AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

April 15, 2026

- **Call to Order –** 6:10 p.m. Please Silence your cell phones
- **Posting of Colors**
- **Placement of POW/MIA** - Cover and Prayer by Chaplain
- **Pledge of Allegiance** – Led by Sgt-at-Arms
- **Preamble** - Led by Membership Chair
- **Roll Call of Officers** – Leslie Dinkel and Stacy Eickhoff, Excused
- **Officer Substitution** - Heidi Maturino for Leslie Dinkel; Janet du Monceau de Bergendal for Stacy Eickhoff
- **Special Guests**: Isabella Melo, 2026 Class President and $1,000 Nursing Scholarship recipient. She is leaning towards pediatric nursing and will be attending Cal State Fullerton. Isabella was presented with both the scholarship and a gift from Mary Beth Martin. Her application is being forwarded to Department for the possibility of an additional $4,000 Department nursing scholarship.
- **Approval of Minutes** - March minutes were approved as written.
- **This Month Dimes for Times is for** Children & Youth
- **Treasurer/Finance** – Laura Farr – 2026-27 proposed budget was discussed. Motion made to approve 2026-27 proposed budget. There was no discussion, motion was seconded and motion passed. An additional motion was made to increase the Community Donation budget for the current fiscal year by $5,000. Laura explained what Community Donations entails for clarity. Question was raised as to whether every donation would be increased by $5,000 and Laura explained that the whole budget would be increased by a total of $5,000 only. There were no further questions. Motion was seconded and motion passed.
- **President Reports** – Cynthia Minucci Neal
  General Announcements:
  - Elections will be held prior to the May 20th General Meeting. Voting will be held in the Fireside Room from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. on that date.
  - Honor Flight Southland will take place at LAX on May 3rd. Contact Cynthia if you are interested and she will provide additional information.
  - Military Families 101, which was scheduled for April 20th has been postponed due to Strong Families, Strong Children being inundated with many new cases. This will be rescheduled soon – more info to follow.
- **1st Vice President –** Bobbi Renaghan – Current membership is 1,825 Seniors - 34 Juniors for a total of 1,859.
- **2nd Vice President –** Bonnie Robertson – Quartermania will be on May 17th. She explained how Quartermania works. Baskets for the raffle are needed – any donation can be dropped off in the troop shipping box and just label it "Quartermania". Donations must be received by May 6th. The Mad Hatter Tea Parter is scheduled for Oct. 4th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- **Secretary –** Leslie Dinkel - Excused
- **Chaplain –** Mary Ann Leonard – No Report
- **Historian –** Mary Beth Martin – No Report
- **Executive Committee –** Peggy Bengry, Janet du Monceau de Bergendal, Janice Flanagan, Dana Johnston, Jan Woolford – No Report

Standing Committees with Chairs Names:

- **Americanism –** Diane Torrence – Read the essay of the Americanism Contest Winner who is a sophomore. The essay theme was, "What does the US Constitution teach us about leadership and responsibility?" Last year, this student's essay won at the Department level.
- **Auxiliary Emergency Fund –** Jan Woolford – No Report
- **Chair Covers –** Janz Simmons – No Report
- **Children and Youth –** Myra Alvermann – We are currently celebrating the "Month of the Military Children", please wear purple to show your support. We recently received a positive response from CHOC where every military child received a goody bag. Ronald McDonald House wishes us to also recognize their military children. Please continue to collect and donate your bottle caps, the hospital truly appreciates this. Through the library system they will be promoting a summer reading program. Participants can win games, prizes and a party! The Military Baby Shower will be held this August and donations will be needed. Dana Johnston also displayed her purple t-shirt in support of "Military Children's Month".
- **Community Service –** Heidi Sargeant (Excused) – presented by Julie Pulino – The March Ruck/Walk was held on March 21st. We had 20 volunteers working check-in, route support, manning posts, etc. and there were 374 participants! The Ruck was from the Huntington Beach Pier to Post 291. She gave a description of the day's activities. This was a great event, and we look forward to participating in next year's event. Bonnie Pollack also reported on "Project Bearable", 219 bears were distributed this month! 100 bears went to the City of Orange Fire Department, 100 bears to 29 Palms Marine Corp Air Base, and 19 bears to Ronald McDonald House and Casa Theresa combined.
- **Constitution and Bylaws –** Janet du Monceau de Bergendal – No Report

