

# American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC

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2017-2018 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, chartered in 2013, is committed to serving veterans, servicemembers and their families in the metro DC area. Our membership is spread across DC and four states. This report highlights the service of our members in the 2017-2018 programming year, which ran from April 2017 through March 2018.

## 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 sacrifices 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.

## Members' Collective Impact

Auxiliary members selflessly serve in the community. 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 table below includes what members reported and the unit's support programs. *Note:* Not all members reported.

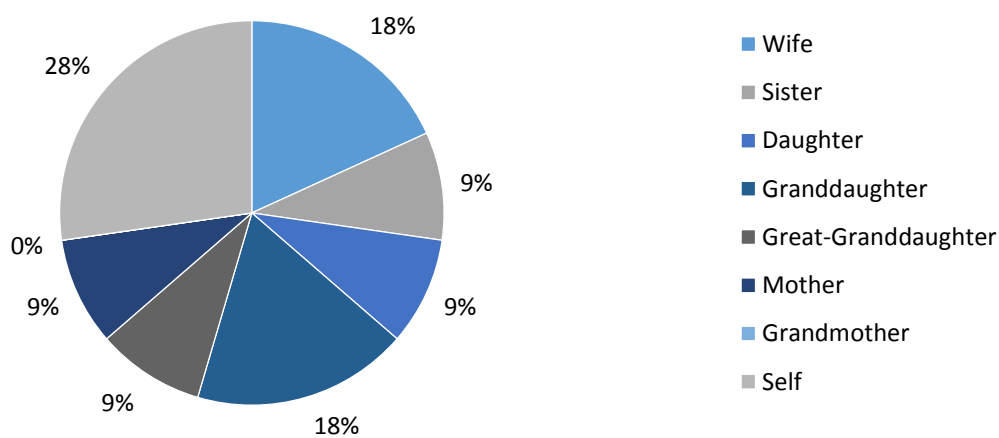
	Veterans	Veteran Families	Service-members	Military Families	Other Children & Youth	Community (Overall)	Total
<b>Hours Volunteered</b>	146	59	45	52	42	361	<b>705</b>
<b>Dollars Spent</b>	\$4,374.25	\$360.00	\$104.00	\$405.00	\$310.00	\$2,407.00	<b>\$7,960.25</b>
<b>In-Kind Donations Received</b>	\$2,740.00	\$175.00	\$0.00	\$115.00	\$750.00	\$1,468.00	<b>\$5,248.00</b>
<b>Number Served</b>	428	60	142	59	257	<i>Not Reported</i>	<b>945</b>

## Demographic Look at Our Membership

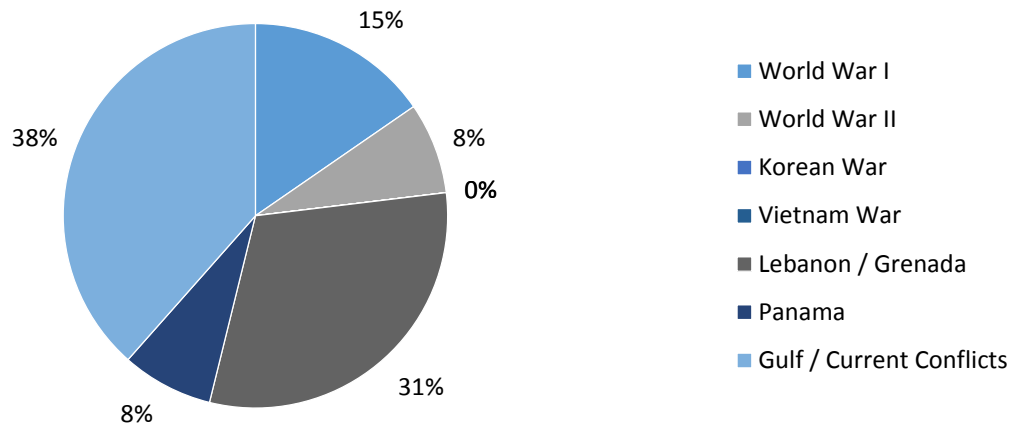
All Auxiliary members are direct female relatives of veterans/servicemembers or female veterans/servicemembers themselves. The largest proportion of our membership is eligible through their own service (28%). Additionally, just over one-third of our eligible veterans have served in the Gulf War and current conflicts.

Our members have belonged to Auxiliary for an average of 7.45 years. We have an average age of 48 years old.

### Member's Relation to Eligible Veteran



### Conflict Period(s) In Which Our Eligible Veterans Served



### Committee Reports

Nationally, the Auxiliary's efforts are broken into 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 promoted awareness and knowledge of the emergency fund to our members. We donated \$1 per member renewing or joining for the 2018 membership year to the national Auxiliary Emergency Fund. We circulated a fact sheet about the fund to our members, with information on how to apply.

#### 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 volunteered in support of programs benefiting our local children and youth.

Members supported 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 hundreds of toys for distribution.



