



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY, UNIT 291
215 15TH STREET, NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92663
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 8, 2025 **Time:** 6:02PM

- ❖ **CALL TO ORDER - Silence your cell phones**
- ❖ **Officer Substitution** – Mary Ann Leonard for Sharon Morgan, Chaplain
- ❖ **Chaplain’s Prayer** – Sharon Morgan, Chaplain
- ❖ **Pledge of Allegiance** – Janz Simmons, Sgt-at-Arms
- ❖ **Roll Call of Officers** – Cynthia Minucci Neal, Secretary

➤ **Excused:**

- ❖ **Approval of Minutes** –The minutes for the Executive Board Meeting held on April 10, 2025.
Motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion was made, 2nd, and motion carried. The minutes were approved as written.

X	President Mary Beth Martin	X	Chaplain Sharon Morgan	X	Executive Committee Jan Woolford
X	1 st Vice President Dana Johnston	E	Historian Sue Lindsay	X	Executive Committee Bobbi Renaghan
X	2nd Vice President Bonnie Robertson	X	Sergeant at Arms Janz Simmons	X	Executive Committee Janice Flanagan
X	Secretary Cynthia Minucci Neal	X	Asst. Sergeant at Arms Stacy Eickhoff	X	Executive Committee Mary Ann Leonard
E	Treasurer Laura Farr	X	Jr. Past President Cindy Edes	X	Executive Committee & Parliamentarian Peggy Bengry

P=Present E=Excused A=Absent Quorum = 9

❖ **SPECIAL GUESTS**

- Sharon introduced Leslie Dinkel who has accepted to become Secretary of the Auxiliary.
- Sharon was honored and will be moving out of state to be with her family. Hot fudge sundaes were enjoyed by all.
- Tom Boscamp from Coastline College VRC, and Tiana Ngo 1st recipient of the *Auxiliary Veterans College Scholarship* came to the Executive Board to accept the 1st Veteran Scholarship.

STANDING COMMITTEES

- ❖ **Americanism** – Carol Markel – No Report
- ❖ **Auxiliary Emergency Fund** – Jan Woolford – No Report
- ❖ **Chair Covers/Merchandise Sales** – Janz Simmons – No Report
- ❖ **Children and Youth** – Bea Foster
 - Contacting Barabara - Education regarding the children Back Packs. Back Packs need to be ordered for new school year - Requested \$600 for back packs. Funds to come from this year’s budget.

- Military Baby shower with the Sun & Sail Women's Club in August. Requested \$600 for 8 gifts of diapers and accessories for the new moms. Funds to come from this year's budget.
- ❖ **Community Service – Sharon Morgan – Presented by Cynthia Minucci Neal**
 - April 30, 2025 Bags of Love had 18 volunteers. Have delivered 80 bags of hygiene to the Costa Mesa Police Dept to date.
- ❖ **Constitution & Bylaws – Janet du Monceau de Bergendal – No Report**
- ❖ **Community Donations – Christine Beilby, Heidi Sergeant & Phyllis Helt**
 - See Community Donations in Board Packet Attachment 1*

1. **Battalion 22**

Suggested Donation: \$1,000

BATTALION 22 is a support group for veterans with the overarching goal of reducing suicide rates among our ranks. We are addressing this issue in unique ways and we're having great success. Our weekly meetings allow prior service members of all branches, backgrounds and lifestyles to share their thoughts and experiences with a sympathetic peer group without fear of being put on a watch list. There are no mandatory reporters, just veterans supporting veterans in a very private and intimate setting. Mat founded this group after his brother's suicide. They recently celebrated their first year anniversary & were featured at the February Coffee Talk at Am Legion Post 291.

RATIONAL: Our goals for 2025 are ambitious we're seeking funding to support these efforts. Awareness Campaign at Huntington Beach July 4 Parade -This year we want to enter a vehicle draped in banners and have teams of veterans walking along & will be applying to have a booth at the 3 day fair that is also happening in HB over July.

MOTION: The Donation Committee Moves to donate \$1,000 to Battalion 22 to support their July 4 parade goals of entering a vehicle in the parade with Veterans walking next to it & booth to bring awareness to this group and to Veteran Suicide. Motion was made, 2nd, and motion carried.

2. **Freedom Dogs**

Suggested Donation: \$1,050

Freedom Dogs is a non-profit devoted to serving wounded members of the military who are being treated for PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and/or other physical impairments. They train dogs in Oceanside and are looking for a location in Long Beach to be closer to the VA. These dogs provide emotional and physical support to support our military. They provide custom-trained dogs pairing a dog & a trainer team with a warrior during rehabilitation to assist with recovery or as a partner for life.

