sisterhood, it is important to be authentic, respect boundaries, and listen effectively.

Here are some steps to cultivate strong qualities of a sisterhood:

BE AUTHENTIC: *Be honest with yourself about your values, passions, strengths as well as weaknesses. Being sincere enables others to connect with you more effortlessly since they can tell that there is no pretense or ulterior motive behind what you are doing or saying.*

RESPECT BOUNDARIES: *Boundaries allow individuals to protect their space against unwanted intrusion by others. While building genuine friendships may grow over time as trust develops through shared experience, this mutual respect must also include respecting boundaries if established verbally by those involved around things like personal beliefs or preferred conversation topics.*

LISTEN EFFECTIVELY: *Learning active listening skills goes far beyond hearing someone else speak; it involves paying attention fully whenever someone talks without interrupting them unnecessarily. It promotes habituation in clearing up assumptions before becoming problematic.*

Oh, if only this was a perfect world!

Many Charters are disbanding. Easy way out ---do not want to do it anymore, no one wants to participate, getting old and tired. Some have gone as far as saying they do not get along. What happened to the sisterhood? They all have become strangers.

Sisters uplift each other in times of need. Not just for their unit but also for the other units in their District.

Sisters are honest about their own weakness and ask for help when they need it.

Sisters above all have respect for each other and listen with their hearts.

*Elizabeth Estavillo
District 12 President*

Before Donating to a Charity, Check It Out!

The television ad is gut wrenching. It shows a thin dog with its ribs showing, shaking in the cold. It asks you to donate. Does your money actually help the animal?

As a rule, charity watchdog organizations say that no more than 35 percent of donations should go to fundraising costs.

But some charities spend 90 percent of what they collect on lawyers, fundraisers and salaries, which means your money goes towards someone's salary, rather than aiding the cause you wanted to help.



Some charities purposely name their organization to sound like an existing reputable organization.

Before donating, Charity Navigator recommends asking the charity for its Employer Identification Number (EIN). If they don't have one DON'T DONATE. If they do, you can find the rating to see if your money will actually reach the intended victims.

It is possible to check the status of a nonprofit at GuideStar.org or on CharityNavigator.org.

The Better Business Bureau also provides information, but some charities cannot be checked – and that's a red flag. Consumer Reports also had a 2019 story with best and worst charities for donations.

*Sue Pascoe
Auxiliary Unit 283 Past President*

Veterans Can Receive a Free Military Service Plaque from “Together We Served”

Veterans have the opportunity to receive a complimentary Military Service Plaque from Together We Served. This plaque showcases service details, period-appropriate graphics, and offers a diverse selection of era-specific backgrounds. Designed in a 11”x6.5” format, each plaque can be easily printed and framed, proudly displayed in any room.

The Military Service Plaque from Together We Served, TWS, is provided at no cost to all Veterans who served in the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, or U.S. Coast Guard.

Upon registration, personalize your plaque on the builder page by adding your service photo, medals, badges, awards, and hashmarks, which will then appear on the plaque “as worn” on your uniform. Once finished, your full-sized plaque is automatically sent as a high-resolution image file ready for printing. For any questions or assistance, TWS’s Veteran-manned help desk is available, or you can contact admin@togetherweserved.com.

Moreover, Veterans can create a complimentary Military Service Plaque for deceased family members who served. If multiple family members served, individual plaques can be created, contributing to a special military family legacy.

For more information visit calegion.org/veterans-can-receive-a-free-military-service-plaque-from-together-we-served/.

*calegion.org
Riki Almanza
submitted by Liz Tungate, ALA District 20 First Vice*



Unit 166 Honors Hospitalized Veterans

James V. Perneti Unit 166 in District 12 is one of the newer units in California and is very active in the town of Los Banos.

The Unit delivered over 215 items of gifts to the patients at the VA Hospital in Fresno during the Christmas season.

They also sent a cash donation of \$200 to the VA Hospital in Livermore for gifts to the veterans for Christmas.

Their hope is that the gifts provided a joyous Christmas to hospitalized veterans.

Ann Kelley, Unit 166

Celebrating our Dual Members: LaSharon Perez: A Dedicated Servant to Veterans and Students Alike

LaSharon Perez is a remarkable individual who has dedicated her life to serving both the veteran community and students seeking international opportunities. As a US Navy veteran she brings a unique perspective to her roles as a dual member of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

At American Legion Post 574 LaSharon serves as the Post Service Officer, providing invaluable assistance to fellow veterans in the community. Her commitment extends further as the Education Chair for American Legion Auxiliary Unit 574 and District 21, where she plays a pivotal role in fostering educational initiatives.

