



Centennial Media Toolkit



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100 Years of *Service Not Self*

The American Legion Auxiliary will turn 100 on Nov. 10, 2019. Our milestone celebration comes a few months after The American Legion celebrated its centennial in March.

The American Legion was founded after the end of World War I in Paris, France. In September of that year, the United States Congress chartered The American Legion. Several women's organizations wanted to become the official affiliate of the Legion. Instead of associating with an existing organization, the Legion decided to create a new organization with the women most closely associated with the men of the Legion. The American Legion Auxiliary was founded at The American Legion's second convention on Nov. 10, 1919.

Since their establishments a century ago, the goals of both organizations have been to help veterans and their families. Today, The American Legion has more than 2 million members. The ALA boasts more than 600,000 members who spend millions of volunteer hours serving our mission every year.

The American Legion Auxiliary has stood alongside The American Legion as advocates for veterans' rights, including passage of the GI Bill, enhancing U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, and ending homelessness among veterans.

The ALA's 100th anniversary is a time not only to celebrate the achievements of the last century, but also to look ahead to our next century, whether you're an individual member or a unit, district/county, or department. A new generation of veterans, servicemembers, and their families will depend on the American Legion Auxiliary.

The purpose of this media toolkit is to help ALA units promote the centennial at the local community level. From planning the celebration to publicizing it, this toolkit can help units of any size. ALA National Headquarters has created templates that can assist you in spreading the news about your unit's events. These templates can be customized when accessed online.



WHERE TO START

Plan your celebrations

If you have not already done so, organize a centennial committee to plan how your unit will celebrate. We suggest members also join the American Legion Auxiliary 100th Anniversary Celebration Facebook group at www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAcentennial. This closed-group forum, a place where members-only can gather to discuss the centennial, is a great peer-to-peer resource for ideas on how to observe the ALA's 100th birthday. Centennial celebration events are perfect opportunities to recruit new members to help us begin our next century of service.

Promote your celebrations

Reach out to your local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. Designate a spokesperson for each event to talk to the media. Utilize your unit's social media accounts and encourage your members to share the unit's information and events on their personal social media accounts.

Ideas for celebrations

Celebrations don't have to be big. Decide what is appropriate for your unit. Some units may want a small celebration with a birthday cake. Others may decide to host a festival for the community. Consider adding a celebration to an event your unit already has planned. There are several things you can do to commemorate the centennial:

- Community open house – Invite residents of your local town or city for a good old-fashioned party. Be sure to have membership brochures visible and available as take-aways. A community event for the public is a great way to recruit new members, volunteers, or donors.
- Ask your town mayor, city council, or chamber of commerce to proclaim an American Legion Auxiliary centennial day. A template for a proclamation is included in this media toolkit.
- Host a dinner or dance at your American Legion post home.
- Host a community festival. Invite vendors in the community to set up booths.
- Organize a centennial blood drive, canned-good, or toy drive.
- Host a birthday party.
- Invite members to a crafting event.

- Ask local businesses to let your unit create a window display. The display can contain historical items and pictures related to your unit and the community. Or you can paint a display on the windows.
- Host a centennial tea. Make it a recruiting event by inviting potential members.
- Volunteer to host a cleanup day at a local park. Wear ALA branded t-shirts so others know who you are.
- Host a centennial picnic. Invite families from your unit, your post, and the community. Create old-fashioned games for families to play. Wear your branded clothing and hang banners in celebration of the 100th.
- Create a centennial display booth at county fairs or other community events. Have members take shifts at the booth to answer questions and tell visitors who we are, why we matter, and what we do.
- Have a float in a parade, or have members carry a banner in a parade and toss out candy.
- Plant a centennial garden. Consider doing this at your post home in a community garden.

Materials to have available at centennial events

- American Legion Auxiliary At a Glance brochure
- The American Legion Family membership brochure
- ALA Youth Programs brochure
- ALA membership application

All of these publications are available by sending a request to your ALA Department Headquarters. Visit www.ALForVeterans.org/About/Department-State-Headquarters to see a listing of contact information.



