



**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY, UNIT 291
215 15TH STREET, NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92663
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES**

Date: October 15, 2025

Time: 6:05 PM

- ❖ **CALL TO ORDER – Silence your cell phones**
- ❖ **Posting of the Colors**
- ❖ **Placement of POW/MIA Cover, Mary Ann Leonard, Chaplain**
- ❖ **Chaplain's Prayer, Mary Ann Leonard, Chaplain**
- ❖ **Pledge of Allegiance, Stacy Eickhoff, Sergeant at Arms**
- ❖ **Music – Mary Ann Leonard, Music Chair –“You’re A Grand Old Flag”**
- ❖ **Preamble of the Constitution of the ALA**
- ❖ **Roll Call of Officers, Leslie Dinkel, Secretary**

P	President Cynthia Minucci Neal	P	Chaplain Mary Ann Leonard	P	Executive Committee Peggy Bengry
P	1 st Vice President Bobbi Renaghan	P	Historian Mary Beth Martin	P	Executive Committee Janet du Monceau de Bergendal
P	2nd Vice President Bonnie Robertson	P	Sergeant at Arms Stacy Eickhoff	P	Executive Committee Janice Flanagan
P	Secretary Leslie Dinkel	P	Asst. Sergeant at Arms Becky Cooper	P	Executive Committee Dana Johnston
E	Treasurer Laura Farr	P	Jr. Past President Mary Beth Martin	P	Executive Committee Jan Woolford

P=Present E=Excused A=Absent Quorum = 19

- ❖ **Officer Substitutions**
- ❖ **Special Guests**

- Nick Armand from Fullerton Community College presented a recognition plaque to ALA 291
- Military Families 101 Class - Cory Vigil, Post 291 Service Officer, presented what will be discussed in the class on the following dates: Monday Oct. 20th 6pm - 7:30pm and Monday Nov. 3rd 6pm – 7:30pm
- Heather White Unit 291 member -Honor Flight Southland
- A visit from an Auxiliary member from the 2020’s
- Initiation of new members by Dana Johnston for Bobbi Reneghan
 - A motion was made to accept the new members. Motion was made

- ❖ **Approval of Minutes** – Minutes for the General Monthly Membership Meeting held on September 17, 2025. Minutes approved as read.

- ❖ **This month Dimes for Times - Education for EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

REPORTS

- ❖ **President, Cynthia Minucci Neal- Update**

- Completion of the Past President’s Plaque Restoration Project – Presented by Janet du Monceau de Bergendal
 In order to complete the restoration of the Past President plaque, which honors our organization's leadership dating back to 1925, supports the continued preservation of our organization's history and honors the individuals who have served in leadership roles. Funding for this final phase will cover the cost of materials, engraving services, and any necessary mounting supplies.

~~MOTION: The Executive Board moves to approve \$2,800.00 to be funded from the Reserve Fund for the final phase of the *Past President Plaque Restoration Project*, which commemorates the leadership and service of the American Legion Auxiliary Newport Harbor Unit 291 Past Presidents dating back to 1925.~~

The motion was revised due to a price reduction for the restoration of the plaque. The new motion follows.

MOTION: The Executive Board moves to approve \$1,760.00 to be funded from the Reserve Fund for the final phase of the *Past Presidents Plaque Restoration Project*, which commemorates the leadership and service of the American Legion Auxiliary Newport Harbor Unit 291 Past Presents dating back to 1025. Motion was made and seconded. Motion was carried.

❖ **1st Vice President / Membership, Bobbi Renaghan**

- Update on Membership- we have 1075 renewals; 2006 Seniors; 44 Juniors

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

- Update on the October 18th - 100-year Anniversary Dinner / Dance Gala/ Silent Auction items
- Jan Woolford gave an update on the November 29th Holiday Boutique

❖ **Secretary, Leslie Dinkel** – Read 2 Thank You Notes to the membership

❖ Treasurer, Laura Farr - No Report

❖ Chaplain, Mary Ann Leonard – No Report

❖ **Historian, Mary Beth Martin**

- Updated the Veterans Day project - Mary Beth and (4) assistants interviewed over 100 veterans. Photos will be displayed in the View Room before Veterans' Day and after
- Passed out a quiz based on the monthly visits from an Auxiliary member from the 1920's – 2020's. The members were awarded prizes.

❖ Parliamentarian, Peggy Bengry – No Report

❖ 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 – No Report

❖ Chair Covers, Janz Simmons – No Report

❖ **Children and Youth, Myra Alvermann-presented by Barbara Sharkey**

- Updated on the October 26th Children's Halloween party

❖ **Community Donations, Christine Beilby presented by Heidi Matarino**

1. Charity Name: Canine Companions for Independence Suggested Donation: \$1,000.00

For decades, Canine Companions for Independence has been empowering veterans by providing service dogs - free of charge, strengthening their everyday lives.

The Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of people with physical and developmental disabilities by providing trained companion assistance dogs and by providing continuing support to ensure the success of the working team. CCI's assistance dogs are trained to respond to more than 50 specialized commands and become the physical extensions of their disabled partners by performing a variety of basic tasks. There are four types of assistance dogs: service dogs that perform practical tasks for a person with a physical or developmental disability; hearing dogs that are trained to alert people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to important sounds such as telephone, alarm clock, and smoke alarm; skilled companions that provide companionship and some physical tasks; and facility dogs that work with professional caregivers in environments where interaction with a trained dog can improve the physical, mental, or emotional health of participants.

MOTION: The Executive Board moves to donate \$1,000.00 to Canine Companions for Independence to provide food for these dogs during their entire professional training.

Motion was made and seconded. Motion was carried.

Charity Name: Heroes Hall at Orange County Fairgrounds Suggested Donation: \$500.00

This is 100% Veteran program. Nov 8th Heroes Hall will be hosting a Veteran's Day event, open to the public with family activities, free food & exhibits highlighting veteran's stories

MOTION: The Executive Board moves to donate \$500.00 to Heroes Hall at Orange County Fairgrounds to support their Veterans' Day event.

Motion was made and seconded. Motion was carried.

Charity Name: Orange County Rescue Mission Suggested Donation: \$1,000

Since 1963 this organization has served homeless people in our community. They are a 501(c) nonprofit focused on reducing homelessness. They provide a multitude of services such as meals, shelter, clothing, etc. for the homeless, including veterans. In addition, their programs provides assistance in the areas of guidance, counseling, education, job training and health care. Their goal is to treat each person who comes to them for help with respect and dignity. They carefully consider how to implement an individual Treatment Plan for those who come to them for help. They do not want to give a handout that continues the cycle of homelessness. Rather, their programs provide a hand up to help those in need take responsibility for their lives.

MOTION: The Executive Board moves to donate \$1,000.00 to the Orange County Rescue Mission to support their efforts in assisting community members in need, including our veteran population.

Motion was made and seconded. Motion was carried.

❖ **Community Service, Bonnie Pollak**

- New - Project Bearable-Bonnie presented Project Bearable. The project is to make small "Comfort Bears" and distribute them to local law enforcement, hospitals, Senior Centers, and to

anyone who needs a little comfort. Bonnie discussed the importance of community outreach and how it is an important component of the project.

❖ **Constitution & Bylaws, Janet du Monceau de Bergendal**

- Change to Standing Rule, Article V, Section 2.

Adding Subsection (a).

Rationale:

1. Allows an Executive Board or General Membership meeting to be held in person AND electronically simultaneously.

2. Example - Occupancy Safety Regulations, per International Building Code (IBC).

Reading of Standing Rule, Article V, Section 2.

MOTION: The Executive Board moves to add Subsection (a) to Standing Rule, Article 5, Section 2 to read as follows: "This would also include meetings held simultaneously in person and electronically."

The motion was tabled until the next General Membership Meeting on November 19th, 2025. The membership has to be informed of the changes ahead of the meeting.

❖ Education, Barbara Melum - No Report

❖ Girls State, Caroline Miller - No Report

❖ **Juniors Activities, Stacy Eickhoff – Update on Juniors**

❖ **Leadership, Dana Johnston**

- Volunteering on Committees - Dana will ask the committee chairs to share with the members information about their committees. This is to promote understanding of the different committees and help members get more involved.

❖ Legislative, Pia Thompson, No Report

❖ Music, Mary Ann Leonard - No Report

❖ **National Security, Karren Schaeffer**

- Updated on the October 13th American Red Cross Blood Drive. 34 volunteers donated blood.

❖ Past President Parley, Mary Beth Martin - No Report

❖ Poppies, Bobbi Renaghan – No Report

❖ Public Relations, Heidi Sergeant – No Report

❖ Salute to Service, Julie Sanborn – No Report

❖ **Troop Shipping, Teri Adams**

- Updated on Troop Shipping - Teri explained the current USPS enforcement of new stringent mailing requirements, our Troop Shipping date in November was cancelled. Teri partnered with the USO to pick up and deliver to our deployed troops all of our donations for 150 boxes. UPS ships directly with their own delivery system.

❖ **VA & R, Marilyn Anania**

- Updated on food pantry shopping for the following:
 - Orange Coast College VRC
 - Coastline College VRC
 - Long Beach VA
 - Hero's Landing

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

❖ **Old Business**

- 100-year Anniversary – Report given during 2nd VP report

- ❖ **New Business** There was a suggestion from a member to utilize the PowerPoint so members could follow along. Hearing is difficult, especially in the back of the room.

NEXT GENERAL MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING – The next meeting is in the Main Hall on November 19, 2025 at 6:00pm.. Register to attend on our website <https://ala291.com> under Volunteer on the Home page

- ❖ **Removal of POW/MIA Cover & Closing Prayer - Mary Ann Leonard, Chaplain**

ADJOURNMENT – Time: 7:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Dinkel, Secretary

American Legion Auxiliary Newport Harbor Unit 291

215 15th Street

Newport Beach, CA 92663