



History

An Auxiliary Chronology of Events

- 1919** The American Legion Auxiliary was first established to support The American Legion and our nation's veterans.
- 1920** Minnesota is the first Auxiliary Department.
- 1921** First National Convention convenes in Kansas City, Mo. The Poppy of Flanders Fields becomes the memorial flower of the Auxiliary.
- 1922** Gold Star Mothers and La Societe des Huits Chapeaux et Quarante Femmes (8 et 40) are established.
- 1923** The four-petaled crepe paper poppy became the official memorial flower of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary and an Auxiliary Poppy Committee was appointed to define the manufacture and distribution of the official Memorial Poppy. Auxiliary Child Welfare Committee is established.
- 1925** The Auxiliary moves its National Headquarters to the War Memorial Plaza in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Auxiliary joins the Federation Interalliee des Anciens Combattans (FIDAC), formed by WWI Allied nations to promote peace.
- 1927** At the Paris Convention, it was decided that only veteran-made poppies would be distributed by the American Legion Auxiliary. The National Auxiliary Bulletin is distributed monthly.
- 1928** Christmas Gift Shops are set up in veteran's hospitals to provide veterans with gifts for their families.
- 1930** The Auxiliary celebrates its 10th. year and begins community construction programs to employ the jobless.
- 1931** The National Poppy Committee announced that 11,272,189 poppies were made by disabled veterans and distributed by Auxiliary volunteers. Membership reached 412,063 members.
- 1933** Congress passes legislation like The Legion/Auxiliary Four Point Program to protect the benefits of veterans.
- 1934** The Auxiliary establishes Junior membership.

- 1935** The Auxiliary sponsors a radio program. "The American Legion Auxiliary on the Air"
- 1936** The National Auxiliary Bulletin becomes the National News. The Auxiliary created its first media award, highlighting the producer of a program, which would typify America, appeal to patriotism and benefit the nation's children.
- 1937** The American Legion Auxiliary's Girls State program is created. Auxiliary members observe the 20th anniversary of WWI with a pilgrimage to France.
- 1939** The Auxiliary severs ties with FIDAC as war in Europe intensifies. The Auxiliary's Pan American program is established.
- 1941** Japan attacks pearl Harbor and American declares war on Japan. The Auxiliary donate six mobile blood units to the Red Cross and creates the Emergency Voluntary Committee to support the war effort.
- 1942** The National Defense Committee focuses on recruiting Army and Navy nurses. The Auxiliary establishes scholarships and sponsors 1,000 student nurses to fulfill this growing need.
- 1943** The Auxiliary donates Red Cross Club Mobiles to Italy and India. The Auxiliary mourned the passing of Moina Michael " The Poppy Lady."
- 1944** The Auxiliary rehabilitation program for disabled veteran is created. The Auxiliary celebrates its Silver Anniversary in Chicago.
- 1945** The Auxiliary's Red Book directory of officers and chairmen is first published.
- 1946** The Auxiliary and Legion support action to expose and combat the growing influence of communism. A five-point program is developed to strengthen Americanism. The Child Welfare program directs assistance to children in war-ravaged France. Delegates at the San Francisco convention increase national dues to 50 cents for Senior members to finance distribution of the National News.
- 1947** The Community Service Committee proposes youth recreation enters to help solve the growing problem of juvenile delinquency an incorporates the Red Cross blood donor program in Community Service. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors the first Girls Nation session conducted in Washington, D.C.
- 1948** National News circulation increases to more than 900,000 and changes to tabloid newspapers format. The Auxiliary escalates its Americanism program to counter communism in Europe and Asia and sponsors the special "Freedom Train" exhibit.

