

June 6, 2025



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY



Girls[★]
S T A T E

WE wait for them.

We grieve with them.

We support them.

According to National Public Radio, the number of military personnel makes up less than one percent of the population (2,266,883 personnel out of 309 million people in 2010). That's a pretty exclusive club! However, each one of those men and women has family — moms, dads, spouses, brothers, sisters, and cousins who are also impacted by the hardships that come from that person's service.

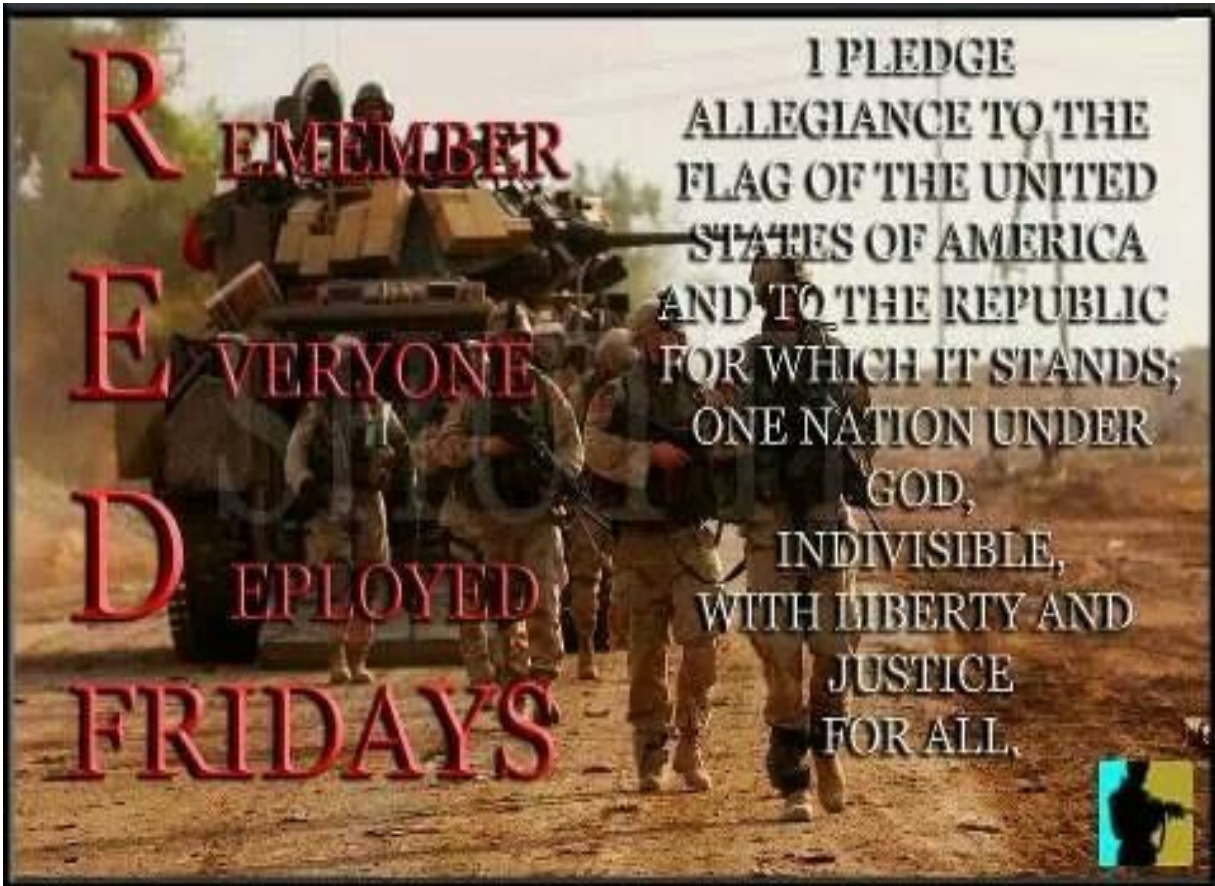
If you are one of those people, sit down at the lunch table with me. Let's talk!



What is R.E.D. Friday?

RED is an acronym that stands for Remember Everyone Deployed. RED Friday was created to remind people of our heroes overseas and show that we are thinking of them. People across the country wear red every Friday to serve as a reminder and to spread the message of how important it is to keep our troops in our thoughts.

Being a part of RED. Friday is easy: just wear red on Friday and tell your friends why!



While wearing red or patriotic apparel is great to show your love of country, might I recommend some additional ways to show you “Remember Everyone Deployed”?

Send care packages!