- **Community Donations –** Christine Beilby, Heidi Sargeant - Christine asked if any members are interested in servicing on the Community Donation Committee to please contact her. She presented 6 motions today to wrap up this year. They are as follows:
  - Motion was made to donate $1,000 to Guide Dogs of America, Tender Loving Care. Their mission is to transform lives through partnerships with service dogs. This motion was seconded, and this motion passed.
  - Motion was made to donate $1,000 to REINS Therapeutic Horsemanship Program. There was a question as to where REINS is located. Christine explained that they are in San Juan Capistrano. She further explained how the organizations are vetted through Charity Navigator, personal contact, etc. The organization must be ranked in the 90th percentile. There were no further questions. This motion was seconded, and the motion passed.
  - Motion was made to donate $1,000 to Camp Pendleton Community Service Foundation – This is the first Rotary Club chartered on an active military base and they focus on helping military families. This motion was seconded, and the motion passed.
  - Motion was made to donate $1,000 to Tunnel to Towards Walk in Huntington Beach. They provide mortgage free homes to veterans to focus on eradicating veteran homelessness. They also support Gold Star Families and first responders. This motion was seconded, and the motion passed.
  - Motion made to donate $1,000 to Tee It Up For The Troops in Huntington Beach. They provide support for our veterans (rehabilitation, suicide prevention, PTSD, etc.). Motion was seconded, and motion passed.
  - Motion was made to donate $1,000 to Team Red, White & Blue. This is a health and wellness community for veterans and founded by veterans. This motion was seconded, and the motion passed.
- **Education –** Barbara Melum – We currently have 10 schools participating in the poster contest for Memorial Day. We awarded two teacher grants totaling $3,557 to the Newport Mesa School Foundation. On April 22nd, we will host a luncheon at Post 291 to honor high school campus police officers (SROs) from the Newport Mesa School District.
- **Girls State –** Caroline Miller – She explained that Girls State is a "hands on" civics lesson. She further explained what the girls do during the week of Girls State She spoke about government and our court system. We have 27 girls from Unit 291 that will attend. The girls must write a Bill before going to Girls State and they use this to run their simulations. One student will qualify for the Samsung Scholarship. Orientation will be held on April 26th at the Garden Grove Elks Lodge.
- **Juniors –** Stacy Eickhoff – (Excused) – No Report
- **Leadership –** Dana Johnston – No Report
- **Legislative** – Pia Thompson – No Report
- **Music –** Mary Ann Leonard – No Report
- **National Security –** Karren Schaeffer – No Report
- **Past Presidents Parley –** Mary Beth Martin – No Report
- **Poppy –** Bobbie Renaghan – All members should have received a mailing. The wall of Remembrance Cards will go up this Friday. We have received many donations, and she will report the dollar amount at next month's meeting.
- **Public Relation –** Heidi Sargeant – (Reported by Cynthia Minucci Neal) – Discussed the media connections (KABC news, etc.) and their coverage of the RUCK. KABC will also be here for the "Salute to Service" in May.
- **Salute To Service –** Julie Sanborn –. No Report
- **Timekeeper –** Mary Beth Martin – No Report
- **Troop Shipping –** Maureen Madigan – No Report
- **VA & R –** Marilyn Anania, Roseann Freilich – Updated provided for two food pantries that were serviced in March. They are looking for new opportunities to help our veterans. They have reached out to US Vets in Long Beach. They have also spoke to Art at the US Vets in Tustin regarding helping our female veterans.
- **Announcements –** None
- **Old Business –** None
- **New Business –** Kim Philhart (for Stacy Eickhoff) presented the slate of nominations for next year. Voting will take place on May 20th from 2 – 6 p.m. in the Fireside room. The slate is as follows: Cynthia Minucci Neal, President; Bobbie Renaghan, 1st Vice President; Bonnie Robertson, 2nd Vice President; Veronica Andler-Lopez, Secretary; Jan Kennedy, Treasurer; Karen Schaeffer, Chaplain; Sue Lindsey, Historian; Stacy Eickhoff, Sgt-at-Arms; and Becky Cooper, Asst-Sgt-at-Arms. The following members are nominated for the Executive Committee – Peggy Bengry, Janet du Monceau de Bergendal, Janice Flanigan, Dana Johnston, Mary Ann Leonard, Janz Simmons, and Jan Woolford.
- **Next General Membership Meeting –** May 20th at 6:00 p.m.
- **Next District Meeting –** Saturday, May 16, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at Albert Schwab Post 555 – 14582 Beach Blvd., Midway City
- **Removal of POW/MIA Cover & Closing Prayer –** Mary Ann Leonard
- **Adjournment –** 7:33 p.m.