

# American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC

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2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT



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## Overview

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC is one of 8,600 American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) chapters in the world's largest women's patriotic service organization. Unit 1, formally chartered in 2013, is committed to serving veterans, servicemembers, their families and the metro DC area. While concentrated in the metro-DC area, our membership is spread across DC and four states. This report highlights the service of our members in the 2015-2016 programming year, which ran from April 2015 through March 2016.

## 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, servicemembers 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.

## Message from the President

*Victoria Pridemore is a charter member of ALA Unit 1 in DC, and she has served as president since we started the formation process in 2012. Eligible in her own right, Victoria joined through her service in the Army National Guard during the current conflicts.*

ALA Unit 1 in DC has once again enjoyed a very successful year here in DC! Our members are dedicated to bettering the lives of veterans, servicemembers and their families through both volunteer work and their full-time employment. Several of our members work in fields where they are able to directly affect the lives of veterans and their families in positive ways.

Unit 1 is proud that our volunteer work also reflects this passion and we are able to provide such a unique perspective to the organization as a whole. Unit 1 prides itself in working with other organizations to increase the impact we can make from our small numbers. This year we worked with organizations like Team Red, White and Blue, by providing them with much needed water on their 9/11 Day Memorial Run, and with the George Washington University's Veterans Day of Service, by helping local homeless veterans and an elementary school. Our members have also provided many hours of service personally, outside of our organized events. These hours spent truly show the passion our membership has for the ALA's mission. As we move into the next year, our membership remains small, but our passion is stronger than ever!



**Figure 1.** (Counterclockwise from the top left) Director of the DC Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs Tammi Lambert, Vice President Lauren Lloyd, President Victoria Pridemore and Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Riegsecker pose for a photo before the start of George Washington University's Veterans Day of Service.

In the Spirit of Service, Not Self,

*Victoria*

## Members' Collective Impact

Auxiliary members serve in the community without fanfare. Each month, we ask members to report their volunteer service, formally with Unit 1 or on their own, benefiting veterans, servicemembers, their families and the community. The below table includes what members reported and the unit's support programs. This year, our members more than doubled the number of volunteer hours from last year. *Note:* There was not 100% reporting of members.

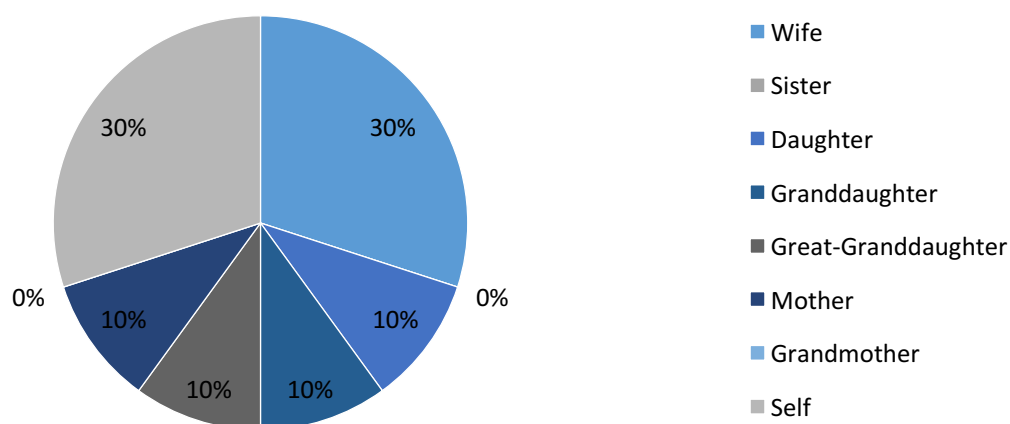
	Veterans	Veteran Families	Service-members	Military Families	Community	Total
<b>Hours Volunteered</b>	260	221	168	164	173	<b>986</b>
<b>Dollars Spent</b>	\$630.00	\$165.00	\$25.00	\$300.00	\$100.00	<b>\$1,220.00</b>
<b>In-Kind Donations Requested</b>	\$300.00	\$200.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$240.00	<b>\$940.00</b>
<b>Number Served</b>	353	37	76	29	<i>Not Reported</i>	<b>495</b>