**Figure 1.** President Victoria Pridemore joins with other volunteers to sort toys for Toys for Tots.

Additionally, members donated to an after school program to help with their youth mentoring program, and they mentored youth in DC's underserved area, where they taught life skills classes for middle school-aged girls.

### Community Service

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



**Figure 2.** Vice President Lauren Lloyd (left) and President Victoria Pridemore (center) help sort care kits for homeless community members on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC mobilized and joined 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.

For Days of Service, we supported a recipient of National Headquarters' September 11<sup>th</sup> National Day of Service and Remembrance grant. For Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, members joined Serve DC to stuff care kits for homeless people in our community. For Memorial Day, we volunteered for the National Memorial Day Parade; members welcomed and shuttled VIPs, the parade participants and the Civil Air Patrol volunteer leaders. Members also worked with the Civil Air Patrol to pass out programs along the parade route.

Our unit continued our relationship with George Washington University's Office of Military and Veteran Student Services and GW Veterans. This year, our members volunteered at their events, raising awareness of the ALA to students, comprised of veterans, current servicemembers and military dependents (recipients of the GI Bill). We also invited the students to attend our events. [See our [education report](#) 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, a student orientation celebration for GI Bill recipients and their families; and the college's Veterans Day of Service.]

In addition, our members volunteered with other groups in order to support veterans. In October, members served dinner to veterans and their guardians in town with Honor Flights at a local Knights of Columbus. In June, members joined ALA Unit 8 in DC to help with their monthly washing of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

Outside of ALA activities, our members also served on community advisory boards to raise awareness of issues impacting veterans, servicemembers and their families in the metro DC area. One member serves on the advisory board for Veterans' Voices DC, a monthly 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. Another member serves on the Mayor of DC's Service Commission; this commission ensures meaningful national service and volunteer service opportunities occur in our community. Additionally, we participate in a DC Community Collaborative of nonprofits to benefit veterans, servicemembers and their families in the metro DC area.

In support of our communities, members participated in a local walk to prevent suicide. Monies raised for this effort went to training crisis line volunteers, as well as other suicide prevention materials and trainings. Another member cut her hair short to donate her ponytail to a nonprofit organization that makes wigs for children with hair loss.



**Figure 3.** Vice President Lauren Lloyd washes one of the walls at the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.



## Education

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

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 in DC promoted quality education for military children and supported military-connected higher education students.

We continued our collaboration with George Washington University's Office of Military and Veteran Student Services and GW Veterans, the student veterans organization, by providing volunteer support for their events. In April, members participated in the Military Memorial Mile March (M4), which was 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 set up, assist in registration, serve lunch and break down the student orientation celebration for GI Bill recipients and their families at the VALOR Tailgate. In March, members participated in the college's Veterans Day of Service, a day focused on connecting the school's MilVet community with service opportunities in the community. Members helped sort and distribute bedding and baby clothes at a nonprofit focused on ending poverty in our community. Furthermore, a member serves as an advisor to GW Veterans.



**Figure 4.** Veterans visiting DC as part of Honor Flights pose for a photo at the World War II Memorial.

One member worked with a local homeschool co-op to collect homemade valentines for World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans. Another member is knowledgeable about the federal education benefits available to veterans; she offered a briefing these benefits to post-9/11 veterans.

We continued to donate \$1 per member renewing or joining for the 2018 membership year to the ALA National President's Scholarship Fund.

In addition, our members collected 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 that collects Box Tops for their children's school. This family was very happy to receive our donations of Box Tops and will continue to receive our Box Tops year-round.

### 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. The Legion's Department of DC has not adopted a local legislative agenda or pursued local issues such as 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 were received, our members jumped into action to contact our senators and representatives. Additionally, many of our members made phone calls and sent emails in support of the Legion's centennial commemorative coin from the U.S. Mint.

### 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 and coordinated events with similar mission-focused organizations in order to provide support for current servicemembers and their families. For the family of a deployed Post 1 Family member, the unit sent a gift card to their favorite restaurant in appreciation of their service.



Members also babysat for military children, helped wrap presents for a military family's children, coordinated an outreach dinner for local military families, helped make introductions for military children looking to intern in the area, provided meals for military families going through a PCS (permanent change of station or when a military family moves every few years), and organized a birthday dinner for a military spouse whose servicemember was deployed.

We also promoted donating blood as often as possible to our members and supporters in order to prevent a general shortage in our communities and to ensure our communities are prepared for a disaster. Similarly, we promoted DC's Snow Team, which pairs community members with senior citizens to help by shoveling snow off their walkways if we have a significant downfall.

## 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 digital channels. We maintain a monthly e-newsletter, website and Facebook and Twitter social media accounts. We are happy to report that our followers and subscribers have increased across all platforms.

Our e-newsletter is focused on upcoming volunteer opportunities, social events and other news. While geared towards members, anyone can subscribe. At present, about nine-tenths of our distribution list is made up of our community supporters and partners. Our last issue went to 110 subscribers. ([Past issues can be found here.](#)) We also continue to maintain and improve our [website](#). Since April 1, our site has been visited more than 625 times.