American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Message Points

- The American Legion Auxiliary was founded Nov. 10, 1919, a few months after The American Legion was founded after the end of World War I in Paris, France. The American Legion is chartered by Congress.
- The American Legion Auxiliary has more than 600,000 members. The ALA consists of more than 8,000 units, 52 departments (states), and 5 divisions.
- 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 meaningful volunteer opportunities within our communities.
 - To empower our membership to achieve personal fulfillment through *Service Not Self*.
- The American Legion Family includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and American Legion Riders.
- Focus areas of the American Legion Auxiliary are advocacy for veterans, veterans/military support, military families, and youth development.
- The value of American Legion Auxiliary members' volunteer service each year is estimated at \$1.1 billion.
- ALA members volunteer more than 12 million hours each year.



Sample Media Advisory

American Legion Auxiliary Unit (your unit number here) planning celebration of ALA's 100th anniversary

For Immediate Release

WHO	American Legion Auxiliary (NAME) Unit (UNIT NUMBER)
WHAT	The American Legion Auxiliary Unit (UNIT NUMBER) is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the organization with several events. The events will include: (LIST OF EVENTS GOES HERE)
WHEN	(DAY/DATE/LOCAL START TIME)
WHERE	(ADDRESS FOR EACH EVENT)
WHY	Founded in 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) helps to advance the mission of The American Legion. With more than 600,000 members, the ALA is one of the nation's most prominent supporters of veterans, military, and their families. ALA members volunteer millions of hours annually, with a value averaging \$1.1 billion each year. From helping to draft the GI Bill in 1944 to advocating for veterans on Capitol Hill, The American Legion Family has been instrumental in advancing legislation that improves the quality of life for our nation's veterans.
HOW	Learn more about the ALA online at www.ALForVeterans.org and (YOUR UNIT'S WEBSITE ADDRESS, IF APPLICABLE) Call (NAME AND PHONE NUMBER) Email (EMAIL ADDRESS)

Contact: (NAME, PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL)



Sample Press Release

**American Legion Auxiliary Unit (your unit number here)
to celebrate centennial**

(CITY) (Month date, year) – The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is turning 100, and American Legion Auxiliary Unit (UNIT NUMBER) in (CITY) is planning to celebrate.

The American Legion Auxiliary was founded in 1919 to support the mission of The American Legion. Following the formation of The American Legion, several existing women’s organizations wanted to become affiliated with the Legion. Instead of joining with a pre-existing group, the Legion decided to build a new organization from the ground up made up of those most closely associated with the Legion. In less than one year, 1,342 local units of the American Legion Auxiliary were formed in 45 states.

Today, the ALA has nearly 600,000 members and more than 8,000 units nationwide. From helping to draft the GI Bill in 1944 to advocating for veterans on Capitol Hill, The American Legion Family has been instrumental in advancing legislation that improves the quality of life for our nation’s veterans.

ADD HISTORY OF YOUR LOCAL UNIT

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Sample Proclamation

American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Day Community Proclamation

WHEREAS, The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a wartime veterans organization based on the four pillars of care for veterans, national security, Americanism, and children & youth; and

WHEREAS, The members of the American Legion are dedicated to upholding the ideals of freedom and democracy, while working to make a difference in the lives of fellow Americans; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Auxiliary was also founded in 1919 to support The American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.

WHEREAS, The American Legion Auxiliary is celebrating its centennial in 2019-2020;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, (NAME), (POSITION OR TITLE) of the (CITY OR STATE) of (CITY OR STATE), do hereby proclaim (DATE) as "American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Day."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of (NAME OF CITY OR STATE) on this (NUMBER) day of (MONTH), (YEAR).

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Sample Press Release Following Proclamation

(City) proclaims (date) ‘American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Day’

(CITY) (Month date, year) – The mayor of (city) has declared (DATE, YEAR), to be “American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Day.”

During presentation of the proclamation, (NAME) praised the American Legion Auxiliary, the world’s largest patriotic service organization, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary Nov. 10, 2019. Following the formation of The American Legion, a number of women’s organizations wanted to become the official affiliation of the veterans service organization. However, the Legion decided a new organization should be created that consisted of those most closely associated with the men of the Legion, and that these women would serve with their organization in peace as they had in war.

The Legion then created the Auxiliary in 1919.

The American Legion Auxiliary has more than 600,000 members and is one of the nation’s most prominent supporters of veterans, military, and their families. From helping to draft the GI Bill in 1944 to advocating for veterans on Capitol Hill, The American Legion has been instrumental in advancing legislation that improves the quality of life for our nation’s veterans.