## Demographic Look at Our Membership

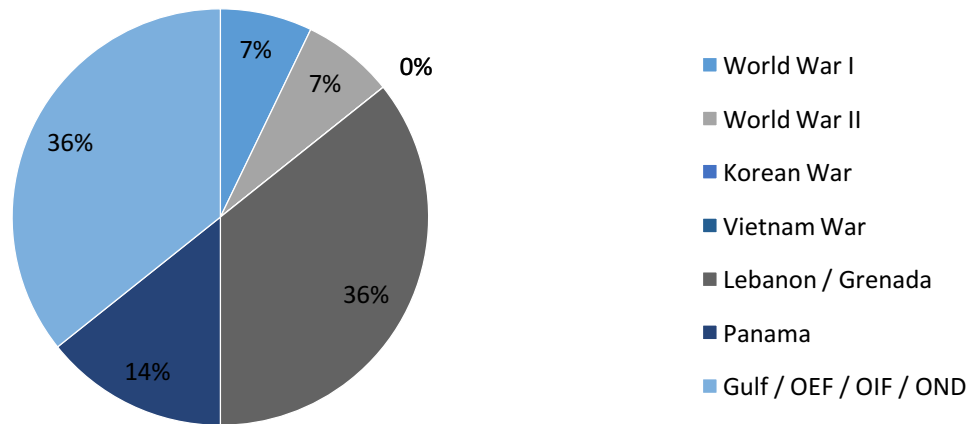
All Auxiliary members are direct female relatives of veterans/servicemembers or female veterans/servicemembers themselves. The largest proportion of our membership is eligible through their husband's service or their own service (30% each). Additionally, nearly three-quarters of our eligible veterans have served in the Gulf War / the Current Conflicts and Lebanon / Grenada (36% each).

Our members have belonged to Auxiliary for an average of 6.6 years. We have an average age of 47 years old.

### Member's Relation to Eligible Veteran



### Conflict Period(s) Eligible Veteran Served In



### Committee Reports

Nationally, the Auxiliary's efforts are broken into several mission outreach, member support and administrative committees. We have listed the committees alphabetically for convenience.

#### American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund

*Provides grants to American Legion Auxiliary members who qualify for specific types of emergency assistance.*

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC prompted awareness and knowledge of the emergency fund to our members. We donated \$1 per member renewing/joining for the 2016 membership year to the national Auxiliary Emergency Fund. We also developed a fact sheet about the fund for our members, with information on how to apply if they find themselves in need.

#### Community Service

*Engages our members and the community in service with and for veterans, servicemembers and their families.*

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC mobilized The American Legion Family and local volunteers in community service to benefit veterans, servicemembers and their families with our commitment to at least one service project a month.

Members spent three Saturdays between May and July 2015 greeting Honor Flights as they arrive in DC at Reagan



**Figure 2. Vice President Lauren Lloyd greets Honor Flights at Reagan National Airport.**

National Airport and at the World War II Memorial. We greeted between one and three flights each day. It was undeniably moving to greet these World War II and Korean War veterans. Veterans know their friends and family members will greet them at their home airport, but they are always so astonished to see so many people who take time out of their day to greet them in DC! Similarly, members volunteered with Elroy Veterans Center's trip to DC and helped guide them around the national memorials.



**Figure 3.** Team Red, White and Blue member and Legionnaire Bill Rausch displays an ALA-labeled water bottle at the 9/11 Event at the Pentagon Memorial.

For the 9/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance, we provided bottles of water to the Team Red, White and Blue members as they stopped at the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial on their run. We relabeled the bottles to indicate the water was donated by the Auxiliary, what the Auxiliary is and how they could find out more information about us.

ALA Unit 1 in DC volunteered with several collaborators to serve veterans, servicemembers and their families. We volunteered with Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 641 to wash the Vietnam Wall for their monthly wash in July and October. Additionally, members joined National Guardsmen in the 29th Infantry Division to organize the Habitat for Humanity ReStore warehouse.

We continued to strengthen our collaboration with the George Washington University's Office of Military and Veteran Student Services by providing volunteers and support for their events. In April, members participated in the Military Memorial Mile March (M4), designed to bridge the gap between student veterans, servicemembers and civilians by walking the National Mall as one, hearing stories of Medal of Honor recipients and greeting Honor Flights. In August, members volunteered to setup, serve lunch and break down the student orientation celebrations for GI Bill recipients and their families at the VALOR Tailgate. In October, members participated in the college's Veterans Day of Service, a day of service focused on sites coordinated by or serving veterans, servicemembers and their families.

We continued to strengthen our collaboration with the George Washington University's Office of Military and



**Figure 4.** Officers Lauren Lloyd and Sharon Riegsecker stand with their volunteer team at George Washington University's Veterans Day of Service at Cleveland Elementary School.



