



*History*  
*Karla Otterness*  
*Department Historian*

The heart of every organization lies in its history. The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota has a rich history documented in minutes, newspaper article and photographs. It is an explanation put in chronological order of who we are and what we do.

Our job as **Unit Historian** is to record accurate information about our Unit. Historians will have an easier time when they write their reports, if they document all year on a timeline, notebook or calendar. Items that historian should report on are: special events in meetings, dinners, special guest, articles in the paper, declaration for poppy month, media coverage, contests your Unit holds. Also remember those auxiliary members who go above and beyond in volunteering.

Check the following before writing your history:

- **Checkbook** - Checkbooks record money that is spent or taken in, but you can also find dates, places, names and what you do in your Unit.
- **Cell phone** - using your cell phone camera to take photos of documents or events.
- **Minutes** - ask you secretary if you can get a copy or look at her minutes to find data.
- **Facebook** - has a lot of information that is posted in chronological order.
- **Newspaper clippings** - ask for help with collecting newspaper articles on your Unit. Then store them in one location.
- **E-mails** - star your emails that apply to history.
- **District newsletters** - are a fantastic resource to recall information.

As Historian, add something to your chairmanship, bring some history to your unit, have fun.

- In honor of our fast approaching 100<sup>th</sup> year, read an article or minutes from your Units charter year. See how different we are.
- Play believe or not, ask a question that pertains to your unit's history. Make the question true or false. Have a small treat for the member who guesses right.
- Every month the American Legion Auxiliary highlights a different chairmanship, find the oldest fact about that chairmanship to report.

These should only be 5 to 10 minutes long. Make learning fun.

Another thing our historians should start considering is our local 100-year celebration. Do you know where your past memorabilia, minutes, scrapbooks, pictures, flags, pins, awards and important documents and signs are? Take the time to lay them out for your members to look at during a meeting. Take inventory and give a copy to several members for safe keeping. Plan on making a display for your post home. If your Unit does not have a post home, consider the library, city hall or work with your local historical society. Maybe host cookies and coffee or

wine and appetizers at this event. Make sure your older veterans and auxiliary members can attend.

Veterans History Project is a way to preserve the personal accounts of American war veterans. Our local Units are encouraged to support the Veterans History Project. Capturing our veteran's stories will ensure that future generations of Americans will know the true history of events.

For detailed information on how to proceed, visit Veterans History Project website at <http://www.loc.gov/vets/kit.html>

Celebrate Women's History Month in March, it's another way to have fun and educate our members. Get several friends to dress up the part of famous historical ladies and do a skit. Rosie Riveter, Clara Barton, Betsy Ross just to name a few.

Remember all the extra events you put towards your chairmanship that you will want to document and report.

### **This year we have a Department History Project**



Many of our photographs from the early 1920's are in desperate need of repair. The collection of photos that capture who we were, are priceless and beautiful. Unfortunately, some of the rarest and most precious photos are in poor condition and in need of professional restoration. All the photos should be placed in archival quality storage boxes to help prevent further deterioration. We also will be working with Hastings Veterans Home for picture frames and display cabinets to house our memorabilia, photos and documents from the

Department of  
been given  
funds from  
help preserve our  
your donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Department of  
Minnesota, State Veterans Service Building, 20 West 12th Street Room 314  
St. Paul, MN 55155. In the memo put History Project. We thank you in  
advance.

Photo vanishing on top  
Minnesota Convention 1922

Minnesota. We have  
permission to solicit  
members and Units to  
memories. Please send



Brittle photo is in three pieces

*Historians, your year-end reports are very important to Department of Minnesota and National but so is having fun in our Units. It will help keep members wanting to come back. Make this year special.*

#### *Resources -*

Department of Minnesota web-site <http://www.mnala.org/>  
Department Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/mnala.org/>  
National website <http://www.alaforveterans.org>  
Veterans History Project through the Library of congress: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

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