

# Writing a Year End Winning Report

## REPORTING, IN GENERAL

Why do this? Why does it matter?

It is very important that the American Legion Auxiliary units report their contributions to support the efforts of our international organization, whose purpose is to support the American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families.

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS? YES OR NO – Discussion

- Some members do not realize the importance of filling out and sending in reports, especially the ones with less experience. Did you know that national uses the figures that we report to send a report to Congress and then Congress uses that report to determine how much money is spent to help veterans when it comes budget time? I didn't. Did you know that the Past President's Parley is supposed to help aid in reporting? I didn't know that either. I always knew that I could go to past presidents for advice, but I just never really thought about it to this degree.

DOES YOUR UNIT UTILIZE THE PAST PRESIDENT'S PARLEY TO HELP WITH REPORTING? – YES OR NO, is there some other way your unit does reports - Discussion

- We all know that awards can be won at the Department and National level, but do you really know how important it is to adhere to deadlines and write narrative?. Your report could be disqualified from winning an award if it is late. You cannot win if you do not try.

## DEFINITION OF A NARRATIVE REPORT

What is a narrative report?

A **narrative** (or story) is any fictional **report** of connected events, presented in a sequence of written or spoken words, and/or in a sequence of (moving) pictures.

YOUR STORY BASED ON FACTS, REAL EVENTS, AND REAL PEOPLE.

- A narrative essay is a piece of writing that recreates an experience through time.
- A narrative essay can be based on one of your own experiences, either past or present, or it can be based on the experiences of someone else.
- In addition to telling a story, a narrative essay also communicates a main idea or a lesson learned

## WHY TELL YOUR STORY

This is the best way to tell the unit leadership, district leadership, department leadership and national leadership all about the things which your unit is doing.

## TOOT YOUR HORN. RING YOUR BELL.

This can also be a way to tell the community about who the American Legion Auxiliary is and what we are about. Show them what we do for those who have served or are currently serving to defend our country.

## THE STORY

Explain the activity with details of who, what, when, where, how and why

- State the facts.
- Use numbers if possible to show how many or how much.
- Give specific examples.
- When writing from the District or Department level – include multiple Units. Everyone is doing something and we need to capture that, do not dwell just on one outstanding Unit.

## ACTIVITY

Index card

Think of something you did for the ALA last week

## EXAMPLE:

**Who-** Me, a lady and the Indiana National Guard Battalion located in Bton

**What** – Lady wants to donate furniture to service member as they are moving away from Indiana. In their new home they are going to start fresh and buy new things.

**When** – Conversation took place 4/7/15 and lady is moving at end of month

**Where** – Fishers, IN; Bloomington, IN; anywhere in Indiana

**How** – Lady assisted with donating household supplies to Soldiers in need during thanksgiving time frame in 2013. She reconnected with me as she loves giving back to the military. I am connecting lady with unit to begin conversation as whom could use a helping hand.

**Why** – Soldiers deserve a break as they defend our country. Lady wants to give back to veterans as her way to say thank you. I was contacted due to my involvement with the ALA.

## MOVING YOUR STORY FROM INDEX CARD TO PAPER

Don't let fear get in the way of jotting down some words and expanding on them.

Are you afraid of writing a report? YES or NO – Discussion

Are you afraid of asking for help and guidance? YES or NO - Discussion

## **BUILDING CONFIDENCE**

You feel like you lack preparation in the subject area. You feel like you do not have sufficient experience with the writing process in order to understand what to do.

There is no right or wrong answer. You cannot FAIL by submitting something. You just need confidence.

As a leader, you could incorporate a challenge for your unit. Take the index card and use that to help you perform “confidence booster,” exercise. The idea is to have your unit members compete in a mini-paragraph marathon. You have each person write one paragraph, every fifteen minutes, for one hour. The exercise allows the members to witness the transformation they go through as they work to accomplish this task. Results: Some exhibit frustration that they might not be able to finish in the time allotted, but their doubts quickly dissipate as they focus less on the time and more on the end goal: finishing at least one of the four paragraphs in fifteen minutes. The happiest members are the ones who thought they could never do it, but find a way to complete the task. At the end of the activity, members reflect on their responses to the topics and on their performance.

