



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES September 17, 2025

- **Call to Order – Please Silence your cell phones** – 6:02 p.m.
 - **Posting of Colors**
 - **Placement of POW/MIA** - Cover and Prayer by Chaplain Mary Ann Leoard
 - **Pledge of Allegiance** – Janet du Monceau de Bergendal
 - **Music** – Mary Ann Leonard. Song selection is “In Service, We Stand” – ALA Newport Harbor Unit 291 100-year Anniversary Song.
 - **Preamble** – Bobbi Renaghan, 1st Vice President, Membership
 - **Roll Call of Officers** – Excused Absence for Secretary, Leslie Dinkel; Treasurer, Laura Farr; Sargeant-at-Arms, Stacy Eickhoff; Executive Committee, Jan Woolford
 - **Officer Substitution** – Heidi Maturino for Secretary, Leslie Dinkel and Janet du Monceau de Bergendal for Stacy Eickhoff, Sargeant-at-Arms
 - **Special Guests** –
 - Auxiliary member, Mary Ann Leonard, from 2010 – presentation of times of the past... year 2010. Spoke about Blockbuster, Facebook, Instagram, fashion, Snapchat filters and other topics from the year 2010.
 - Cory Vigil, Service Officer Post 291 – President Cynthia Minucci Neal proceeded with his introduction which included information about his military service and many achievements. Cory spoke about the importance that the Auxiliary plays in the activities and functions of Unit 291. He was a recipient of one of our troop shipping boxes and he spoke about how vital these functions are, as well as the support of our military troops. He also spoke about some of the “trainings” that he is involved with including Military Veteran Family 101 training. He spoke in depth about this training and the importance of volunteering to help our veterans. He continued to explain the various military discharges and how this directly effects the veteran benefits that the discharge veteran would qualify for. He encouraged everyone to take the Military Veteran Family 101 training – a one-hour course available online thru the County of Orange. Everyone completing this course will receive a certificate from the County of Orange.
 - **Approval of Minutes** – August 2025 minutes were approved as written.
 - **This Month Dimes for Times is for** – AEF/Leadership/PPP/Public Relations for Junior Activities
 - **Treasurer/Finance** – Laura Farr (Excused) – No Report
 - **President Reports**
- General Announcements:**
- There was discussion about exceeding public safety code for occupancy during our General Membership Meetings. Members should register online to attend General Meetings. It was suggested that we put out a publication stating that we have a limited number at seats for each meeting. There was much discussion about the 10 hours of volunteer work requirement. There was also discussion about the difficulties for our older members to do the 10-hour requirement. Members also requested a tutorial for “Sign-up Genius” be provided. There was discussion about the difficulties of maneuvering our website. Cynthia spoke about updating some features on our website. Members would like to log on and view their hours served on our website. Mary Beth will provide this info.
 - **1st Vice President Membership** – Bobbi Renaghan – Membership is currently closed. We have a total of 2008 Auxiliary members. Dana Johnston also conducted the “Installation” of new members (these new members are included in the 2008). Motion was made to accept new members – motion was 2nd – motion passed. New members were escorted to the front and members took their oath.
 - **2nd Vice President** – Bonnie Robertson – Thanked everyone who participated in Bunco. The next event is the Tea Party and Fashion Show scheduled for this Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Many members have signed up to help, and this event is sold out! Next month we will have the 100-year Gala dinner and dance on Oct. 18th.
 - **Secretary** – Leslie Dinkel (Excused) – No Report
 - **Treasurer** – Laura Farr (Excused) – No report
 - **Chaplain** – Mary Ann Leoard – No Report
 - **Historian** – Mary Beth Martin – Discussed our Veteran Slide Show – only 82 members have provided pictures of their family member veteran out of 2000 Auxiliary members. She requested that members email her pictures and info of the veteran they are related to. She also discussed the upcoming Fashion Show – we are celebrating our 100-year anniversary... 100 years of fashion. She displayed some older fashion and asked for volunteers to model the clothing. In addition, a motion was made for \$500 to the Historian budget to produce and mount photos of veterans for display throughout Post 291. This motion was 2nd and the motion passed. Photos will be of living veterans here at Post 291. Her email is: pastpresident@ala291.com
 - **Executive Committee** – Peggy Bengry, Janet du Monceau de Bergendal, Janice Flanagan, Dana Johnston, Jan Woolford – No Report
 - **Junior Past President** – Mary Beth Martin – No Report

Standing Committees:

- **Americanism** – Carol Markel – No Report
- **Auxiliary Emergency Fund** – Jan Woolford (Excused) - No Report
- **Chair Covers** – Janz Simmons – Needs help on Saturday, Sept. 21st at 7:30 a.m. for chair covers for the Tea Party and Bonnie will need help with decorating the tables.

