AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 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 Laura Farr, Excused
- **Officer Substitution** - Heidi Maturino for Leslie Dinkel; Janet du Monceau de Bergendal for Stacy Eickhoff (Stacy Eickhoff working election room)
- **Special Guests**: None
- **Approval of Minutes** - April General Meeting minutes were approved as written.
- **This Month Dimes for Times is for** Poppy
- **Treasurer/Finance** – Laura Farr (Excused) Mary Beth Martin proceeded with the 2nd reading of the 2026/2027 proposed budget. Motion was made to accept the 2026/2027 budget and motion was seconded. There were discussions and questions regarding membership and facility rent expenses. An explanation was provided – it was explained how all the families (Legionnaires, SALS, Auxiliary, Yacht Club) must pay a fee to the City of Newport Beach for use of the Post 291 facility. After the questions and explanations concluded, the motion for the 2026/2027 budget passed.
- **President Reports** – Cynthia Minucci Neal – She presented several motions for approval. They are as follows:
  - **Motion:** The Executive Board moves to waive the reading of the 2025/2026 Delegates and Alternates list. Discussion followed about the incorrect years shown on the agenda, which listed 2026/2027. Once it was confirmed that the correct years were 2025/2026 the motion was seconded, and motion passed.
  - **Motion:** The Executive Board moves to approve the 2025/2026 Delegate and Alternate list for the convention as presented. Further discussion addressed the incorrect years on the agenda, changing them from 2026/2027 to 2025/2026. The motion was then seconded, and motion passed.
  - **Motion:** The Executive Board moves to send the President uninstructed to the Department of California Convention. There were questions and discussion regarding the definition of "uninstructed". Once this was explained, the motion was seconded, and motion passed.
  - **Motion:** The Executive Board moves to approve an annual allocation of up to $5,000 annual fee for fiscal year 2026/2027 for an offsite storage unit, including shelving, containers, and supplies. It was explained that the current onsite storage unit is at capacity, requiring some members to store items in their homes. There was discussion regarding where this offsite storage unit would be located (most likely Costa Mesa), and what type of items would be stored within the storage unit. It has also been determined that there is no additional storage space available onsite. The motion was then seconded, and the motion passed.
  - **Motion:** The Executive Board moves to transfer up to $5,000 from the reserve funds to cover the cost of the offsite storage. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed.
  - Past Presidents Mary Beth Martin and Mary Carolyn presented Cynthia Minucci Neal with her Junior Past President pin and recognized her many contributions to ALA291. They thanked her for her leadership and the countless hours she has devoted to this organization. She was also presented with a book highlighting this past year's activities, including a narrative and photographs. Cynthia then thanked everyone for their participation and support.

  - Past Presidents Mary Beth Martin and Mary Carolyn spoke about the "Member of the Year" award, noting that selecting the recipient is one of their most meaningful responsibilities. They then announced that Kim Philhart was this year's honoree. Kim joined ALA291 in 2009, and they recognized her dedication, many hours of volunteer service, loyalty, and compassion. She has been involved in countless events and projects here over the years. Kim then came to the podium to accept her well-deserved award.
- **1st Vice President –** Bobbi Renaghan – We currently have 1875 Seniors and 36 Juniors for a total membership of 1911. Dana Johnston then presented 14 new auxiliary persons for membership to ALA291. A motion was made to accept the 14 new members, the motion was seconded, and the motion passed. The new members were then sworn in.
- **2nd Vice President –** Bonnie Robertson – She thanked all who participated in Quartermania which was a "Big Success". Our next event will be the Mad Hatter Tea Party on Oct. 4th. This will be another great event which will include a fashion show. Flyers will be available in a few weeks.
- **Secretary –** Leslie Dinkel - Excused
- **Chaplain –** Mary Ann Leonard – Discussed and performed the "Draping of the Charter" ceremony for members of ALA291 that have passed away this year. She proceeded to present their names and provided a little information on each member that passed.
- **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 – No Report
- **Auxiliary Emergency Fund –** Jan Woolford – No Report
- **Chair Covers –** Janz Simmons – No Report
- **Children and Youth –** Myra Alvermann – This month C&Y had three motions to bring forth for the general membership. They are as follows:
  - **Motion** was made to donate $2,000 to the Armed Services YMCA of the USA Camp Pendleton Beach Camp Hero Program. This is a 9-week summer day camp at Camp Pendleton designed to support the specific needs of military children. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed.
  - **Motion** was made to donate $1,500 to Camp Flashhh at Camp Pendleton. Camp Flashhh stands for "Families Laughing and Sharing Hugs, Hope, and Happiness" and is intentionally designed for military families who have children with special needs. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed.
  - **Motio**n was made to donate $1,000 to the Camp Pendleton Summer Reading Program which is an 8-week program that promotes literacy during the summer months for military children. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed.
- **Community Service –** Heidi Sargeant (Excused) – Bonnie Pollak provided an update on Project Bearable – the next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 26th in the Fireside Room at 11:00 a.m. They have lots of supplies to continue to make bears for distribution.
- **Constitution and Bylaws –** Janet du Monceau de Bergendal – No Report
- **Community Donations –** Christine Beilby, Heidi Sargeant – No Report
- **Education –** Barbara Melum – Discussed the 13 Poppy Poster winners which the posters were displayed at the Post. She also spoke about the recent luncheon to honor our local School Resource Officers, Teacher Grant Awards, and the Newport/Mesa Foundation Dinner.
- **Girls State –** Caroline Miller – Orientation went well, with approximately 74 delegates attending. The next event is the send-off dinner on June 17, followed by Girls State beginning June 22. We will have the month of July off and the whole process will begin again at the end of August. She also shared information about the Girls Nation Smile Program, through which Amazon purchases can generate proceeds for Girls State. In addition, she said a volunteer with computer skills is needed to assist with the program.
- **Juniors –** Stacy Eickhoff – No Report
- **Leadership –** Dana Johnston – No Report