## **TIPS AND TRICKS**

- Pick your committee chairmanship to write about
- Use your story and other’s stories (share your index card ideas among each other)
- Use the President’s Theme CHANGE IS OUR FUTURE
- Try to use the National President’s Theme CELEBRATING FAITH, FAMILY AND FREEDOM
- Use National Plan of Action and Department Plan of Action
- Ask for a quote from a member about what you did
- Reflect on how you feel about the story
- Summarize why you enjoy being a member of the ALA
- Keep track of statistics all year
- Create a mid-year report to help keep you on track
- Report what all levels did \*If you are reporting at the Department level\*
- Come up with a catchy phrase, something that will stick out – For PR remember I said that we were “Angels Sharing our Story by Passing it on and Passing it out for our Veterans”. This phrase incorporated our Department President’s theme and our National President’s theme. It also was about our story because PR is all about getting our story out there.

**WHICH CHAIRMANSHIP SHOULD I WRITE ABOUT:** Discussion with Brittany about her situation – her unit is too small so she has never written a report

Allow it to play out in front of others

Devote focus to one chairmanship for the small Unit to write a narrative about. For example IVH, the Unit could write about their adopted veteran and how they support him/her. Write about donations (money, snacks, etc.). Do you go to play bingo with the veterans?

**PRESIDENT THEME:** Example with my index card example - How could we incorporate CHANGE IS OUR FUTURE???

**SUBJECT:** Embracing the age gap between younger veterans and their families with an older generation ALA member

Brainstorm and jot down 3 ideas

- 1) Consider starting deceased member program – donate furniture from a member whom passes away to a young military couple (maybe that is a taboo idea)
- 2) A member whom has owned their house for more than 10 years, provides advice to local National Guard unit about how to buy a house or recommend safe vendor/businesses to work with (doable and could incorporate with ALA, but for next year)

Need to figure out what this activity created change

- 3) Their change became someone's future... Now we are really on to something. And maybe next year you can focus on the above ideas more to expand your committee program.

**PLAN OF ACTION:**

Re-state their mission, objective and goals in your own words.

Explain what you did to meet those goals and objectives.

So let's say we want to work on **National Security** –

It's Purpose Statement is:

To support our military and their families.

My connection lady x to MAJ David Endris at the Bloomington Armory, we are hoping to support a military member and their family by getting them furniture to enhance their living situation. The ALA assisted in this by connecting these 2 individuals and asking them to sit down with you at lunch at the AL to discuss the next steps.

Let's look at **Community Service** -

It's Purpose Statement is:

To strengthen our local communities with uniquely identified opportunities of service by providing volunteer leadership, encouraging the stewardship of its patriotic citizens, acknowledging our country's military history, and supporting the families that have sacrificed for our freedom.

Have audience work out a sentence that fulfills the purpose statement

**QUOTE:**

Ask someone in the audience what they think about what I did with connecting the lady with NG unit

A XX year member of the ALA stated , “ “

After you written your report, you are not done....

THEN WHAT...

**Add these to other areas of the ALA:**

Historian book

Create a prayer for book of prayers

Cavalcade of Memories

Create a Press Release

Add story to your unit newsletter

Share your story with the newspaper

Create a National narrative

Send your story to be submitted to the ALA magazine

Share your story with those that helped you make the story (x and MAJ Endris)

Membership - Ask the WHO on your index card - are they members? If yes, like in my example MAJ Endris is a part of Franklin AL – I could write a note to the Franklin unit and share with them his story...

If they are not, find out if they are eligible to be a member. If they are eligible, SIGN THEM UP! Is the lady in Jenny's example a member? She already enjoys giving back to the military. That is something that will spark a member that would actually be involved and not just joining to be a bar member.

And I could go on and on....