THE CONNECTICUT AUXILIARE #4/ December 2025
American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Connecticut, Inc.
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Department Office Hours: **Monday/Tuesday /Thursday 9:00-5:30**

Department President,

Hello Members,

As we enter the month of December, I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to each of you. This season is always a busy one, yet you continue to give your time, your compassion, and your energy to support our veterans, military families, and communities. Your dedication does not go unnoticed, and I am truly thankful for everything you do.

The holidays are a meaningful reminder of why our mission matters—bringing comfort, connection, and care to those who have served. Whether you're volunteering at events, donating items, writing cards, or simply spreading kindness, every effort you make strengthens our organization and touches lives in powerful ways.

I also hope to see many of you at our Christmas Shops this month. These gatherings are not just an opportunity to support veterans and their families, but also to enjoy fellowship with one another and celebrate the spirit of the season.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful, peaceful, and safe holiday season. Thank you for all you continue to do—today and always.

For God and Country,
Kristin Jones
Department of Connecticut President

Membership

Racing Toward 85% — The Ride Continues!

Fellow Riders,

Our districts are thundering down the trail, each pushing harder toward our next checkpoint — March 15 and 85%!

District 1, the Spirit Riders, are riding strong at 60.33% — your energy keeps the flames alive!

District 2, our Freedom Riders, are out front at 68.54% — freedom truly fuels your fire!

District 3, the Liberty Riders, are leading the pack at 73.78% — setting the pace for all of Connecticut!

District 4, our Inspirational Riders, are riding steady at 62.31%, showing what teamwork can do.

District 5, the Patriot Riders, are regrouping at 53.54%, ready to charge forward with

renewed strength.
District 6, the Minutemen, stand ready at 65.70%, proving they're always prepared to answer the call.
And District 7, our Revolutionary Riders, at 65.52%, are gearing up for a powerful comeback — every revolution starts with courage!
Together, Connecticut rides at 64.31%, and the next goal is clear — 85% by March 15!
Each phone call, each transmittal, each conversation ignites the trail ahead.
Let's keep the flames burning bright and push toward our next victory!
Let's Ride, Connecticut!

Lisa LaCoursiere, Dept Sr. Vice President 🐂🔥

Message from National

Want to serve on a national ALA committee? The application process for 2026-2027 national committee appointments is open through Jan. 1, 2026! National committee chairs and members are appointed annually and confirmed by the National Executive Committee to serve on a wide variety of ALA committees for you to explore. All members are eligible to apply. Learn more by reading the ALA blog: https://www.legion-aux.org/Blog/Apply-today!-2026-2027-ALA-national-committee-appl

Notes From the Department Office

We are still missing Unit Officers/Chairmen lists from several units. If your unit's list has not been sent, get it in asap. If you are full access on ALAMIS, we still need the form completed.

ALAMIS renewal forms, along with payment, are due by December 23, 2025.

When mailing correspondence to the office, use PO Box 266, Rocky Hill, 06067-0266 only.
Email correspondence – aladeptct@gmail.com

Finance

Happy Holidays!
I would like to thank everyone who supported our Foxwoods raffle! It was a huge success! Our winner was Katherine Williams from Unit 104, Taftville.
Next up is the 31 days of March Calendar Raffle! Keep your eyes open for tickets coming soon!
Enjoy your families and friends this holiday season. We'll see you in the New Year!

Marge Sunbury, Finance Chairman
margesun1955@gmail.com
860-639-3011

Treasurer's Statement

There are several Units that have yet to pay their Unit bond. This is an obligation every Unit has. The Department pays in advance and then lets the Units pay them back. I have called each

Unit that has not made this payment. I left messages with no return call. If you are a District President, you should following-up on your Units to make sure all their obligations are up-to-date; including membership.
We are a team and a team plays together. Imagine if no one listened to Paul Revere on his ride!

Marge Sunbury, Department Treasurer
860-639-3011 margesun1955@gmail.com

Americanism

"Hi everyone,
I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season. Attached to this bulletin is the information and cover sheet for the Americanism Essay It's time to get them out to your schools, churches and libraries. If you have any problems? Please feel free to give me a call. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas ! I hope to see you January.

Eileen D'Andrea, Chair 203-621-4258 edandrea72@yahoo.com

Children & Youth

Happy Holidays to everyone. Keep all children in your hearts during the holidays. Remember our military children - if your unit can adopt a CT National Guard family please do so asap. A form to sign up was sent out previously from the office.
We will be making no sew blankets at Mid-Winter Conference. Directions on how to make them will be given out at that time. Blankets that were made by anyone that smokes **can not** go to the hospitals due allergies the children may have. You can make these for most of the hospitals. See you at Mid-Winter Conference.