There are many websites dedicated to this form of support. You don't even have to have a special service member in mind. The [Red Cross](#) and [USO](#) are reputable places to start. They have mailing addresses and lists of recommended items for care packages for deployed soldiers. They are also reputable organizations to donate to if you want to help with relief efforts from the impact of hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Contributions to the USO will go directly toward service men and women (and their families) deployed to the Gulf region.

The USO has a special place in my heart, as I have visited a handful of their offices in airports over the years. The first hug I received in the States upon our return home from a 3.5-year tour in Italy was from a friendly stranger volunteering her time handing out water at the USO in Baltimore. Her kindness brought me to tears. That, OR it could have been the exhaustion from two back-to-back international flights with 8-month-old twins, a 2-year-old, and a 6-year-old, but I digress. I still remember that hug. I don't know if she was wearing red, but her support was obvious through her involvement with the USO.

The USO has its own social media campaign called **#Flex4Forces**. The campaign calls on all Americans to show their strength as a “Force Behind the Forces” by striking a biceps flex in support of our nation's military and sharing it on social media. It's a fun and friendly way to show your support.

Here's the real challenge: take a break from social media and actively seek out those service men and women, deployed or not.

Show you care by taking the time to talk to service members, young and old. Have coffee with a friend whose service member is deployed.

High five a military kid.

Organize a fundraiser to raise money to purchase care package items.



10 More Organizations and/or Ways to Get Involved:

1. The [USO](#) is a nonprofit organization providing care packages, entertainment, and recreation-type services to military members and their families since 1941. You can help by donating money, volunteering your time, corporate partnering, and fundraising.
2. Donate to the [Fisher House Foundation](#), which supports wounded, injured, and ill service members.
3. Send expired coupons to Active Duty military personnel and their families with [Support Our Troops](#). Military family members stationed in overseas locations are allowed to use coupons up to 6 months past their expiration date at commissaries, and this helps reduce that financial burden.
4. Donate by adding cash to your Girl Scout Cookie order. Your Girl Scout could earn a badge and the troops will benefit, too.
5. [Hope for the Warriors](#) aids those who sustained physical and psychological wounds in the line of duty.
6. The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America ([IVAVA](#)) provides new Veterans with health, education, and employment support.
7. [Homes for Our Troops](#) builds mortgage-free and specially adapted houses for those with multiple amputations and for veterans with traumatic brain injuries.
8. Donate to the Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust ([DAV](#)).
9. [Soldiers' Angels](#) offers a variety of ways to give back to Veterans, Deployed, Wounded and Family members.

What do they Actually Need?

You will find your service member needs essentials, choose small, travel-size containers of personal care products, and avoid aerosol cans. To keep liquids from spilling, cover the opening of the container with plastic wrap, then recap before shipping.

Toiletries. Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, cotton swabs, shaving lotion, disposable razors, shampoo, and individually packaged tissues.

Personal care. Individually packaged baby wipes, eye drops, lip balm, lotion, aspirin or another pain reliever, and feminine hygiene products for women.

Foot care. Moleskine, medicated foot powder, and athlete's foot ointment.

Disposable hand warmers. Send these during the winter if your service member is in a cold climate. Also, fingerless gloves, stocking caps, and long underwear are good ideas.

Goggle-style sunglasses. Your service member will appreciate these if he or she is deployed in the desert. Cotton socks and underwear. Make sure the garments are made of 100 percent cotton rather than a cotton blend.

Extra, Fun Things to Send

In every care package, be sure to include a personal note or other special reminders of home. Photographs, drawings, and DVDs of

your activities at home will be comforting to your service member. Here are some more ideas:

- Your children's art projects or schoolwork.
- A small scrapbook filled with mementos from home.
- The Sunday comics from your local newspaper.

Additionally, some fun entertainment may be a good idea, especially if you have extra room in the flat-rate package.

Reading material. Paperback books, current magazines, and comic books. Games. Foam footballs, basketballs, Frisbees, Hacky Sacks, playing cards, yo-yos. Crossword puzzles, word searches

Electronics. Portable media player, handheld electronic games. Maybe a disposable camera.

Batteries. Size AA and D batteries are in high demand. If you're sending a battery-operated device, remove the batteries so the appliance doesn't accidentally turn on during shipment. And remember: you cannot ship lithium-ion batteries.

Writing materials. Notepaper, envelopes, pens, pencils, and stamps. Maybe even self-addressed stamped envelopes so you're guaranteed to get something back.

There are many ways to show your support for troops at home and abroad. Any day that you can volunteer your time, resources, or words of encouragement, your effort is appreciated. We welcome the support!