Beyond her contributions to the military community, LaSharon serves as the Assistant Director for Education Abroad at the University of California, Riverside. Her efforts have opened doors for numerous students, enabling them to embark on enriching international experiences.

LaSharon's outstanding contributions have not gone unnoticed. The NAACP Riverside Branch recognized her with a veteran award, acknowledging her unwavering commitment to community

service. Additionally, she has received several prestigious accolades, including the Preserving Black Brilliance Honoree, the Monarch Ally Award, the LGBT Ally



Award, the Education Abroad Global Envoy Honoree, and the Safe Abroad Innovator of the Year.

Her selfless dedication is evident in her role as a provider of information and resources for veterans, ensuring they access the benefits they deserve.

LaSharon initiated buddy checks for Post 574, exemplifying her commitment to

supporting fellow members when they need assistance.

Recognizing the importance of education at all levels, LaSharon initiated the Give 10 Program for Auxiliary Unit 574. Using this program she selected Edgemont Elementary School where she and her team provide support to students and teachers alike for the 2023-2024 school year. Her vision extends to the creation of a scholarship program for Unit 574. With the Mayor of Moreno Valley's support, she wants to ensure that at least three high school students in Moreno Valley will receive scholarships in 2024.

When asked what she is most proud of, LaSharon humbly expresses that being able to give back to others is an honor and a privilege. Her multifaceted contributions to veterans and students underscore the profound impact one individual can have on their community.

LaSharon Perez is a shining example of dedication, compassion, and a true commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those she serves.

James Vass, ALA District 21 Secretary

Four Chaplains Day Interfaith Service

February 3, 2024 at 10 AM

Saint Mary's Catholic Church
12050 E North Avenue
Sanger, CA 93657



American Legion members, family, friends, and the public are all invited to attend.

How to Make a Sleeping Mat for Homeless Veterans



Each 6-foot-by-2½-foot mat is made from 600 to 700 recycled plastic grocery bags. The mats are lightweight, waterproof, and help keep plastic bags out of oceans and landfills. Each mat takes about 50 hours to make.

Here are step-by-step directions on how to make a plastic bag sleeping mat:

- ◆ **Be a collector** – Collect clean plastic bags from the grocery store and other places. The bags should be in good shape and not full of holes.
- ◆ **Be a folder** – Return the bags in their original shape.
- ◆ **Be a cutter** – Cut off the bag's handles, as well as an inch from the bottom of the bag. Then cut the bag into 2½-inch loops.
- ◆ **Be a "plarn" maker** – Link the loops to form plarn (plastic yarn) and roll them into balls like you would with a ball of yarn.

Crochet or knit the rows:

Crochet the mat into a 6-foot-by-2½-foot mat. It is a single crochet with a size P or Q hook.

Make a chain 36 inches long, which is about 66 chains. Make the loops loose with a little space between each one.

Make an extra loop at the end to use as your turning point.

Start at the third loop to make your second row.

Continue until the mat is 6 feet long.

Crochet from front to back so that it does not pucker up.

Crochet two rows of a single crochet to form a tie that is 80 inches long. Connect the tie to the mat so that the mat can be rolled up and carried like a sleeping bag.

Knit the mat using size 19 knitting needles. Knit approximately 50 stitches until it reaches about 2½ feet wide. Keep knitting until it reaches 6 feet long. Cast off, and you're done!

Linda Hayes
Department Vice President

Holiday Happenings District 26



Unit 105 wrapped gifts at the VA-Menlo Park. Toys and gifts are donated for children of veterans and various VA programs.



VA-Menlo Park 103 year old resident Mr. Perez expressed his appreciation and thanks for his gift and the Auxiliary's visit.



District 26 members drop off their VA Adopt-a-Vet Gifts. All six Units fulfilled VA-Menlo Park patient wish lists.

Peggy Toye
District 26 President

ALA Juniors Rock!

Our Youth in Action: Junior President Olivia Thuney!

In her role as the Honorary Department Junior President, Olivia Thuney has demonstrated an authentic passion for her supported causes through active involvement in the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), District 29, Unit 716.

Her community service journey began with the Girl Scouts of America, and in 2019 she transitioned her focus to impactful fundraising and volunteering with the ALA.

Over the past five years, Olivia has actively participated in various events held at the Long Beach VA Hospital, Joint Forces Training Base, Villages at Cabrillo House, and Long Beach Ronald McDonald House. In addition to her event involvement, she dedicates every Tuesday to volunteering, selling tacos for the Auxiliary, and the last Friday of every month serving steaks for the Sons of the American Legion. Her remarkable dedication has resulted in over 1,800 hours of logged community service.

