



American Legion Auxiliary

*A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans,
Military, and their Families*

TO: National Executive Committee Members, National Officers, National Chairmen, Past National Presidents

CC: Dept Presidents; Dept Secretaries, NHQ Staff; National Committee Members

From: Kelly Circle, Executive Director

Re: Weekly Briefing 10-23-2020

Red Book Updates

Welcome to the weekly briefing, national committee members! I've added you to the distribution list because we are now including red book updates each week and you need to be in the know on that. It's also easier for me to send to everyone at once than having our chairmen have to forward the briefings. 😊

The hard copies of this year's Red Book will be mailed next week so be on the lookout for those. Attached to this briefing will be the updates we've received since we went to press. If you are ever in doubt, the online version of the Red Book is the first place information is updated so go there first.

Member Participation in Remote Training

In a preliminary review of the registrants for Mission Delivery: Basic and Veteran Service (all sessions), we are seeing success in reaching our members! Of the 640 members who registered, 243 were Unit Members only (38%) and 247 (39%) were Department Officers or Chairmen. National Officers made up 13% of registrants and District Officers were the remaining 11%. (Numbers were rounded so the total percentage is 101%) Here's the chart for easier understanding:

Department Officer/Chairman Count	247	39%
District Count	69	11%
National Count	79	13%
Unit Count	243	38%
Grand Count	640	

Thank you for all your efforts in helping us get the word out on these trainings and please continue to spread the word! Even if someone has been a member for decades and know the programs in-depth, there just might be a new idea or twist on an old idea that they will find helpful for their unit!

Member Benefits

We have added two new Member Benefits – AmWINS and Armed Forces Vacation Club. AmWINS is our new Member Benefits broker – where they plan to help us expand our



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program and add new benefits, and increase revenue. AFVC offers weeklong vacations starting at \$359 at 200,000+ resorts in 100+ countries. You can find out more about AFVC and our other Member Benefits by logging into the Member Portal on our website:

<https://www.alaforveterans.org/Members/Login/?ReturnUrl=%2fResources%2fMember-Benefits%2f>

Words of Wisdom

“May the quality of our thinking be mighty – then our accomplishments will be mighty, too! For only as we are great can we serve, and only as we serve can we continue to be great.”

-PNP Rachel “Rae” Biester (1933-34)

I was going to end with this really cool quote, but I found out that not only was Rae Biester a Past National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, but was also the first woman superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint.

Rachel Rae Biester was appointed as Superintendent in 1953 by President Eisenhower and served eight years. During her tenure there, she was known for “bringing a will of steel to the work when needed, and a heart of gold to the workers.” She sent Christmas cards and birthday cards to every worker and if anyone got sick, she would personally visit them at their home or hospital.

“Biester not only reached out to the staff, but also encouraged the staff to reach out to her. The door to her office was never closed, and employees were always welcome to come to her with their problems – job-related and personal ones, as well.

Not long after taking charge at the mint, Biester faced a major crisis: The economy was lagging, coin production was down, and widespread layoffs loomed for mint employees. She summoned the staff to a mass meeting and asked for ideas on what might be done to help save jobs – and someone in the group suggested expanding production of proof sets.

‘I never knew about proof coins before I went to the mint,’ Biester told me in our interview, ‘but once I found out what they were, I liked them very much. And I felt within myself that they needed more promotion.’

Promotion is precisely what she gave them. She sent personal notes to purchasers of 1953 proof sets thanking them for their orders, urging them to continue buying proof sets in future years and encouraging them to interest their friends in doing likewise. She sent similar notes in 1954. And the orders came pouring in: Sales nearly doubled in



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1954, and they nearly doubled again in 1955. Within two years, the mint's annual output rose from 128,800 proof sets to 378,200 – and thanks to the extra workload, the layoffs were successfully averted.” (Reiter, Ed, Coin News Today)

I share this with you because I see the similarity of our membership decline to the crisis Rae faced at the Mint. What can we learn from her to help our organization now? What if we were to send personal notes to every member to say thank you for their work on a project, or wish a member happy birthday? What if we sent notes urging members to continue to serve on projects and encouraging them to interest their friends in doing the same? Maybe we could have similar results!

My biggest takeaway from this article was that Rae was genuinely kind and compassionate. She cared for others and used that trait in her work and with the ALA. By showing kindness and compassion to those she supervised, she was able to build a team to overcome real challenges. As leaders in the ALA, are we ready to do the same?