



Department of Minnesota September 2025 Unit Mailing Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)

As a program chairman, I have learned so much with each new program I chaired. VA&R is not going to be any different – I have already learned a lot, I am learning, and I will continue to learn throughout the entire year. I hope you will join me on this adventure.

You have probably heard me sing (not out loud) the praises of each of my previous chairman programs, but I am looking forward to the VA&R and I will be singing its praises, too. Not that you can always believe what you read on the internet, but it did know that we had eight veterans home, which makes us very fortunate because it also told me that there is a total of 173 in the United States, which means we have a lot more than the average of 3.3. We also have four VA Medical Centers that serve our Minnesota veterans with their medical needs.

Our eight veteran facilities are home to over 700 veterans and spouses, all with long waiting lists. Our four VA Medical Centers can house over 600 patients at any one time. Every one of these twelve facilities has an Auxiliary representative that works within their walls to ensure that help is available. They cannot do it alone and I know that lots of our Auxiliary members volunteer at the facilities. I would like to encourage more of our members to volunteer. There is no minimum time requirement because any time spent volunteering is so worthwhile for our veterans and for ourselves.

VA&R is an opportunity for members and units to give financially to those brave men and women that served our country. The VA&R program varies within the homes. Some provide personal items they need; some provide for daily activities. I hope over the next months to introduce our 12 ALA home reps. They can tell us what they do and what our veterans need. No matter what we provide for our veterans, donations are always welcome. Some units donate money to a specific home, which is fine. General donations to the VA&R program go to support our ALA programs within our state's homes. Either way, I ask that you send any donations to the Department Office, so it counts towards our donation dollars.

All national program chairman put out their program plans and VA&R has a few and they are very doable in Minnesota. How many of you quilt? How many of you or your unit have been involved in a Quilt of Valor? I know that quilting is popular in Minnesota. I plan to be sure all units understand this program and I would like to list all veterans that are honored with a quilt this year.

Several of our auxiliary members participated in the Wreaths Across America at Fort Snelling. It is a national program that places wreaths on graves (in the snow, by the way). Again, I am sure that they will be looking for volunteers again later this year.

Robin's project is the Honor Flight program. This has been around for many years and the stories I have heard about those that were privileged to go are heartwarming. Please support her project.

Any time that you or your unit participate in any of our programs that work with veterans, you are honoring them. Your membership in the American Legion Auxiliary honors your family member who served our country. The possibilities to accomplish this are endless. Many don't take a lot of funds – just your time. I hope to encourage all units to get involved.

I encourage all units to submit a VA&R report to your District Chairman. That way the chairman can submit her report to me. I hope to receive a report from each district this year. Thanks in advance.

Linda Kelly, VA&R Chairman