VOLUNTEERS ARE SPECIAL PEOPLE

Volunteers are special people with a highly developed sense of responsibility. While pessimists and optimists argue whether a glass is half-empty or half-full, the Volunteer sees a glass of water and starts looking for someone who might be thirsty.

Valuable treasures like you make us beam
Outstanding is the help you lend to our team,
Loyal is your tireless efforts all year,
Upbeat and always full of good cheer,
Notable for your compassionate touch,
Thoughtful in ways that mean so much,
Ever prepared with a welcoming smile,
Eager to go the extra mile,
Reaching out to those in need,
Supportive in every word and deed.

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING

VOLUNTEER PAY

Volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless,
But because they are priceless!



.Volunteer Work

“Volunteers give time today to make life better tomorrow.”

WHY BE A VOLUNTEER?

IT'S NOT FOR MONEY: IT'S NOT FOR FAME.

IT'S NOT FOR ONLY PERSONAL GAIN,

IT'S JUST FOR LOVE OF FELLOWMEN.

It's JUST TO LEND A HELPING HAND.

It's JUST TO GIVE A LITTLE SELF.

THAT'S SOMETHING YOU CAN'T BUY WITH WEALTH.

IT'S NOT FOR MEDALS, WORN WITH PRIDE.

IT'S IT'S JUST FOR THE FEELING DEEP INSIDE.

IT'S THAT REWARD DEEP IN YOUR HEART.

IT'S FEELING THAT YOU'VE BEEN A PART
OF HELPING OTHERS FAR AND NEAR.

THAT MAKES...**A VOLUNTEER.**

VOLUNTEER

You can make a difference!

Community Service: The Auxiliary's Community Service program is based on the premise that no organization has a right to exist within the community without giving something to that community in return. Community service helps to make our communities better places in which to live. Auxiliary members study community needs, recommend projects, raise funds, and donate their time to accomplish their specific objectives. When someone performs an action that benefits his or her community, it is known as community service. Examples:

- Making a difference by contributing something that is of value to you - money, skills, time, advice.
- Helping without expecting something in return
- Motivating someone to make a difference
- Taking steps to fulfill the urge or sense of obligation to stand for something bigger than yourself.

Volunteer Work

I don't receive a check each week or monthly; this is true.

But knowing I am helping out - get paid??? Of course I do!

The warm Hellos, the sad goodbyes, the hugs and kisses too,

You ask, "Do I get benefits?" Oh yes - of course I do!

If you could know the joy I feel, the warm glow in my heart,

You wouldn't ask if I get paid. You'd have known it from the start.

So let me share a little love, one hour at a time,

And maybe someone else like me will pass it down the line.

“Volunteers give time today to make life better tomorrow.”

I'm a cat person, and I don't think I have ever considered myself otherwise. I am, however, still in love with dogs. Officer Blitz was so sweet, and I was rather surprised he got to visit us. I found out that some of my friends also thought I was a dog person while we went around talking about it at dinner time. One person told me they thought it was because of how I spoke to Gus, but I simply love Gus. But why am I a cat person if I love dogs? Well, I have a simple answer to this question: you know what to expect when you are with a cat. Cats are often a little spicy, and I think we all know they bite and scratch. Dogs, on the other hand, it's harder to know what to expect. We all imagine that dogs are sweet and loyal companions. As someone who has faced a dog attack in the past, it is harder for me to trust dogs, but I always know what to expect from cats.

On a different topic, day five was the most fun so far. I have enjoyed working with my fellow Senators on the legislative floor, working to find the best solution for all bills. Also, sitting downstairs and watching the movie while singing was wonderful.

Reagean Wingard,
City of Williamson



Last day here, and it was so beautiful outside today. I am so happy to go home, but it's also bittersweet for me. I'm going to miss all these amazing, beautiful girls here. We have one last legislative session to go through the bills. Then go clean up the camp and pack our things 😞. I really learned about a lot of things here. Spending time here definitely changed me. Am going to miss all those delicious, amazing foods the kitchen cooks for us. Thank you to all our sponsors for making it possible for us to witness this amazing experience. Thank you to all the staff. I appreciate and love y'all. Mary, Nichole, and Chris, THANK YOU FOR YOUR GUIDANCE. I LOVE YOU 🍕. You guys made the experience worth it.

Amie
City of Williamson(for the last time 😭)

Alyssa Hansen

Today, there are whispers from everyone about how we will be getting to go home soon. I can't help but smile as everyone passionately describes how they miss their home, bed, pets, and shower. To me, however, my plans aren't quite as welcoming. My hope, my path, my entire future will be determined after this week.