Members volunteered at projects serving homeless veterans and an elementary school where the principal is a veteran. In March, members volunteered at The Pitch, an all-day interview completion for military-connected students (veterans, servicemembers and dependents) to practice their interview and business skills; we helped man the registration table for participants and companies, as well as took pictures of the event.

Members continued to participate in a DC Community Collaborative of nonprofits to benefit veterans, servicemembers and their families in the metro DC area.

## Children and Youth

*Promotes programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans.*

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC volunteers in support of programs benefiting our local children and youth.



**Figure 5.** Vice President Lauren Lloyd (right), with her husband and several Marines, close a crate of sorted toys ready for distribution with Toys for Tots.

Members volunteered together to support Toys for Tots, a program of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves which provides toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them Christmas presents. In addition to recommending members and supporters donate to the Toys for Tots program, we joined local Marines and other volunteers to help sort and bag toys for distribution.

Additionally, a member volunteered with a local Girl Scout troop comprised of young women who are in the foster care system. She volunteered to help them with cookie sales and their activities for World Thinking Day, a day designed to help see how they can make a difference in places they care about.

## Education

*Fosters learning for children in our own community, with a focus on the children of our servicemembers and veterans.*

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC prompted quality education for military children and schools serving military children.

In addition to raising awareness of the National President's Scholarship in the metro DC area through our various tabling and outreach events, contacts, social media accounts and website, we donated \$1 per member renewing/joining for the 2016 membership year to the scholarship fund.

Our members collect Box Tops for Education, but we wondered how to best donate these Box Tops to serve our veterans' and servicemembers' families. We discovered a military family we previously supported during a deployment collects Box Tops for their childrens' school. The family is very happy to receive our donations of Box Tops.

## Legislative

*Fosters grassroots advocates for veterans, servicemembers and their families through supporting the legislative agenda and initiatives of The American Legion.*

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC is in a unique situation when it comes to working the Legislative program, as our members are scattered across several states. However, we are committed to supporting the legislative agenda of The American Legion. To our knowledge, The Legion's Department of DC has not adopted a local legislative agenda or pursued things like mayoral proclamations.

Our members subscribe to both the Weekly Legislative Update and Action Alerts provided by The Legion's national Legislative Division. When Action Alerts are received, our members jump into action to contact our senators and representatives.

Members also volunteered to manage the registration table for George Washington University's Office of Military and Veteran Student Services event (VALOR in Politics [VIP]) to encourage veterans to pursue a career in politics. Members were able to hear Rep. Duncan Hunter (CA-50) and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (HI-2); both are veterans who serve on the Armed Forces committee.



**Figure 6.** President Victoria Pridemore with Rep. Duncan Hunter (CA) at the George Washington University VALOR in Politics (VIP) Event.



## National Security

*Promotes a strong national defense, with a focus on supporting current servicemembers and their families.*

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC supported current servicemembers and their families through our own programming and volunteering with similar mission-focused organizations.



**Figure 7.** Volunteers with Unit 1, including our officers and American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps AmeriCorps VISTA Amanda Moore, break from cleaning-up following the TAPS balloon release for a group photo.

For Memorial Day, members and supporters participated in the balloon release for TAPS' annual Good Grief Camp. Together, we assisted with cleaning up the venue following the event.

For POW/MIA Remembrance Day, a member served as the Mistress of Ceremony for the DC Mayor's Office of Veteran Affairs' morning ceremony.

Members were invited to man an information table on the ALA's programs and services at Wounded Warrior event at Walter Reed Medical Center. The event focused on letting wounded warriors and their caregivers know about programs and services that could assist them.

## Public Relations

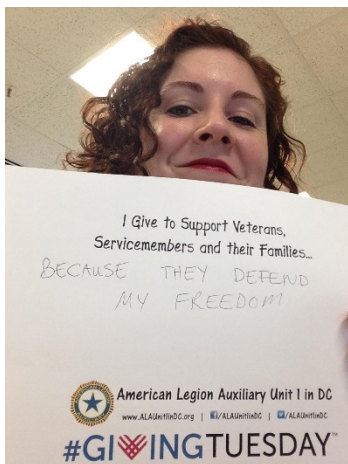
*Promotes who we are, what we do and why we matter.*

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC worked hard to promote awareness and a positive image of the American Legion Auxiliary through various electronic mediums. We maintain a monthly newsletter, website and Facebook and Twitter accounts; our followers and subscribers have increased across all platforms.

