

## CELEBRATING PERSONAL SERVICEMEMBER HOLIDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Jan. 15 – **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY** – “Everybody can be great because everyone can serve.” – *The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr*

- Host a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Project with a focus on empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and creating solutions to social problems.
- Remembrance activities may include awareness campaigns. Be sure to check out The Department of Defense for newsletters, blog posts, and ad media recognizing Martin Luther King, Jr.’s accomplishments and legacy.
- Hold special events, contests, charity fundraising drives, and remembrance ceremonies to commemorate King’s birthday.

All year – **ALIVE DAY** – anniversary date of when a veteran/soldier almost lost their life in combat. Many soldiers lost fellow servicemembers on the same day, making it a day to also honor the sacrifice of those they served with.

- Some spend the day reflecting on their own, while others choose to celebrate with a party surrounded by family and friends; some may not want to acknowledge the day at all.
- Recognize the veteran/servicemember on that day with a phone call, text, gift, or a card to let them know you are thinking of them and grateful to have them in your life.
- This may be an opportunity for the soldier/veteran to acknowledge and celebrate those connections with their fellow service members and their safe return home from a war zone.
- To help understand the emotions and needs of these soldiers, watch the HBO documentary, *Alive Day Memories: Home from Iraq (2007)*, featuring Alive Day stories from veterans of the Iraq war. They tell their stories and talk about the ways their lives changed after their injuries occurred.
- For friends or loved ones, it can be challenging to know how to best acknowledge a servicemember/veteran’s Alive Day, or whether to acknowledge the day at all.

All year – **ANNIVERSARY DAY** – servicemember wedding anniversary. We can help military couples celebrate their wedding anniversaries to help shorten the distance.

- Encourage spouses to plan and be transparent to make the anniversary special – do not assume either spouse “just knows” how things work during a TDY. Surprise parties and unexpected gifts sometimes just are not possible during a deployment.
- Get creative – help send flowers/gifts to the duty location or vice versa. Those involved in military exercise, war games, weekend drill, etc., may not be able to send or receive such packages.
- Settle for a brief phone call or video conference if not able to celebrate.
- Have the spouse wrap/pack a small, but special, gift to open while the service member is on duty.
- Plan a time where each spouse does something special with friends or family on their Anniversary Day.
- Help them plan a visit. The service member’s assignment may permit family members to come for a visit – others may not. Navigating the specific regulations and the rules of engagement for your overseas assignment will be key.

### BLUE STAR BANNERS

Blue Star Banners are a wonderful way to recognize members of your Unit or community that have a spouse or children serving in the U.S. Military. The banner may hold up to five stars and each star represents a family member in the U.S. Armed Services: Learn more about the Blue Star Banner here: <https://www.legion-aux.org/blue-star-banners>



Blue Star Banners may be purchased from Flag & Emblem Sales: <https://emblem.legion.org/Blue-Star-Banners/departments/61/>

We want to hear from you! Post pictures of your events on the Dept. of NC FaceBook page (see link below).

Be sure to report everything you do to [michelle.potuzak@yahoo.com](mailto:michelle.potuzak@yahoo.com).

Join Us on FACEBOOK: [AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY DEPT OF NC](#)

## IMPORTANT PROGRAM INFO

- The National Security (NS) Program Plan, End-Of-Year Report and monthly NS updates with suggestions for activities can be found on the Department website: <https://www.alanorthcarolina.com/>.
- All Units submitting an EOY report by April 30 will be entered into a drawing for \$100. Reports can be sent in as weekly/monthly updates. Narrative reports are also encouraged! Volunteer hours are the most important item to report! Send reports to: [michelle.potuzak@yahoo.com](mailto:michelle.potuzak@yahoo.com) or Michelle Potuzak, 15908 Lavenham Road, Huntersville NC 28078
- The best Unit report will be submitted for the National, Most Outstanding Unit National Security Program award.

## ONGOING NS ACTIVITIES

- Wear **RED** on Fridays - **R**emember **E**veryone **D**eported.
- Follow the Legion's POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution 288 for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings. Fly the POW/MIA flag at your Post.
- Cut and send coupons for our troops: <https://supportourtroops.org/troopons>
- Organize a blood drive or simply take time to donate blood.

## SALUTE TO SERVICEMEMBERS AWARD

The Department's goal: submit an entry for EACH BRANCH of the military for these awards. We need you to achieve this!

National will award a winner for each branch of service - Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force and the National Guard and Reserve. Please let us know should you need help with the application. Winners will be guests of the Auxiliary at National Convention. You can find out more information about this award on the National website:

[Salute to Servicemembers Award \(legion-aux.org\)](http://legion-aux.org)

## MID-WINTER CONFERENCE — DEPT. OF NC NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE PROJECT

### Collection for Troop Care Packages NC Packs 4 Patriots/Support Our Troops

Ayden, NC — In operation since 2004 and sent care packages to over 200,000 troops — all over the world — just last year alone!



### PLEASE BRING THESE ITEMS TO MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

- **GIFT CARDS** – Amazon \* Walmart \* Visa – any amount (helps the organization to purchase items to send to our troops)
- **WRITTEN LETTERS/CARDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT OR PRAYERS** (please do not seal the letters/cards) - could your Unit do just 20 cards/letters – feeling ambitious, how about 100?

OR, if you cannot make it to Mid-Winter Conference:

- **ORDER ITEMS FROM THEIR AMAZON WISH LIST** (ships directly to NC Packs 4 Patriots/Support Our Troops). You can find the Amazon Wishlist on their Facebook page: [NCpacks4patriots/supportourtroops](https://www.facebook.com/NCpacks4patriots/supportourtroops) or follow this link: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Be sure to write '**NC ALA National Security Project**' in the gift message for each item you send so we can keep track. Also, for the address, be sure to select "Barbara Whitehead's Gift Registry Address."