- 1949** The Auxiliary and Legion support the HUAC and urge legislation to curb suspected communist activities in the US. The Legion/Auxiliary's "Tide of Toys" program collects and ships more than 3,000,000 donated toys to Europe.
- 1950** The first Golden Press/Golden Mike media awards are presented. The Auxiliary celebrated its 30th year, membership reached 980,205.
- 1951** National News returns to a pocket-sized format. The combined efforts of the entire Legion family yield donations of \$7,000,000 to assist veteran's children. The 8 & 40 establishes tuberculosis clinics at VA hospitals and contributes to child welfare projects.
- 1952** The Auxiliary airs poppy television spots. More than 26,000,000 poppies are made by 9,693 veterans earning \$366.284 and contributions of nearly \$ 2,000,000 for disabled veterans and their children . A new "GI Bill of Rights" grants benefits to Korean War veterans. Helen Hayes receives the Distinguished Service Award for their films and her work against polio.
- 1953** The first Women's Forum on National Security convenes in Washington. Community Service supports the "Crusade for Freedom." Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia. The Auxiliary sends clothing to Korea orphans. Ten new VA medical centers are built for a total of 170 hospitals. Departments conduct training schools, adding 4,020 new hospital volunteers for a total of 12,200.
- 1954** Child Welfare assists more than 130,000 children. "I love Lucy" wins the Golden Mike award.
- 1955** Auxiliary membership peaks at 998,103 members.
- 1956** The Auxiliary opens its Washington office. Youth self-help projects, part of the Pan-American Study program supported by CARE, provide 91 young carpenters in Haiti with tool kits.
- 1958** 11,015 hospital volunteers serve en 174 VA Hospitals and 292 non-VA hospitals. Edith Hobart, first National President of the Auxiliary, dies.
- 1960** The VolunTeens program is established.
- 1961** Auxiliary bulletin, "Color the Picture, Memorize the Rules," alerts parents and children to the threat of child molestation.
- 1963** Auxiliary helps build 13 rural schools and sends tool kits to the Dominican Republic. Child Welfare assists 941.771 abused and neglected children.
- 1964** A fresh water system and equipment are donated to Equador. The Auxiliary contributes disaster relief to Alaska after a destructive earthquake.

- 1965** The Auxiliary sets up 12 vocational training centers in Costa Rico.
- 1966** The Auxiliary's Foreign Relations program finances a water system and community development project in the Philippines.
- 1968** Foreign Relations program equips a hospital maternity/pediatrics ward in Malaysia.
- 1969** Auxiliary Community Service volunteers donate 15,070 gallons of blood and 2,600 pairs of eyeglasses to Lions International . Leadership courses are offered at Area Conferences.
- 1970** The Auxiliary marks 50 years of service. Foreign Relations finances construction of 55 classrooms in Nicaragua. The new Past Presidents Parley presents 157 nursing scholarships. The Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) is established for Auxiliary members in crisis. An Auxiliary life insurance plan is created. Eligibility is extended to granddaughters of veterans. Apollo 11 astronauts are honored at the Women's Conference in Washington.
- 1971** The Auxiliary builds a bridge and conducts vocational training in Panama. Junior members, now at 100,000, sponsors a teacher at freedoms Foundation, hold rummage sales where needy families shop for free, and contribute to handicapped and native Americans
- 1972** Children and Youth focuses on drug abuse prevention, assistance and education for the handicapped , rehabilitation of juvenile offenders and pre-school immunization programs. One quarter million dollars in scholarships is awarded by Auxiliary Education programs. Children and Youth programs receive \$942,000 to benefit 4,000,000 children. The Cavalcade of memories is established at National Headquarters.
- 1973** CAT's (Community Action Teams) spend \$1,000,000 and 2.25 million hours donating blood and supplying playground equipment, and wheelchairs and crutches for the handicapped. Foreign Relations brings electricity to 15 rural villages in South Korea. The poppy program reports 14.5 million poppies made, earning \$1,837,000 from distribution and \$314,000 for 2,232 hospitalized veteran poppy makers.
- 1974** The Poppy program reported 14,472,000 poppies were made by 2,232 hospitalized veterans who earned \$314,000 and \$1,837,000 was donated from the distribution.
- 1975** The Americanism Committee sponsors 45 teachers at Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge, Pa. Senior membership dues increase to \$1.50. Foreign Relations donates construction materials to build classrooms in West Java.
- 1976** The nation celebrates 200 years of history. The Spirit of 76 Committee completes a two-year project to erect a stage and Proscenium Arch on the grounds of Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, Pa. The Auxiliary supports the Legion-sponsored Freedom Bell project. Foreign Relations purchases seed and fertilizer in Belize.

- 1977** The Auxiliary helps to rebuild homes in earthquake ravaged Guatemala.
- 1978** The Auxiliary donates money to build 40 classrooms in Peru. In 172 VA hospitals and nursing facilities, 2,850,000 service hours are given by 62,991 volunteers to help 633,000 veterans.
- 1979** President Jimmy Carter signs a bill extending Legion eligibility to Vietnam-era veterans.
- 1980** The Awareness Assembly, formerly the Women's Forum on National Security, is established to inform members about national and international issues pertaining to defense, security, women and the aged. A French crystal plate etched with the Poppy commemorates the Auxiliary's 60th year, and proceeds fund youth programs. Foreign Relations contributes to school reconstruction and community center in the Dominican Republic after Hurricane David. The Past Presidents Parley awards \$69,000 in nursing scholarships.
- 1981** Foreign Relations builds and equips kitchens and warehouses for Cambodian refugees in Thailand.
- 1982** In February, the newly-created American Legion Auxiliary Awareness Assembly is conducted in Washington, D.C. Foreign Relations donates to the Eluwa School for the Deaf and Blind in Namibia.
- 1983** The National News accepts paid advertising.
- 1984** The "Friends of Our Little Brothers" Children's Home in Mexico receives \$90,000 for irrigation wells.
- 1985** Foreign Relations raises \$66,366 for Father Flavian Nucci's Home for Special Children in El Salvador.
- 1986** The Auxiliary funds and dedicates the Job Nave Clerestory Window in the National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.
- 1987** The National President's project, The Secret of Animal Island, a comic book illustrating safety tips for children, set Auxiliary records for response from the general public.
- 1988** Legion/Auxiliary members hold an open forum on the MIA/POW issue. The Auxiliary presents the Public Spirit Award to rescue personnel of Midland, Texas, for saving Jessica McClure. The Golden Press/Golden Mike Awards are retired - the Heart of America Awards is initiated.
- 1989** The Supreme Court rules that burning the US flag is protected under the First Amendment.

