



## RECORDING THE DEPARTMENT'S HISTORY

Many historians firmly believe that a true understanding of the past is one of the most powerful tools we have for shaping the future. It can instill a sense of identity and purpose as well as suggest goals that will resonate. Therefore, it is important for every department to have a yearly history written. Here are some tips:

- Write the history in a third-person narrative. Your job is that of an intermediary – someone who witnessed the events and then describes them for the reader. Do not include your thoughts or comments on the events – only the occasion, the people involved, and what occurred.
- Be sure to start recording events as soon as the department president is sworn in at your department convention. Include the theme for the year and how it relates to the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.
- Include current events that impact the American Legion Auxiliary (local and globally). These events have a cause and effect on the Auxiliary, resulting in new or resurrected projects and programs.
- Department president visits to units are important, so be sure to include examples of what the department president did to support veterans, military, their families, and communities.
- Should the national president visit your department, include in your history how she helped your department focus on the Auxiliary's mission.
- Include all member activities as part of the department history, not just activities of the president.
- Include awards your department have been given by the national organization as well as those from the communities.
- Record special events that occur during the year. Examples:
  1. Your state government passes a declaration for Poppy month.
  2. Your department conducts a big fundraiser for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.
  3. Current events that affect the Auxiliary members in your state and the Auxiliary's response to that event. For example, if there is a weather disaster, write about how your members went above and beyond to help in the community, etc.

- Any time your department gets media coverage (i.e., a PSA on the radio or press release in the paper).
- Pick out impressive statistics from other department committees. Examples:
  1. Your AEF funds greatly increase
  2. The number of girls attending ALA Girls State
- Be sure to include the failures as well as the successes as we all learn from errors. For example, the department tried a new project, but it didn't go as well as hoped. Include why the project failed. Future members may see the value of the project but need the details so they can make a success of the project.
- Include all amendments and resolutions that were carried and those that didn't. If one didn't pass, include the discussion so that others may learn why it failed.
- End the history with information about your department convention that ends the year.

Once complete, present history for the year to the Department President and give the department a copy for its files.