Our newsletter is focused on upcoming volunteer opportunities, social events and other news to know. It is focused toward members, but anyone is invited to subscribe, and *nine-tenths* of our distribution list is made up of our community supporters and partners. ([Past issues can be found here.](#))

We continue to maintain and improve our [website](#); since April 1, our site has had over 1,600 U.S.-based visits. Both our Facebook and Twitter accounts share relevant information. This year, we've participated in two Thunderclaps hosted by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs to raise awareness on veterans' suicide during Suicide Prevention Month and celebrating Veterans Day, as well as by The American Legion to share that we are all #Accountable2Veterans.

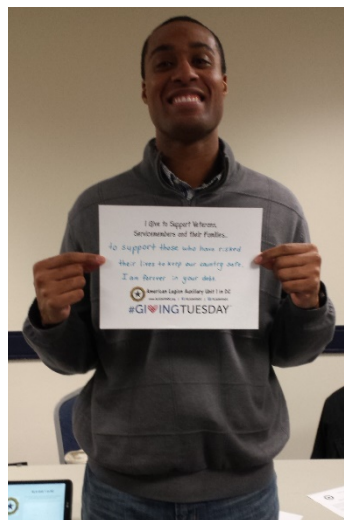
We continued our efforts on #GivingTuesday, a global social celebration of giving back on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, to raise awareness to why we give to support veterans, servicemembers and their families. Members and some of our supporters participated in our campaign. Participation in this campaign drastically increased our social media reach for the week; we engaged 1,700% more people than the week before on Facebook.



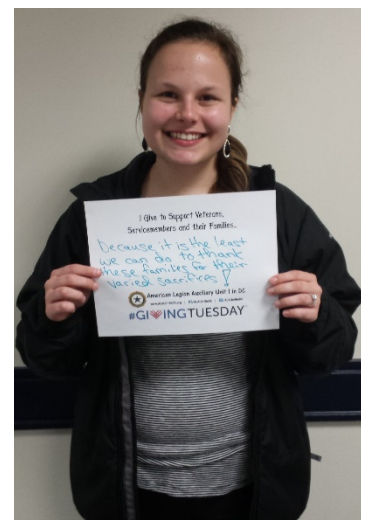
**Figure 8.** Diana Lazzell gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families because they defend our freedom.



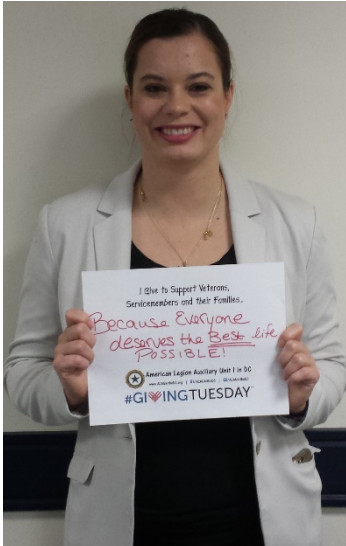
**Figure 9.** Supporter Heather gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families because America must honor those willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to ensure our freedoms.



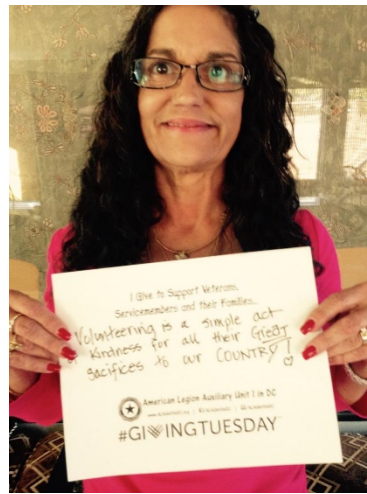
**Figure 10.** GW student Anthony Evans gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families to support those who have risked their lives to keep our country safe. Adding he's forever in their debt.



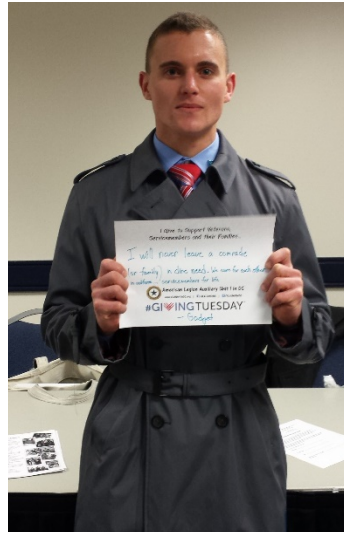
**Figure 11.** GW student Meaghan Wilson gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families because it's the least we can do to thank military families for their sacrifices.