RATIONAL: Donation supports the training team and assist our military recover with a dog during treatment or partners a dog with a veteran for life. Heidi S met the Executive Director at Long Beach VA for a full detail on the prog

MOTION: The Donations Committee moves to donate \$1,050 to Freedom Dogs to help them provide dogs during recovery or as a partner for life. This will also help them move to the Long Beach area to establish a training facility closer to the VA. Motion was made, 2nd, and motion carried.

3. The Exchange Club of Newport Beach

Suggested Donation: \$1,000

The Exchange Club of Newport Beach is the oldest nonprofit. They have donated over a million dollars to Newport Beach and surrounding communities for youth programs, Americanism. Prevention of child abuse, military service member support.

Each year they sponsor an event at the Lido Theater and put on a food fest gathering and movie screening. These events have raised over \$1,000,000 over the years and helped start the largest child abuse prevention center in the nation! The Exchange Club of Newport Harbor gives more than \$63,000 in scholarships to our students in the Newport Mesa School District each year.

For over 15 years, the members have set up 1,776 American Flags at Castaways Park on Armed Forces week each year to honor our military. Called the Field of Honor, it is an inspiring event, which attracts families from all over the county. If a member of the legions has passed they will put a yellow ribbon on it with their name and branch of service.

Motion: The Donation Committee moves to give \$1,000 to The Exchange Club of Newport Beach, to continue their effort in supporting our community and supplying our flag. Motion was made, 2nd, and motion carried.

❖ Education – Barbara Melum – No Report

❖ Girls State - Caroline Miller

- Will be introducing the Girls State Alternates at the General Monthly meeting on May 21, 2025 and presenting them with Certificates.
- May 18, 2025 Honor Flight at LAX - Flyers for Honor Flights at LAX to meet the plane and the Veterans.
- Created goodie bags for the Counselors.

❖ Juniors – Stacy Eickhoff

- Volunteers for Salute to Service - Awaiting Juniors confirmation.

❖ Leadership – Cindy Edes

See Leadership in Board Packet Attachment 2

➤ Good Deed Award to Blake Hartfelder

Suggested Donation: \$200

- INFORMATION: I first read about this young man in the local Sentry paper. When Blake was 3, his mother Eileen started collecting blankets and towels to be given to animal shelters to be used for birthing and warmth during the cold months. This imprinted on Blake so in the 4th grade, he asked his principal if he could organize his own blanket drive. He designed his own flyer and got 1200 blankets. He continued the blanket drive twice a year through the 8th grade and estimates he has collected approximately 2,000 blankets and towels a year. He started driving 18 months ago and started putting up flyers in Starbucks and other businesses and even has a QR code to a Google document for porch pick-ups. Blake even did a special drive for the Pasadena Humane Society and the North Central Los Angeles Shelter after the devastating fires in the Palisades and Altadena. Blake says he gets great support from his family, community and his High School

and has about 19 volunteers who work with him. Blake was awarded the ALA National “Good Deed Award” which is to recognize young people who demonstrate a kind, caring act of selflessness.

- **Motion:** I move we donate \$200.00 to Blake Hartfelder. Motion was made, 2nd, and motion carried.

❖ **Legislative – Pia Thompson** – No Report

❖ **Music – Mary Ann Leonard** - Song selection for the General Monthly meeting is *You're a Grand Old Flag*

❖ **National Security – Susan Difonzo** – No Report

❖ **Past President Parley – Cindy Edes** – No Report

❖ **Poppy – Bobbi Renaghan**

- Update on Poppies – into 1½ weeks of receiving Poppy donation mail back. Miss Poppy was at the Post last Friday on May 2nd, collecting Poppy donations.

❖ **Public Relations – Heidi Sergeant**

- Salute to Service news article in the STU News.

❖ **Troop Shipping – Janice Flanagan & Janet du Monceau de Bergendal**

- 05-17-2025 Troop Shipping inside Main Hall
- Collecting addresses of deployed Troops

❖ **Salute to Service - Jeannie Celeketic & Julie Sanborn** – Presented by Mary Beth Martin

- To date 20 enlisted graduating high school students are coming to date

❖ **VA & R – Heidi Maturino**

- US Vets - went shopping and filled the food pantry
- US Vets Helping Heroes Program - helped a veteran to bring his electric bill current and another veteran with limited finances. Purchased a requested grocery list and delivered the items to the veteran.
- Coastline College VRC filled the food pantry
- Long Beach VA last trip to Long Beach VA Food Pantry will be after Troop Shipping.

REPORTS

❖ **President – Mary Beth Martin**

See President in Board Packet Attachment 3

- Corey Vigil wants to train the Auxiliary on Veterans.
- Band app - additional memory storage 100GB \$33.98 a year. Holds pictures for 5 years on Band. Important for Auxiliary to have 1 storage for all of Auxiliary needs.