Ruth Morgan, Chair

Education

I hope everyone had a safe and happy Thanksgiving. What were you thankful for?
November 17 - 21 was American Education Week. Did you express gratitude to your public school staff, from teachers to bus drivers and cafeteria workers? Post what you did on social media, and share it with me so I can let others know. You can do this any and all times of the year!
If you do not have any contacts at your school district yet, it's time to make them. Reach out to Superintendents, Principals, Counselors, anyone. We need to spread the word about ALA Scholarships and Department Grants.

Contact me at ALA_CT_Education@yahoo.com if you have questions, need ideas, or want to share something unique your Unit is doing.

Elaine Kotler, Education Chair "Advice is like snow—the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into the mind" - Samuel Taylor Coleridge

ALA Laurel Girls State

Planning for the 2026 session of ALA LGS is well under way! We, the committee, are working diligently to plan a meaningful, engaging, fun, and relevant session. The 2026 session will be held June 27 – July 2, 2026 at the University of New Haven.

As we prepare, we are seeking to know an **ESTIMATED** number of participants.

The tuition per delegate for the 2026 session is $600.00. We recognize that this is an increase in tuition. If your unit is unable to cover the full cost of a delegate, please contact us. There may be other units in a similar situation, that when combined, can sponsor one or more delegates to attend.

**Action item: Please share the anticipated number of girls your unit will sponsor to this NEW EMAIL address: alalgsofficial@gmail.com **. We look forward to hearing from you!

Pamela Thompson, Chairman and Committee

Leadership

This wonderful month of December, a perfect time to show our leadership in what we say to each other. Instead of greeting folks with asking if they got their shopping done? Do you really care? or are you just following along with what others say to start a conversation?
Be a leader instead and greet them with "Good to see you, this busy season." Or, wish them a happy holiday.

With this in mind, I wish everyone a happy, stress free holiday. Be a leader, be positive, and enjoy the holidays. (holy days)

Lorraine Dixon, Chair dixonlorraine@aol.com

Legislative

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family. Please keep our Veterans in our thoughts and prayers. It is so very important that we all call our Senators and State Representatives and tell them how they need to support and vote to keep the benefits for those who gave us this freedom we so enjoy. Tell your representatives that we can never forget. One matter you can discuss is to have the VA benefits available.
Here is how the 125 days relates to veterans benefits:

- **Claims Backlog Definition**: The VA defines a benefits claim as "backlogged" if it has been pending for more than 125 days.
- **Performance Metric and Goal**: The 125-day mark is a target for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). Their goal for completing certain types of claims, such as supplemental claims not related to health care, is an average of 125 days.

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  - **Legislative Mandates**: Recent legislation, specifically a recent Senate-passed spending bill, has included provisions that require the VA to ensure it has sufficient staff to adjudicate benefits claims with an average processing time of under 125 days. This is intended to improve efficiency and reduce the overall backlog.
  - **Advocacy Efforts**: Organizations like The American Legion have passed resolutions and advocated for legislation that would mandate the VA process claims in under 125 days with a high accuracy rate.

So, while there isn't a bill *providing* benefits for 125 days, there are legislative efforts and performance goals focused on ensuring that the VA processes existing benefits claims within that 125-day timeframe.

Ann Penington, Chairman

Mid-Winter Conference

Mid-Winter Conference will be held on January 30-31,2026 at the Trumbull Marriott. Some of President Kristin's plans include training on suicide prevention given by instructors, one of whom is a Marine veteran who is a licensed clinical social worker. The training is called "Why We Didn't Tell You" and teaches how to start the conversation around suicide along with much more information. Also, attending will be a speaker from Honor Flight CT (Dept President's Project). A service project will also take place. Join us for meeting members from around the Department, receiving wonderful, useful info from the speakers and having some fun!

Karen L Thompson, Chairman

National Security

Members,

Now is a great time to start thinking about sending out care packages to our troops. This a great project for units to work on together. What to send? Common choices are: Non-Perishable foods items – snacks like protein bars, trail mix and canned goods. Personal care items – travel-sized toiletries, sunscreen and baby wipes. Entertainment items – books, magazines and small games make great items when troops have a little down time. Letters and photos – Personal notes and pictures from home for morale help to lift spirits. How to send care packages: Know the timeline and how long it will take for delivery, free priority mail packages are available at the post office, list the quantity, weight and value of items being sent. Prevent spills – use heavy plastic, zipper lock bags for items that might leak and address your package correctly – include the service members full name, unit name, and the complete APO/FPO address with a nine-digit ZIP code if available. Check deadlines – review USPS deadlines and holiday cut-off dates to ensure timely delivery. It's also the time of year to think about supporting Wreaths Across

America which will take place on Saturday, December 13, 2025, Wreaths cost $17.00 each and can be purchased through their website. Wreaths are laid on veteran's graves in more than 5,200 cemeteries across the 50 states. Units can donate a wreath or many wreaths and can participate at a local veteran's cemetery to help lay the wreaths on veteran's graves.