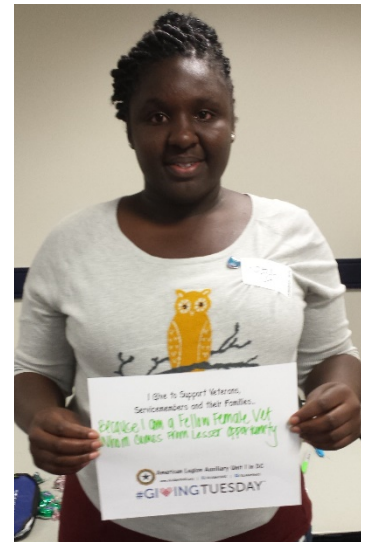
**Figure 12.** President Victoria Pridemore gives back to support veterans, servicemembers and their families because everyone deserves the best life possible.



**Figure 13.** Fellow ALA member Beverly Eads gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families because volunteering is a simple act of kindness for all their great sacrifices to our country! We care for each other in uniform... servicemembers for life.



**Figure 14.** GW student Matthew Basista gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families because he'll never leave a comrade (or family) in dire need.



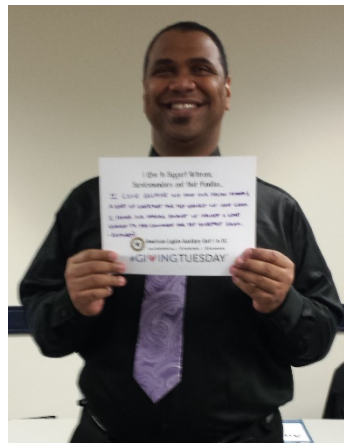
**Figure 15.** GW student Katie Alston gives to support her fellow veterans, servicemembers and their families.



**Figure 16.** Vice President Lauren Lloyd gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families to return all the good deeds and support military families receive.



**Figure 17.** National Legislative Chairman Lisa Williamson gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families in honor of her son's service!



**Figure 18.** GW student Antwain Thomas gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families because we owe our fellow veterans a debt of gratitude for the service given. He honors our veterans because they provide a great service to our community for the sacrifice given.



**Figure 19.** Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Riegsecker gives to support veterans, servicemembers and their families because freedom is not free.



## Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

*Promotes programs and services that assist and enhance the lives of veterans and their families, ensuring restoration and/or transition to normally functioning lives.*

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC has demonstrated our gratitude to veterans and their families through various activities. Our service to veterans focused around homeless alleviation and transitional housing; student veterans; and caregivers and individual veterans, as well as amplifying our voice for veterans.

## Homelessness Alleviation and Transitional Housing



**Figure 20.** Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Riegsecker and another volunteer help decorate the Southeast Veterans Service Center for the holidays.

Members joined volunteers from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Veterans Affinity Group to help serve Thanksgiving dinner at the Southeast Veterans Services Center, a co-ed facility for homeless veterans transitioning to permanent housing, and decorate the facility for the holidays by covering several doors with wrapping paper.

Additionally, members helped gather coats, hats and gloves for homeless veterans.

## Student Veterans

Our unit continued developing a working relationship with George Washington University's Office of Military and Veteran Student Services. This year, our members volunteered at their events, raising awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary to the students, comprised of veterans, current servicemembers and military dependents (recipients of the GI Bill). We also welcomed the students to attend our events. We tabled to promote the Auxiliary at a resource fair, promoting our volunteer events and resources. (See our [community service report](#) above for more information on how we volunteered with the Military Memorial Mile March [M4], a walk to bridge the gap between the military community and civilians; the VALOR Tailgate, the student orientation celebrations for GI Bill recipients and their families; the university's Veterans Day of Service, a day of service focused on sites coordinated by or serving veterans, servicemembers and their families; and the Pitch, an all-day interview completion for military connected students.)

### *Caregivers and Individual Veterans*

Several members provided respite and peace of mind care to the families and caregivers of various conflict periods. From the Persian Gulf era, members helped the family of a disabled veteran move furniture and prepare their home for Baby #2. Another member sat with two Korean War veterans, so their wives could take care of their personal needs. One of these veterans has Alzheimer's Disease, and with our member's support his wife has been able to take care of a death in the family, prepare for their anniversary party and attend her own doctor's appointments. The other veteran's wife was able to attend a family gathering because our member sat with him. Another member provided moral support for the son of a Vietnam veteran following his father's passing.