- 1990** The National Emergency fund is established for disaster victims. The Auxiliary's Washington, D.C. office closes. The Auxiliary celebrates its 70th year. The Family Support Network assists families of US troops in the Persian Gulf. Eligibility dates include veterans of Grenada, Lebanon and Panama. Marilyn Quayle is "Woman of the Year."
- 1991** Dr. Robert Schuller receives the Public Spirit Award. Erma Bombeck is Woman of the Year.
- 1992** The Auxiliary introduces the "Young people and Relationships," video. The Auxiliary builds the "All Woman" House at habitat International's Jimmy Carter Work Project in Washington. Auxiliary Public Spirit Award winner is Mrs. Robin Higgins, widow of Lt. Col. William Higgins who was killed by terrorists in Lebanon. Eligibility dates are extended to include veterans of the Persian Gulf War.
- 1993** The Auxiliary enhances its focus homeless veterans. More than one million pounds of food is collected and donated to assist homeless veterans across the nation.
- 1994** Teen Court, which offers an alternative to the formal juvenile justice system, is introduced to Auxiliary members. Teen Court allows young offenders to be tried and sentenced by a jury of their peers. Auxiliary members initiated 17 Teen Courts around the country. The Citizens Flag Alliance is formed to pass a constitutional amendment or protect the American flag from intentional physical desecration.
- 1995** The American Legion Auxiliary celebrates its 75 th anniversary.
- 1996** Samsung endows a scholarship for a Girls State or Boy State citizen who is a descendent of a Korean War Veteran. Elizabeth and Zachary Fisher receive the Public Spirit Award for recognition of the Fisher House Foundation. Fiftieth session of Girls Nation is celebrated.
- 1997** First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton receives the Public Spirit Award for her promotion of children and youth issues. Past National President Linda M. Newsome cut the ribbon for the dedication of the Woman in Military Service Memorial in Washington D.C. The Auxiliary became involved with the President's Summit for America's Future and the Children's Miracle Network. Maryland Lt, Governor, Kathleen Kenned Townsend, was named Woman of the Year.
- 1998** Auxiliary emphasizes a family theme trough embarking on a year of service to the family. Taste of NFL, was the recipient of more than \$30,000 to help feed the hungry. The Auxiliary also became an official sponsor of the Children's Miracle Network National President Barbara Kranig appeared on the nationally television telethon. Miss America, Kate Shindle, was a special guest at awareness Assembly.

- 1999** National President Virginia Hobbs calls for members to become more aware of the desperate need for organ and tissue donations. Public Spirit Award winner James Redford brings further awareness with his documentaries on the miracle of transplantation. Washington Attorney General Christine Gregoire is recognized as the Woman of the Year. program highlights include fund-raising for the world War II Memorial.
- 2000** Auxiliary members celebrate the new century and millennium under the theme, "Celebrate America 2000." Through an aggressive fund-raising campaign, members raise more than \$660,000 for the World War II Memorial—nearly tripling its two-year goal of \$250,000. National President Elizabeth Stewart uses her national platform to promote breast cancer awareness. The American Legion Auxiliary celebrates its 80th year.
- 2001** Under the leadership of National President Kristine West, the American Legion Auxiliary becomes a host sponsor of the Department of Veterans Affairs Creative Arts Festival. The National President and National Vice President Sherry McLaughlin witnessed the groundbreaking of the World War II Memorial in November 2000 and the inauguration of George W. Bush in January 2001 as the 43rd President of the United States. Woman of the Year honors was given to First Lady Laura Bush at the 2001 National Convention in San Antonio, Texas.
- 2002** In response to the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001, Auxiliary members donated nearly \$100,000 to various relief efforts.
- 2003** American Legion Auxiliary members respond to the wartime deployment of U.S. Troops overseas in "Operation Iraqi Freedom.