- **Children and Youth** – Myra Alvermann – Spoke about the upcoming Children’s Halloween Party on Sunday, Oct. 26th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. We need candy donations – please bring to the next General Membership Meeting.
- **Community Service** – Open Position
- **Constitution and Bylaws** – Janet du Monceau de Bergendal – No Report
- **Donations** – Heidi Maturino
 - San Clemente Military Family Outreach – Their mission is to provide emergency assistance to qualifying (enlisted E1–E6) military families on Camp Pendleton. Families in crisis find a safety net in SCMFO. Funds provide items such as diapers, food, clothing, gas, car repairs, medical/dental expenses and other unexpected financial challenges. Motion was made to donate \$1,000 – motion was 2nd – motion passed.
 - Active Valor – This is a combat veteran run 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to giving new purpose to veterans by pairing them as mentors to children of our nation’s fallen heroes, referred to as Gold Star Children. Motion was made to donate \$1,000 – motion was 2nd – motion passed.
 - Warrior Foundation Freedom Station – This organization is committed to supporting our warriors in a variety of ways providing quality-of-life items and numerous support services designed to assist them and their families during recovery. Over 100 bikers will join the 72-mile Patriotic Motorcycle Ride from Irvine CA to St. Soledad National Veterans Memorial in San Diego on Oct. 12, 2025 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Motion was made to donate \$1,000 – motion was 2nd – motion passed.
- **Education** – Barbara Melum – Lesson plans for various grades were provided to schools in the Newport/Mesa School District to teach about the Constitution. She is looking for volunteers to serve on her committee to run a poster contest for local schools. Volunteers would contact schools and provide information about the Poster Contest. There was also discussion about having students write letters to veterans and also other ways to bring “Americanism” into our schools. This is primarily for the Newport/Mesa School District. We could also provide patriotic info for our students about the Pledge of Allegiance, etc. She is requesting several volunteers to help her in this activity.
- **Girls State** – Caroline Miller – Current number of schools is 19. Goal is 20 schools. She explained that this is a one-week leadership program in June that is held on a college campus where girls set up their government and learn about running our government, writing bills, etc. All girls that participate are great – all have a GPA of 4.0 or above. The cost of participating will increase by approximately \$100 per girl. She discussed the importance of fundraising to support Girls State. They are also looking for new colleges to host Girls State.
- **Juniors** – Stacy Eickhoff (Excused) – No Report
- **Leadership** – Dana Johnston – She discussed the importance of stepping up and getting involved in leadership roles. Leadership at Post 291 was discussed along with the importance of more leadership and getting more volunteer hours.. “New volunteers come with new ideas, and this is great!” She also discussed our various events and how they raise the funds to support our veterans. President Cynthia Minnucci Neal also discussed her own involvement and volunteerism and what this has meant to her.
- **Legislative** – Pia Thompson – No Report
- **Music** – Mary Ann Leonard – No Report
- **National Security** – Karen Schaeffer – Discussed September “Disaster Preparedness Month” and the importance of being prepared with food, water, emergency kit, etc. A flyer was also provided with this information. Susan Defonso discussed our next blood drive which will be on Monday, Oct. 13th – there are many slots still available, and she encouraged everyone to sign-up to donate their blood.
- **Past Presidents Parley** – Mary Beth Martin – The Nursing Scholarship was discussed. We have a \$4,000 and \$1,000 scholarship available to veteran students. She has sent out two applications and has contacted colleges to see if they have any veterans going into the nursing field.
- **Poppy** – Bobbi Renaghan – No Report
- **Public Relation** – Heidi Sargeant – No Report
- **Time Keeper** – Mary Beth Martin – Emails have been sent to members who have reached their 10 hours of volunteer time. Emails are sent twice per month with a link to the spread sheet to check your hours. Members who are 90+ years old are excused from the 10-hour requirement. The 10 hours only effects your Access Parking Card – it does not affect your membership.
- **Troop Shipping** – Teri Adams – Next Troop Shipment is Saturday, Nov. 22nd at 10 a.m. She needs help getting names and address of active-duty military troops deployed out of the country. Please forward any info to her. They are planning on sending 150 boxes.
- **VA & R** – There was discussion regarding the food pantries – Heroes Landing, Orange Coast College, Coastline College, LBVA, etc. There was a motion made to donate \$750 to Honor Flight Southland. They are honoring a Post 291 veteran who has been selected to go on the next Honor Flight “Tour of Honor” – Sept. 19–21, 2025. His daughter is an ALA 291 member and will accompany him on the trip as his Guardian. Auxiliary members can also participate by donating snacks, volunteer to assist at the airport, or travel as a guardian with a veteran. VA & R made a motion to donate \$750 to Honor Flight Southland to have the American Legion Post 291 Veteran’s daughter (a Unit 291 Auxiliary member) travel with him as his guardian. The motion was 2nd – motion passed.
- **New Business** –
 - .There was further discussion regarding the 10-hour volunteer requirement. Membership voted in May in favor of implementing the 10-hours.
 - The next General Membership Meeting will be held on Oct. 15, 2025 in the Main Hall at 6 p.m.
 - The next District Meeting will be on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. Orange Post 132 – 143 S. Lemon Street, Orange, CA
- **Old Business** – None
- **Closing Prayer** – Mary Ann Leonard
- **Adjournment** – 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heidi Maturino for Leslie Dinkel
Secretary, Unit 291