Members additionally donated to a veteran's fund to help him and his wife adopt.

### *Amplifying Our Voice for Veterans*

Members are also serving on community advisory boards to raise awareness of issues impacting veterans. One member serves as the vice chairman of the Mayor of DC's Veteran Advisory Board on Veterans Affairs; appointed by the mayor, this board advises the mayor and the District government departments, agencies and offices on all matters pertaining to veterans in DC. Another member serves on the advisory board for Veterans' Voices DC, a storytelling series by and for veterans in DC focused on the intersection of military service and civilian life. She helps coordinate speakers, resources and assists veterans, servicemembers and their families in sharing their stories with the community.

## Financial Information

### *Donor Acknowledgements*

All gifts play an important role in the success of ALA Unit 1 in DC, and we are enormously grateful to all those who believe in and support ALA Unit 1 in DC through financial donations. Every gift—regardless of size—ensures that we're able to provide services to local veterans, servicemembers and their families. This year's donors are:

★ Lisa Williamson

## Accounting Breakdown

### Money In (graphic is left to right for items in key)



**Dues Remittance: 90%**  
**Poppy Donations: 10%**

### Money Out (graphic is left to right for items in key)



**Membership Dues to Dept/National: 27%**  
**Veteran/Military Support Programs: 4%**  
**Postage: 1%**  
**Chaplain Expenses: 5%**  
**Dept. Convention Delegates Fees: 3%**  
**Donations to AEF: 3%**  
**Donations to Children of Warriors Scholarship: 3%**  
**Donations to Dept. President's Project: 3%**  
**Web Expenses: 17%**  
**Other: 35%**

REVENUE	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
<b>Dues Remittance</b>	\$450.00	\$525.17	\$386.55	\$257.17
<b>Donations—General</b>	\$405.00	\$1,205.00	\$25.00	—
<b>Donations—Poppy<sup>1</sup></b>	—	\$1,312.17	\$135.00	\$30.00
<b>Fundraisers</b>	—	\$19.33	—	—
<b>Events</b>	—	—	\$30.00	—
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	\$855.00	\$3,061.67	\$576.55	\$287.17

<sup>1</sup> In 2013-2014, there was a mailing of poppies to all Post 1 Family members. Starting in 2014-2015, donations were made to the “poppy fund” as a way to earmark money for direct-service veteran-focused programming.



EXPENSES	2012-2013 <sup>2</sup>	2013-2014	2014-2015 <sup>3</sup>	2015-2016
<b>Membership Dues to Department/National</b>	—	\$476.00	\$182.00	\$98.00
<b>Veteran and Military Support Programs</b>	—	\$352.02	\$697.89	\$14.63
<b>Family Support Programs</b>	—	\$226.79	\$25.00	—
<b>Fundraisers</b>	—	\$35.78	—	—
<b>Supplies</b>	—	\$1.14	—	—
<b>Postage</b>	—	\$83.98	\$49.05	\$3.94
<b>Pins (for officers and new members)</b>	—	\$40.00	—	—
<b>President's Expenses</b>	—	\$3.69	—	—
<b>Secretary/Treasurer's Expenses</b>	—	\$33.95	\$8.45	—
<b>Chaplain's Expenses</b>	—	—	\$13.71	\$18.96
<b>Dept. Convention Delegate Fees</b>	—	—	\$10.00	\$10.00
<b>Donations to AEF</b>	—	\$15.00	\$17.00	\$10.00
<b>Donations to Children of Warriors Scholarship</b>	—	\$15.00	\$17.00	\$10.00
<b>Donations to Dept. President's Project</b>	—	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$12.00
<b>Web Expenses</b>	—	\$59.39	\$60.39	\$61.39
<b>Others</b>	—	\$57.00	\$158.00	\$128.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	—	\$1,419.74	\$1,258.49	\$366.92

## Looking Ahead

Looking forward to the 2016-2017 programming year, we hope to:

- ★ Engage more veterans, servicemembers and their families, in service to our community.
- ★ Implement ALA-based programming and strengthen our work with similar organizations.
- ★ Increase our membership number, including recruiting sisters of veterans or servicemembers and those with eligibility stemming from the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

<sup>2</sup> Expenses from the 2012-2013 programming year were paid in the 2013-2014 programming year, due to delays beyond our control.

<sup>3</sup> Payment of some 2013-2014 programming expenses, such as donations to national funds, postage expenses and department convention delegate fees, were paid in the beginning of the 2014-2015 year.