While everyone dreams of snuggling up in their beds again, I attempt to mentally and physically prepare myself for the greatest push for my future yet. I will be travelling directly from Girls State to what's known as SLE, a recruitment program for West Point, my dream college. The first day I get there, I will be tested on my physical strength in a test known as the CFA. Later that week, I will be interviewed on why West Point stands out to me and why I stand out as a candidate. Girls State has absolutely helped me grow in this area, and I feel prepared, but sometimes you will be anxious no matter how prepared you are.

This week is one that I have been preparing for for 7 months now, so it makes sense to me why I feel nervous. But when surrounded by such happy and hopeful faces in these past few days, I can't feel welcome to express my nerves and have to see their smiles drop. So I will put on a smile and likely cry with everyone at graduation as I will miss everyone greatly, but I will not entirely be crying just for my fellow delegates, but for the dream I have for my future.

Sophi Jenkins

My last full day of Girls State has arrived. With it comes the last one of these articles I have to write

(which, I have to say, is one of the things I will not miss the most about Girls State). Today was fun.

Really fun. We met the super cute Blitz, as well as the really inspiring Trooper Joslin. It's amazing to hear people talk about things that they're passionate about, and I really connected with her path to being a trooper and falling in love with the K9s she works with. "Fall in love with the process" is something I've heard often, and I've begun to understand it over the course of this camp, both in the short- and long-term.

It might be the reinforcement and development of this idea that I find to be the most impactful takeaway of my time here. Falling in love with the process means loving the hardship for how it makes you stronger, falling in love with the relationships that get you through it, and most of all, loving the idea that there can always be a brighter future, so long as you try to make it that way. Talk that talk and legislate!

Macey Harper

So tonight is the last night I will be writing to you from Alaska Girls State. Normally, I would say this is a bittersweet thing, and I guess it still is, but tonight I am really resonating with the bitter. I feel as though we have been here forever, and just got here at the same time. I personally watched every single one of my fellow delegates, whom I now call my friends, grow. Not just on their own, but all of us, together, as a newly formed community. It hurts my heart to know that I have no idea if or when I will ever see these girls again. I have never felt more supported, pushed, and just bursting at the seams with gratitude. I hope that our time here stays with everyone else as much as I know it will stay with me.

Macey Harper signing off

Alyssa Hansen

Today, there are whispers from everyone about how we will be getting to go home soon. I can't help but smile as everyone passionately describes how they miss their home, bed, pets, and shower. To me, however, my plans aren't quite as welcoming. My hope, my path, my entire future will be determined after this week. While everyone dreams of snuggling up in their beds again, I attempt to mentally and physically prepare myself for the greatest push for my future yet. I will be travelling directly from Girls State to what's known as SLE, a recruitment program for West Point, my dream college. The first day I get there, I will be tested on my physical strength in a test known as the CFA. Later that week, I will be interviewed on why West Point stands out to me and why I stand out as a candidate. Girls State has absolutely helped me grow in this area, and I feel prepared, but sometimes you will be anxious no matter how prepared you are. On Monday, at the first city meeting with no previous knowledge of legislation, bills, and how meetings are run, I quickly realized I may have gotten myself way in over my head, but as the week went on, I quickly learned how things are done. This week has taught me so much, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to have been here for the last week and I would do it again in a heartbeat.

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Nichole Bray,
Assistant Counselor
City of Williams

The girls have shared how much they have enjoyed themselves and have bonded in such a short time. Reading their daily news articles has given so much insight of their time here. I have been able to enjoy sitting in on their debates and times in the cabin, sharing their point of view, and just the little things that are going on with them. This is now my second year at Girl State, and another year, I can see why being a counselor is amazing, and how much this means. I learned what it takes to be a leader and guide with support. Girl State has the most amazing women whom I am forever grateful to be able to spend this week with. Can't wait for next year.

Mary Scaturamchio
Councilor
City of Williamson

Christine Kube

Approximately one month before the start of the 2025 Girls State camp, Nina nicely asked me if I would like to help out this year, all while plastering a smile on her face (smile or smirk?) since she knew I didn't know what I was getting into... she kept saying you will have a blast!! I was somewhat worried with this statement, but thought.... OK. After arriving at camp and getting set up, I sat there in the lodge thinking about which motorcycle I should be riding and where, when 5 tired girls walked in. At the time, had I known, this would probably be the most subdued I would see them all week (excluding movie night).

Little did I know that I would be introduced to a recital of a group karaoke version of Rhianna and a dramatic reading of Justin Beiber...wow.... I have no words.