Amidst her efforts in helping blind veterans play bingo at the Long Beach VA Hospital and leading her juniors to write holiday letters to deployed service members, Olivia has also taken on the role of a fundraiser. She orchestrated two corn hole tournaments, resulting in a commendable fundraising total of \$3,200. The most recent event contributed \$2,000 towards her ongoing personal project.

Furthermore, over the last three years, Olivia has spearheaded a weekly bake sale program on Taco Tuesdays, generating over \$12,500 in funds. Portions



of these proceeds have been used to acquire and distribute Patriot Bucks, feminine products, and pantry items to the Long Beach VA Hospital. Additionally, funds have been used to support Wreaths Across America and provide gift certificates and gas cards to assist veterans in need. In her ongoing efforts, Olivia is always on the lookout to broaden her fundraising opportunities for active-duty military service members and community outreach programs.

Presently, Olivia is focused on a personal initiative titled "Sammy's Project," a tribute to her dear companion of 16 years. The initiative aims to raise funds for providing service and therapy dogs to military veterans who are facing challenges such as PTSD or other disabilities.

Olivia considers the ALA as an extended family, supporting and empowering her with the confidence needed to take on leadership responsibilities. Olivia's ambition for the coming year is centered around encouraging more juniors to engage in local and regional ALA activities that have a meaningful impact on veterans, active-duty military members, and their loved ones. She envisions developing and guiding a dedicated young group of volunteers committed to the well-being of service members and their families.



Wreaths Across America

Department of California Americanism Chair Cindy Rogers and District 25 President Barb Toth assisted in honoring and remembering our heroes at Riverside National Cemetery. With participation and support, a total of 10,284 wreaths were placed this year.

To get a jump start for 2024, please consider sponsoring a wreath for next year's National Wreaths Across America Day – Saturday, December 14, 2024. Please visit online WAA link directly: www.wreathsacrossamerica.org or contact your favorite WAA Sponsorship group.

*Cindy Rogers
Department Americanism Chair*

March 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6			
		12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Official Visit on the Calendar

American Legion Auxiliary President Lisa Williamson's official visit to California is scheduled for March 7—11. Watch for details!

Lots of informative and fun events are in the works!

Baby Shower Raises Over \$10,000 in Donations!

I want to send sincere thanks to all members who brought baby shower gifts to our ALA Baby Shower held during the Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting on January 19. It was a huge success! We are so blessed to have many caring members.

We had over \$8,000 worth of items and that was just what we were able to showcase. When all is finished, Travis Air Force Base will receive over \$10,000 worth of baby items.

This chairman is beyond grateful. I hope everyone enjoyed the game as well as the sweet treat donated by Pinkberry!

*Maureen O'Brien-Sacco
Department Children & Youth Chair*



ALA California Girls State and Americanism - How We Spread the Word!

American Legion Auxiliary California Girls State is all about Americanism. It starts from the time our delegates arrive and lasts long after our session is over.

Our curriculum is grounded in democracy. Our young leaders build their own city, county, and state governments from the ground up. They learn about the importance of civil discussion and debate to share ideas and speak on hot topics, in order to present legislation or write platforms.

All delegates become citizens of our Girls State, and as citizens understand the responsibility of active civic engagement. All citizens participate in the process by voting, running for office, and taking on the tasks of running the city, county, and state. They see how they can impact their own communities, and that our democracy relies on their active engagement.

In addition to our basic curriculum, we also provide many opportunities to spread Americanism:

- Citizens are taught proper flag etiquette. Each morning and evening our citizens raise and lower the flag with all participants present. A veteran tribute is offered at each raising and lowering, and the Pledge of Allegiance is recited each morning.
- Every participant is given an honor button with a photo of a veteran of their choosing. Most select a family member or treasured friend, and some select a famous American. We all proudly wear our honor buttons and share the stories of the honorees.

- The POW/MIA table staged in a place of honor, and the ceremony is present.

- ALA members share the poppy story, and each participant receives a poppy. Because the citizens understand meaning, these poppies become treasured mementos.

- We honor our Gold Star and Blue Star citizens by having special opportunities for them to meet and be recognized. Each Gold/Blue Star citizen presents a photo slide at our closing ceremony honoring their family member.

- Citizens learn about the American Legion Auxiliary, our programs, and impact. Qualified Girls State citizens are urged to join.

Each year we have a service project tied to our Department President's special project. Last year all citizens wrote cards of appreciation to veterans returning on Honor Flights. They included gift cards with small denominations for coffee and the like.