Please mark your calendars for our Awareness Assembly Lunch – February 28, 2026 from 11:30am – 2pm at the Norwalk Post – 60 County Street, Norwalk.

Our National Security Committee wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Gladys DiDia,Chair cmeow26@sbcglobal.net

Poppies

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! Being all together, as Legion Family members, helping at Christmas shops over Thanksgiving weekend was just a wonderful experience as always. I wish you all could experience how your poppy dollars help our veterans when you see all the wonderful gifts that were available for them for their families. The happy look on the veterans' faces is priceless.I apologize that we were not able to get a Poppy Party going this Fall. There were some situations on my end that caused a delay and for that I am sorry. But we will be gearing up come January to reach out to those who showed an interest in having us visit and in learning to make poppies. I did love seeing all the Facebook posts showing Poppy Distributions for Veterans Day events, ALA CT Units rock! Remember to report what you did for your end of year report. We will be selling some poppy merchandise at Mid-Winter! Just some cute items so you can share the poppy experience at your meetings and when you are out and about! Remember, branding is the key to all programs. And everyone loves seeing our poppy! It is a great conversational tool to gain members and explain who we are and what we do. For those who still need poppies for any upcoming events in 2026 and have not yet placed your order, time is running out. **The deadline is December 31, 2025.** I cannot promise if you need poppies in 2026, unless the order has been received by the deadline, that we will be able to accommodate you. Should that happen, please reach out to me directly, not the office, as I will determine if it is possible. Questions or help, just give me a call, text, or email.

Have a wonderful Christmas and Holiday season with family and friends. See you in the New Year!

Janice Sentivany, Chair 860.416.4572 1teuke@gmail.com

VA&R

The Christmas Gift Shops are right around the corner!!

As you read this, we are gearing up for the gift shops, if you would be able to give some time to assist with setting up the Gift Shops, helping veterans shop, wrapping gifts – we would

appreciate it very much. Call me at 203-233-0956 or email me at kari2001ala@gmail.com to let me know when you would like to volunteer.
We will be setting up both Gift Shops at Rocky Hill (Levitow Health Care Center and in the Auditorium [for the Veterans' Residence and Newington VA]) on **Friday November 28th**. We will start at 9:30 and work until everything is set to go! Many hands help complete the job quicker.
Levitow Gift Shop will be open on Saturday, **November 29th** with ribbon cutting at 9:00am and continue until 4:00pm. **Sunday, November 30th** from 9:00am – 12:00pm. After closing we will be packing everything up and taking it back to the office.
The auditorium will be open on Sunday, **November 30th** with ribbon cutting at 9:00am and continue until 5:00pm. **Monday, December 1ST** from 9:00am – 5:00pm. After closing we will be packing everything up and taking it back to the office.

WHVA – set up **Saturday, December 6th** starting at 9:30am and continuing until finished. Ribbon cutting **Sunday, December 7th** at 9:00am and continue until 5:00pm. **Monday, December 8th** – 9:00am- 5:00pm, **Tuesday December 9th** – 9:00am- 3:00pm. After closing we will pack up and load the truck to return everything to the office.

Karen L Thompson, Chairman kari2001ala@gmail.com

Chaplain

In this blessed holiday season, let love fill our hearts and our lives. Let us strive for peace and understanding of all cultures and customs. Be it Merry Christmas, Blessed Yule, Happy Hanukah, Blessed Ramadan, Kwanzaa or any other holiday we celebrate, let us respect the customs and values of each other instead of finding fault in the beliefs of others. This is the season of love and peace. May we carry both in our hearts all season long, and everyday thereafter. Amen

Dates to Remember

December 2025	January 2026
6-9 WHVA Christmas Gift Shop	1 Happy New Year
7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	19 Martin Luther King Day
14- 22 Hannukah	30-31 Mid-Winter Conference
25 Christmas Day	
26 – Jan 1 Kwanzaa	
31 New Year's Eve	

FUTURE DATES

February 28 Awareness Luncheon – flyer attached
June 27 – July 2 ALA Laurel Girls State

Past Department Presidents' Birthdays –December

Donna Morin
241 Monroe St.
New Britain, CT 06052

Helen Goewey
101 Carillon Hill Lane
Sellersville, PA 18960-2624

IN MEMORIAM

Unit #2 Suzanne Mantei

Unit #2 Jane Mattson

American Legion Auxiliary
PO Box 266

Rocky Hill, CT 06067-0266

Happy Holidays