**Figure 5.** A community art show attendee takes a photo of veterans showcasing their art to post on social media during our Veterans Creative Art Showcase.

Our Facebook and Twitter accounts share relevant information about our unit and the military and veteran community. We have 142 likes and 298 followers. We used ads on social media to promote our Veterans Creative Art Showcase to a wider audience, and utilized a hashtag, #ALADCArt, to help attendees share information about the showcase with the public. (See our [VA&R report](#) for more information on our Veterans Creative Art Showcase.)

## 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 demonstrated our gratitude to veterans and their families through various activities.

To highlight the impact the arts have on our veterans, the unit hosted a Veterans Creative Art Showcase where veterans could display their art and share with the community what their art means to them. The showcase, which occurred during Veterans Day weekend, featured 11 veterans. The veterans served in four branches and all served within the last 50 years. The artworks' mediums included photography, painting, drawings and metalwork. The showcase was mentioned in a local paper and advertised on social media; nearly 100 community members attended the showcase. To help document what art means to these veterans, we recorded a few vignettes with the artists. We used our program to highlight the work of the Auxiliary as a whole, as well as each of the three units in DC.

Our Department President's special project was coordinating the Holiday



Figure 6. During our Veterans Creative Art Showcase, veteran Theresa Hilsdon (left) talks about her work with an event attendee.



Figure 8. During our Veterans Creative Art Showcase, veteran Arthur Washington (right) talks about his work with an event attendee.



Figure 7. During our Veterans Creative Art Showcase, veteran Andrea Dickerson (left) talks about her work with an event attendee.

Gift Shop for the long-term care hospitalized veterans at the Washington DC VA Medical Center. Our unit contributed monetarily to this project, and our members volunteered on-site to help veterans “shop” for items that they wanted to give to their family members.

Members also volunteered at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, helping residents play bingo and checkers; helped a veteran move; researched information for a veteran moving from a nursing home back to their home; assisted veterans looking for jobs and scholarships; provided respite care for the spouse of a Korean War veteran with Alzheimer’s disease; assisted a veteran’s spouse in making funeral arrangements for her husband; helped collect information to create scrapbooks for veterans commemorating their service; organized a barbeque for a veteran’s family that was new to the area; participated in a PTSD awareness walk; shared information with veterans about community resources and the Legion Family at the local government’s DC Hires Vets event; and organized and prepared an international dinner for veterans and their families with veterans from Vietnam to the current conflicts.

## 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 are able to provide services to local veterans, servicemembers and their families. This year’s donors are:

- ★ American Legion Auxiliary Foundation
- ★ American Legion Auxiliary Unit 8 in DC

### Accounting Breakdown

Below and on the next page are our financial reporting for the last five programming years.

REVENUE	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
<b>Dues Remittance</b>	\$526.00	\$390.00	\$258.00	\$276.00	\$316.00
<b>Donations—General</b>	\$1,205.00	\$25.00	—	\$50.00	\$3,861.25
<b>Donations—Poppy<sup>1</sup></b>	\$1,313.00	\$137.75	\$30.00	\$34.00	—
<b>Fundraisers</b>	\$19.33	—	—	—	—
<b>Events</b>	—	\$30.00	—	—	—
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	\$3,063.33	\$582.75	\$288.00	\$360.00	\$4,177.25

<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	2013-2014 <sup>2</sup>	2014-2015 <sup>3</sup>	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
<b>Membership Dues to Department/National</b>	\$476.00	\$182.00	\$98.00	\$84.00	\$140.00
<b>Veteran and Military Support Programs</b>	\$352.02	\$697.89	\$14.63	\$50.00	\$3,861.25
<b>Family Support Programs</b>	\$226.79	\$25.00	—	—	\$25.00
<b>Fundraisers</b>	\$35.78	—	—	—	—
<b>Supplies</b>	\$1.14	—	—	—	—
<b>Postage</b>	\$83.98	\$49.05	\$3.94	—	\$19.60
<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	—	\$5.54
<b>Convention Delegate Fees</b>	—	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$15.00
<b>Donations to AEF</b>	\$15.00	\$17.00	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$11.00
<b>Donations to Children of Warriors Scholarship</b>	\$15.00	\$17.00	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$11.00
<b>Donations to Dept. President's Project</b>	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$12.00	\$45.00	\$12.00
<b>Web Expenses</b>	\$59.39	\$60.39	\$61.39	\$58.44	\$63.39
<b>Other</b>	\$58.66	\$163.37	\$129.66	\$139.83	\$140.71
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$1,421.40	\$1,263.86	\$368.58	\$416.27	\$4,304.49

## Looking Ahead

Looking forward to the 2018-2019 programming year, we hope to:

- ★ Engage more veterans, servicemembers and their families in service.
- ★ Offer additional volunteer opportunities that meet the needs of our military and veteran community and strengthen our work with similar organizations.
- ★ Increase our membership, including those with eligibility stemming from service in 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.