We often hear from our alumnae who share that the experience at ALA California Girls State helped guide them toward their futures. They state that participation in ALA CAGS raised their civic knowledge and positively impacted their level of civic engagement. This is our ultimate goal at ALA California Girls State.

As you can see, ALA California Girls State IS Americanism in action!



ALA National Vice President, Trish Ward makes over 500 honor buttons each year for our citizens and staff.



ALA California Girls State citizens prepare to raise the flag.

*Valerie Hardy
ALA Western Division Americanism Chair
ALA California Girls State Director*

District 28 Welcomes Madame President

American Legion Auxiliary District 28 had the privilege of hosting Department President Glenda Schultz January 13 to 14.

Some of the activities planned were a tour of our local Veterans Transition Center (VTC) in Marina, a lovely lunch at the Bayonet Golf Course, and a visit to the Central Coast Veteran's Cemetery.

The tour of the VTC in Marina was very educational as there has been so much accomplished there with the improvements and expansions of their programs. No veteran or family is turned away and the stats are very impressive. We were able to see the construction site where more beds will be available to our veterans in the near future.

The luncheon was great to have one-on-one time with Madame President and each other.

The Central Coast Veteran's Cemetery was breath taking. There was a feeling of love and respect paid to our local veterans and their families.

What a blessing the day was for us all!

*Rosemary Barron
District 28 Historian*



DEC 2024: Impressions of a First Timer

The Department Executive Committee (DEC) met January 19-21 at the Doubletree in Sacramento. It was a long, rainy weekend for everyone especially for a first timer not familiar with the layout of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of California above district level.

One thing I noticed right away was the camaraderie, many coming together as old friends. Attendees were ready for fun, yet knowing the importance of getting the department business done.

There were "ah ha" moments, looking at old concepts in a new way or seeing the same thread throughout as the weekend developed. Seeing how so many women can get so much done with ingenuity, fortitude and friendship was inspiring.

Some things learned were new to me, and I had to research further. Some I questioned, and others I got a new understanding of and appreciation for by the end of the weekend.

There is always a lot more to learn about any organization. Despite differences within the ALA, the goal is always the same: "In the spirit of service, not self, to do as much as we can for our veterans." We continue to do what we can individually and with our sisters in service.

Elise Spleiss



Congratulations to Unit 249 member **Hannah Neeley** who was sworn into the USAF on January 23, 2024. As a Junior she attended Girls State. Hannah is the granddaughter of Grace Huston.

The Unit is extremely proud of her!

February is Americanism Month



Americanism is pride and love of our country and is not just a word; it is a cause; a way of life practiced each day and month of the year through our thoughts and actions.

Practice patriotism in your home. Instill in your children the foundation for appreciating and understanding our governmental system. Our youth of today are our strength for democracy of tomorrow, so give them your needed guidance of Americanism to ensure their patriotism of the future.

Americanism month is simply a time to reflect on our freedom and a time to let the public, particularly our youth, know just how unique and special our land is and the freedom that all our veterans have given us.

Let's all have pride and dedication to protect and honor our American flag and display it proudly. "Ask not what our country can do for you, but what you can do for your country".

Presidents Day (February 19, 2024): remember to fly your flag proudly.

What can you do to promote Americanism:

- * Visit schools to participate in educating our students in proper display and retirement of our American flag. Hand out flag etiquette information.
- * Give certificates of recognition for participating in your school's Flag Corps.
- * Present Blue Star and Gold Star Banners.
- * Promote daily flying of the flag.
- * Replace American flags with certificates of appreciation for flying the flag to residents and businesses.
- * Present both National and Department essay contests to schools or other community organizations.

Deadline Dates:

- * March 01: Units pick-up essays from schools.
- * March 22: Units forward the winner only to District Chairman for Judging.
- * April 19: District Chairmen forward winner only to Department Chairman for judging.

Cindy Rogers, Department Americanism Chairman

Save the Date

February

Americanism

- 02: Groundhog Day
- 03: Four Chaplains Day Interfaith Service
- 04: USO Birthday
- 11: Super Bowl Sunday
- 12—16 : National Salute to Veteran Patients
- 13: Mardi Gras
- 14: Valentine's Day
- 19: Presidents Day
- 19: Coast Guard Reserve Birthday

March

Community Service

- 03: Navel Reserve Birthday
- 04: Hug a GI Day
- 05: Seabee Birthday
- 07—11: National President's Visit
- 10: Daylight Saving Time
- 13: K9 Veterans Day
- 17: St. Patrick's Day
- 21: Rosie the Riveter Day
- 24: Palm Sunday
- 25: Medal of Honor Day
- 29: National Vietnam War Veterans Day
- 31: Easter



Photo Judy Evridge