➤ **1st Vice President / Membership – Dana Johnston**

- Update on Membership at 100% 1,957
- Discussed 134 members non-paid to date. Discussed sending out 1 last time

- New member orientation meeting reviews rules and that we are a service orientation and volunteering.
- Membership Motion
 - **Rational:** We are a service organization. We join to support our veterans, military, their families and the community. We have members that do not support the Auxiliary by volunteering. We believe the access card should be for the members who volunteer. Volunteering includes attending meetings, coming to events hosted by the Auxiliary, and volunteering in our programs: including but not limited to Front Door Access, Troop Shipping, Children & Youth, Salute to Service, and being on the Board or a Chairmanship or one of the committees. The American Legion Yacht Club requires volunteer hours. We are suggesting 10 hours per year. The hours need to be accumulated in the prior year. New members will be given a 1 year grace period.

Motion: I move we require 10 hours of Auxiliary Unit 291 volunteer time per calendar year (January 1 to December 31) in order to maintain access card privileges. Motion was made, 2nd and motion carried.

❖ **2nd Vice President / Fundraising - Bonnie Robertson**

- Update on April 27, 2025 Quartermania
- Big success had a lot of raffle baskets.
- Suggested Movie night and Bunco

❖ **Secretary – Cynthia Minucci Neal - No Report**

❖ **Treasurer – Laura Farr – No Report.** Everyone received email on 05-08-2025 with financials

❖ **Chaplain – Sharon Morgan – Presented by Mary Ann Leonard**

❖ **Historian – Susan Lindsey – No Report**

❖ **Sargeant-at-Arms - Janz Simmons - No Report**

❖ **Assistant Sargeant -at-Arms – Stacy Eickhoff - No Report**

❖ **Parliamentarian – Peggy Bengry - No Report**

❖ **Executive Committee – Bobbi Renaghan, Jan Woolford, Janice Flanagan, Mary Ann Leonard, & Peggy Bengry - No Report**

❖ **Junior Past President – Cindy Edes**

See Junior Past President in Board Packet Attachment 4

➤ **Bob Woolford Golf Tournament Santa Ana Elks Lodge** **Suggested Donation: \$156.20**

- **INFORMATION:** Bob Woolford a Post 291 Legionnaire, was a great support of our Auxiliary and always volunteered with Jan for many of our events. The Santa Ana Elks (which Bob was a member) is holding their 3rd annual golf tournament on June 7 and has been renamed the 3rd Annual Bob Woolford Golf Tournament. Tee sponsorship is \$156.20.

- **Motion:** I move we sponsor a Tee for \$156.20 in honor of Bob. The placard should read, American Legion Auxiliary Newport Harbor Unit 291. Motion was made, 2nd, and motion carried.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

❖ **Old Business**

❖ **100 year Anniversary – Cynthia Minucci Neal**

- May 24, 2025 Baseball tickets available
- Saturday June 21, 2025 9:30am – 11:30am Beach Clean Up

❖ **Member to Member – Cynthia Minucci Neal – No Report**

❖ **New Business**

- **Mary Ann Leonard** – Paid Up for Life. Discussion to be continued at July meeting.

❖ **NEXT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING** – The next Executive Board meeting is July 10, 2025. It will be held in the Fireside Room at 6:00pm. The Auxiliary is dark in June (No meeting).

❖ **NEXT DISTRICT MEETING** – The next District meeting will be on May 10, 2025 at 9:00am at Leisure World, Seal Beach. The Leisure World main entrance address is 13533 Seal Beach Blvd., Seal Beach, CA. Therefore, our guests should enter from the right lane at the main entrance and tell Security that they are here for the Auxiliary meeting in Clubhouse 3, Room 1. The address of Clubhouse 3 is 1421 Northwood Rd. The Leisure World main entrance address is 13533 Seal Beach Blvd. Therefore, our guests should enter from the right lane at the main entrance and tell Security that they are here for the Auxiliary meeting in Clubhouse 3, Room 1. They should have their vehicle's right turn signal on and traffic personnel will direct them to turn right. This will put them on Del Monte, a long curving road with one boulevard stop after which the street name changes to Northwood. These directions will bring them to the large parking lot with 2 clubhouses where they can park for Clubhouse 3. Look for the red, white & blue balloons at the entrance to Clubhouse 3. Refreshments will be available beginning at 8:15 a.m.

❖ **POPPY MAKING PARTY** – District 19 is sponsoring a Poppy Making Party on Sunday June 1, 2025 2:30pm to 5:30pm. See flyer for more information.

❖ **Closing Prayer – Sharon Morgan, Chaplain** – Presented by Mary Ann Leonard

ADJOURNMENT – Time: 7:59pm