



The ALA Spotlight Shines on Betty Heedley

Unit 297 of Benbrook, Texas, is proud to submit this nomination for President Diana King's "Be a Star in Someone's Life" award.

Betty Heedley has been a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 297 for 25 years. She is eligible through the service of her late husband, James Heedley, who served in the United States Navy during the Viet Nam Conflict.

Mrs. Heedley has held the office of Unit 297 2nd Vice President since 2008. She currently serves as our Americanism & VA&R Chairman, Bingo Chairperson & Bookkeeper, and actively participates in the 12th District, 1st Division, and Department of Texas activities and events.

Betty is retired from American Airlines, but we all say that she works more now than she did while she was employed! She spends countless hours volunteering at the Post and in the community - she heads up the kitchen duties in most Post functions, prepares desserts for our monthly steak night, represents the Unit at Bingo weekly, maintains Bingo financial and administrative records, works with the local high school JROTC program, and participates in many projects assisting our veterans, active duty personnel, and their families. She is also a supporting member of the American Legion Riders of Post 297 and prepares a dinner before each ALR meeting with the proceeds benefitting the Riders.

Betty's passion lies with our veterans and the constant reminder that they are not forgotten. Two of her favorite projects are the Liberty House and the Patriot House - residential facilities for homeless veterans in Fort Worth. The Liberty House is run by the Tarrant County MHMR Addiction Services and provides a safe and drug-free environment while they work their recovery programs and the Patriot House is a homeless shelter for veterans operated by the Presbyterian Night Shelter. Both facilities work in partnership with the U.S. Veterans Administration in providing transitional living, drug or alcohol addiction services, and basic needs for those who have served our Country.

Betty has organized numerous activities to benefit our veterans who have fallen on unfortunate circumstances. She organized a Veterans Day "cook-out" with the Auxiliary & Riders for the Liberty House veterans to enjoy a day of burgers and friendship in their honor, a Christmas celebration with food and gifts for the residents, and several drives throughout the year to collect and distribute needed household / personal items, clothing, gift cards, etc. Betty has become a constant visitor and welcome friend to all who reside and work here. No matter the occasion or the reason for her visit, the warm smile and friendly greeting of Betty Heedley and American Legion friends provides them a joyous occasion and a reminder of their Country's gratitude for their service.

Betty has also encouraged other projects for the Auxiliary in support of our veterans, such as providing coffee supplies and items for the Kiddie Kart at the Dallas VA Hospital, fund raisers for the Fisher House, and plans to attend the upcoming Volunteer Orientation for the new VA Outpatient Clinic in Fort Worth. Betty continues her efforts with our active duty personnel as well. Realizing the importance of communication for our soldiers who are so far away from home, Betty worked relentlessly on an idea to

provide laptop computers to our soldiers overseas. Her determination and persistence resulted in a donation of 15 laptops from a local company and a donation of \$750 to cover the shipping charges. These laptops were sent to selected troops in Afghanistan, and Betty has already begun work to continue this program through the assistance of other organizations willing to give back to our men and women in uniform.

Betty's benevolence and passion for life isn't unique to the American Legion Auxiliary. Her dedication to her family is first and foremost. She is very active in the lives of her two grown daughters, transports her son-in-law to dialysis weekly, spends several days a week with her aging mother, and is a personal friend to many. She enjoys dancing, Texas Hold 'Em, a good glass of wine, travelling, and LIFE.

Mrs. Heedley has been our "Shining Star" at Unit 297 in so many other ways. Whether it's an out-of-town weekend with her mother or a day spent cleaning at the Post, Betty approaches each day with a passion for life, a dedication to her family, a love for her Country, and a desire to lend a helping hand. She personifies the vision statement of the American Legion Auxiliary, "*Service, not Self*", and we are proud to have her as a member and a friend.

Submitted by
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Benbrook Unit 297