In all honesty, I generally do not like politics. Partly because I haven't studied it or followed it. However, this week has been educational; I have learned about politics at a state and federal level, and the current culture of teenage girls, including music preference and views on family size, community requirements, and having unlimited resources at a snap of fingers to create that perfect community that is smog free, has endless food, great cookies, a cool train, and aquatic life. However, it sounds like the city would need to budget for excessive use of electricity, and if the city population is smart, their annual salary will be below \$200,000 a year :-)

All joking aside, it has been fun and enlightening to be around all of the citizens this week. I can see why they are all so motivated to succeed, and I have no doubt that they will, at the highest level. Good luck to all of you.

Where has the time gone? I can not believe it has been a whole week already! It was so exciting to meet and greet you when you arrived and to see how you each have grown throughout this week, You have all been a fantastic group of citizens. All of you just seemed to blend into long-lasting friends. It is important in life to have the help of your friends. When things got a little stir crazy, you all stepped up and persevered to the best of your abilities.

You don't know how proud I am of every one of you! Even though some of you may not have been sure of yourselves at first, I feel in my heart that you are more confident and have even ventured outside of your comfort zone.

I hope that you all leave with your heads high with the confidence, pride, and desire to go out and conquer your dreams!

Jane Larson

The cook -



Go

My dear citizens,

Wow! The end of the week is here. I am ready to go home. I am tired. I am not ready to say goodbye.

I truly feel a special connection to each of you. Hare so welcoming, so accepting, so thoughtful, so respectful, and so very very beautiful.

Thank you for sharing your lonely spirits with me. I will hold you close to my heart.

Go...my young chicks. Go, conquer the world. Love yourself, remember to be kind. You can be a strong woman and also be kind.

Watch out and reach out when your heart tells you to. "BE THE ONE". Although use caution and protect yourselves.

It's a big world, and you're about to embark. You've got this!

A hard moment is just that, a moment. Take a breath. Center yourself.

Go.

Always,

Mom - Carrie

GIRLS STATE 2025 – What a time!!!

Another year of Girls State is over. Notice, I said "year". Girls State is not just for a week in June. There are things happening all year long. It takes a team to make the week of Girls State a success. There were major changes made to the construct of Alaska Girls State, which made many of us tremble, but we managed to overcome the challenges.

All of that work paid off on May 31st when we arrived at the Alaska Healing Hearts Campground Staff had taken the time that day to load up the trailer to take out to the camps. We arrived about 7:00, and things were off and running. Two of us headed into town to pick up 4 people arriving, while Mary was driving down from Fairbanks with several more. By noon on June 1st, everyone had arrived and managed to move into their cabins.

Throughout the week, there were 8 general assemblies, 8 city meetings, 4 legislative sessions, and 2 party caucuses. In addition, there variety of activities such as making poppy wreaths, doing a whistlestop tour for general elections, and giving speeches.

When they first arrived, many of the citizens were a little shy and introverted. But as the week went on, they came out of their shells and blossomed into creative and intelligent young ladies. After being directed through things once, they took the wheel and went through the seas with confidence.

Congratulations to all of our citizens and staff. It was a highly impressive week and one that will be a highlight for the years to come.

Barb Nath

Co-Director

Dear Citizens of ALA Alaska Girls State,

Although today is the last day of AK Girls State, it does not end here; you are now part of a community much larger than Alaska Girls State. You are part of a community of over 300,000 women who have completed this program. What does that mean? It means you will have a never-ending network of women and instant friendships. You will know that the person sitting across from you has been through a rigorous program that pushed you into an uncomfortable zone, that she is reliable, and will be a friend during the good and tough times. You will support each other and collaborate for the common good.

This week has been an incredible week of learning and making lifelong friendships. You started out the week as quiet and unsure of what was in store for you, and you have ended the week as a confident citizen of Girls State, a state that each of you has created with laws, ordinances, and policy. As a citizen of AKGS you have grown into a community of citizens and built a state that you would want to live in through collaboration between cities, the platform party, and legislation. Needless to say, it has been an honor to watch this collaboration grow into something more.

During your week here at ALA Alaska Girls State, you have learned about many of our programs that we have to offer. We encourage you to become involved in your Sponsoring Unit by volunteering with them during their special events. Present your poppy wreaths to your sponsoring unit and accompany the unit members to the Veterans and Memorial Day Ceremonies. Lastly, you, as a citizen of Alaska Girls State, are our liaisons for future citizens of Girls State. Be our advocate, tell your friends, talk to your unit members, counselors, teachers, or anyone who will listen about your experience.

It has been an honor and a privilege to be your ALA Alaska Girls State Director of 2025

For God & Country

Nina Ketelsen

Nina Ketelsen, ALA Alaska Girls State Director