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Media contact: (name, office, phone number, email address of an ALA member who can be available for media requests)



Sample 30-Second Radio PSA

In 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary was formed as an affiliate of The American Legion. For 100 years, the American Legion Auxiliary has supported America's veterans, servicemembers, and their families – putting service before self. As the American Legion Auxiliary begins a new century of service, Unit (NAME, NUMBER) of (YOUR TOWN/CITY NAME) is as committed as ever to serve veterans, servicemembers, and their families in the community. Visit www.ALforVeterans.org to find out how you can become a member, a volunteer, or a donor.



Sample Social Media Posts

Social media is a great way to increase visibility for your unit's event. Ask members to repost on their personal pages. Below are some samples of what you can use on social media to promote your event. Be sure to add a photo to go along with your promo.

1. Save the date! American Legion Auxiliary Unit (number) is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the ALA with a birthday party. Help us celebrate on (date/time/place). All are welcome. #ALA100 #AmericanLegionAuxiliary
2. It's time to celebrate! American Legion Auxiliary Unit (number) is hosting a birthday party this (day/date). We will have games, door prizes, and of course, birthday cake! Bring your friends and family to help us celebrate the 100th anniversary of the American Legion Auxiliary. #ALA100 #AmericanLegionAuxiliary
3. American Legion Auxiliary Unit (number) in (town) invites the community to an open house at Post (number). Help us celebrate the American Legion Auxiliary's 100th anniversary and learn more about who we are, who we serve, and how you can join us. #ALA100 #AmericanLegionAuxiliary
4. Spread the word! Be on the lookout for window displays at (business in town) that celebrate the American Legion Auxiliary's 100th anniversary. Take pictures of the display and share it with us and your page! #ALA100 #AmericanLegionAuxiliary
5. Are you going to the (name of parade) on (date) in (town)? Be on the lookout for the American Legion Auxiliary's float. We will be tossing out candy. Take a picture of us and post it here! #ALA100 #AmericanLegionAuxiliary



Speech to Explain ALA History and Mission

Hello, I'm (name) with American Legion Auxiliary Unit (unit number).

I'm here to tell you about the American Legion Auxiliary ... an organization celebrating a century of service in 2019-2020.

We are part of The American Legion Family, which includes not only The American Legion, but the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and American Legion Riders.

None of these organizations would exist without The American Legion. All were created as veterans support organizations.

The American Legion Auxiliary was founded November 10, 1919, just a few months after The American Legion.

The American Legion was formed following World War I by combat troops of the American Expeditionary Forces in Paris, France, in 1919. The Legion was later chartered by Congress. The Legion served as a support group, a social club, and an extended family for former servicemen.

After its formation, several women's organizations wanted to become the official affiliation of The American Legion. However, after taking this into consideration, members of The American Legion decided that a new organization should be formed. The Legionnaires wanted this new organization to be made up of the women most closely associated with the men of the Legion. It was then that the American Legion Auxiliary was established.

In less than one year, more than 1,300 local units were organized in more than 45 states. Today, the American Legion Auxiliary is the world's largest patriotic service organization.

The ALA has more than 600,000 members nationwide.

Our mission is to support The American Legion and serve veterans, military, and their families ... a mission that has remained unchanged for 100 years.

You can find ALA members across the country helping military families cope with the effects of multiple deployments.

Members show compassion to injured and homeless veterans by providing resources in their communities.

The ALA co-sponsors the annual National Veterans Creative Arts Festival with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This nationwide program at VA medical facilities is a form of rehabilitative treatment to help veterans with physical and emotional disabilities.

American Legion Auxiliary programs teach our youth how to be good citizens.

Units across the country conduct Junior Activities programs to help younger members develop leadership skills.

Our Children & Youth program recognizes kids who perform a heroic act of physical bravery with the Youth Hero Award. The ALA's Good Deed Award recognizes those who contributed in a special way to society through community service.

High school juniors learn how to become leaders at ALA Girls State programs and at ALA Girls Nation.

American Legion Auxiliary members volunteer more than 12 million hours each year. The estimated value of volunteer service is \$1.1 billion.

We invite you to join us today by becoming a member, a volunteer, or an advocate for the American Legion Auxiliary and its mission.

You can help use move forward into our next century of *Service Not Self*.

Look for us at www.ALForVeterans.org.