- **Legislative –** Pia Thompson – Posted the National Legislative Newsletter on the unit's Facebook page. Members were encouraged to review it, especially the "Calls to Action" section, and to please participate. She also encouraged everyone to vote on the upcoming June 2nd election. She provided some "same day registration" information, and information on forwarding the mail-in ballots for those temporarily away from home (active duty, children attending school outside of California, etc.)
- **Music –** Mary Ann Leonard – No Report
- **National Security –** Karren Schaeffer – No Report
- **Past Presidents Parley –** Mary Beth Martin – No Report
- **Poppy –** Bobbie Renaghan – Discussed the Poppy fundraiser and where the money is spent which is helping our veterans through our VA & R Program. So far this year we have raised $37,250. Special mention to Auxiliary member, Becky Mauger, who raised over $1,000 from her community!
- **Public Relation –** Heidi Sargeant – (Excused)
- **Salute To Service –** Julie Sanborn – She discussed this program which began in 2024. This year we had 65 high school recruits attend this great event. We also had local recruiters and some local high school counselors in attendance. The recruits were also given Duffy boat rides provided/donated by our Yacht Club and some of the local Duffy boat rental companies. She further discussed the event and all who attended from the City of Newport Beach, the Armed Services, and other organizations. She mentioned all who donated to making this event so amazing. She also discussed how members can get involved in this program.
- **Timekeeper –** Mary Beth Martin – No Report
- **Troop Shipping –** Maureen Madigan – No Report
- **VA & R –** Marilyn Anania, Roseann Freilich – She explained the role of the VA & R program. This month, $3,678 was used to support several local veteran food pantries. She also discussed the unit's continued support of the LBVA and the support they provide to our veterans. She has requested more information about the Thrift Store in Long Beach and what our members can donate to help them out. Once this info is received it will be posted on our Facebook page. She also spoke about the help that the LBVA provides to our female veterans. We were also invited to attend Santa Ana College's Veterans Recognition Dinner where the American Legion Auxiliary was named "Partner of the Year". She then displayed the award that was presented. They continue to look for veteran organizations that we can partner with and support.
  - **Motion** was made to donate $1,000 to the Veterans Creative Arts Festival in June. The motion was seconded, and motion passed.
- **Announcements –** None
- **Old Business –** None
- **New Business –** Stacy Eickhoff read the names of our 2026/2027 elected officers. They are as follows:

Cynthia Minucci Neal, President	Stacy Eickhoff, Sergeant-at-Arms
Bobbie Rehaghan, First Vice President	Becky Cooper, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Bonnie Robertson, Second Vice President	Peggy Bengry, Executive Committee
Veronica Andler-Lopez, Secretary	Janet du Monceau de Bergendal, Executive Committee
Jan Kennedy, Treasurer	Janice Flanagan, Executive Committee
Karren Schaeffer, Chaplain	Dana Johnston, Executive Committee
Sue Lindsey Historian	Jan Woolford, Executive Committee

  - **Motion** was made to accept all elected officers and executive committee members. Motion was seconded, and motion passed.

- **Next General Membership Meeting –** Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Hall
- **Next District Meeting –** Saturday, June 13, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at Huntington Beach Post 133 – Memorial Hall at 17 Street Park, 1718 Orange Ave.
- **Removal of POW/MIA Cover & Closing Prayer –** Mary Ann Leonard
- **Adjournment –** 7:49 p.m.