

**Minutes of the  
DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**August 28, 2022** (corrected)  
**(National Convention – Hospitality Room)**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by President Jane Larson

**ROLL CALL**

This was a mandatory meeting for all members of the Alaska Delegation to the National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All other Department Executive Committee members were excused.

**PRESENT**

National Executive Committee Member Penny Mazonna  
Alternate National Executive Committee Member Sue Diaz  
President Jane Larson  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Anarene Robinson  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President April Sinclair  
Secretary Barbara Nath  
Treasurer Diana Estrada  
Sue Caswell  
Sharon Cherrette  
Robyn Downs  
Beverly Eads  
Brenda Fiddick  
Rehta Foster  
Connie Landmesser  
Shirley Shadbolt  
April Sinclair  
Lisa Williamson

**UNITS**

Jack Henry Unit 1  
Kodiak Unit 17  
George H. Plumley Memorial Unit 20  
Spennard Unit 28  
Muldoon Unit 29?  
Susitna Valley Unit 35  
C. Russell Huber Unit 57

**EXCUSED**

Lori Fruhwirth

**MOTION:** by Sue Caswell and seconded to dispense with the Opening Ceremonies except for the Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no Unfinished Business to come before the DEC at this meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

The only business to be brought up at this meeting must be related to National Convention or be the ratification of Committee Chairs. There were no committee chairs to ratify,

The majority of pre-convention committee meetings were held virtually. The only pre-convention committee meeting held in person was the Constitution and Bylaws Committee meeting. One Alaska delegation member was selected as the Official Representative to each pre-convention committee. Other Department members were invited to attend. The Pre-Convention Committee reports were given by the official representative.

Education (Sue Caswell) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. Many units gave cards, flowers, gift cards for Teacher Appreciation Day. They also did school supply drives. The Southern division had nine (9) juniors who earned the education patch.

Legislative (Sue Diaz) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. Two pieces of legislation that affect women veterans were brought up.

One is the Protecting Moms Who Served Act which requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement the maternity care coordination program. The VA must provide community maternity care providers (non-VA maternity care providers) with training and support with respect to the unique needs of pregnant and postpartum veterans, particularly regarding mental and behavioral health conditions in relation to the service of the veterans in the Armed Forces. Additionally, the Government Accountability Office must report on maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among pregnant and postpartum veterans with a focus on racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes for veterans. This was signed into law on November 21, 2021

The second is the Debra Sampson Act which significantly reduces difficulties to healthcare for women veterans and increases essential services to address issues like homelessness, harassment and assault, and child care. It does the following:

- *Establishes the Office of Woman's Health at the Department of Veterans Affairs*
- *Ensures that gender-specific services are continuously available at every VA medical center and community-based outpatient clinic*
- *Requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish policy to end harassment and sexual assault, including gender-based harassment, at all VA facilities*
- *Expands counseling programs for women veterans and their families*
- *Improves newborn and child care by increasing the number of days of coverage for newborns, covering emergency transportation, and ensuring that veterans have convenient, cost-free child care options when they have VA medical appointments*
- *Authorizes grants to support low-income women veterans and increases resources for homeless women veterans and their families*

In essence, this act provides equitable, quality gender-specific health care and benefits which will now be available to the more than two million women veterans serving our country. It was signed into law June 5, 2021.

National Security (Sue Diaz) -- There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska.

It was noted that this is a very large program. Some of the highlights for the year included:

- POW/MIA ceremonies were conducted
- A 24-hour vigil was held for POW/MIA. Each person stood in silence for 15 minutes
- A living gold star memorial was set up with 55 apple trees
- Gold star spouse's day was April 5<sup>th</sup>
- First responders were recognized
- For emergency preparedness, blood drives and classes on how to be better prepared in case of an emergency
- Coupons were gathered to help military families which is helpful since prices are so high.

Enlisted members are the backbone of the military. Back and forth communication is very important. Every state has military members. You can get that list from the State Department of Veteran's Affairs.

The Salute to Service member is now inclusive to include male and female service members. Four services are being honored this year. This is to recognize active-duty personnel for their contributions. We have our first male awardee this year. If you recognize a service member, make sure a letter goes to their commander.

Constitution and Bylaws (Sue Diaz) – The committee forwarded 22 amendments to the National governing documents. Only one amendment did not receive a recommendation for approval. All delegates were present at this committee meeting.

Children and Youth (Robyn Downs) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. Departments were encouraged to apply for a Child Welfare Foundation grant if there is a special project. May 31<sup>st</sup> is the year end date.

Leadership (Robyn Downs) -- There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. All departments/unit were encouraged to take the ALA online classes.

Public Relations (Beverly Eads) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. It was pointed out that this is our means of informing others about who we are and what we do.

Junior Activities (Diana Estrada) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee. The Outstanding Department Junior Activities Program went to California. The Outstanding Unit Junior Activities Program Award went to Susitna Valley Unit 35.

ALA Girls Nation (Lori Fruhwirth) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. This year, a few states joined with their Boys State program due to low numbers. A suggestion was made that we put together a video about the program to send to schools and to help get the word out.

National History (Lori Fruhwirth) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. National is asking for us to look for items or events that show diversity throughout our history.

Finance (Connie Landmesser) -- There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee. A review of policies was recommendation. Departments were encouraged to have the following in writing to guard the department form areas of conflict:

- Conflict of Interest
- Whistleblower
- Document Management
- Travel and Expense Reimbursement
- Gifts and Grant Acceptance
- Endowment Spending
- Fundraising
- Minutes and Proceedings of Governing Body and Committee Meeting
- Check Signing and Business Credit Card
- Reserve Funds
- Purchase
- Emergency Response and Disaster Recovery (as it relates to Department records)
- Social Media

It is everyone's responsibility on the Finance Committee to have input and help to make the budget successful. Budget preparation must be shared with the committee to put forth to the DEC for approval.

The Finance Chairman is responsible to review the budget through to actual. This should be done at least quarterly. A professional audit is encouraged to be done at least every other year by an independent auditor.

National Chaplain (Connie Landmesser) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee. It was pointed out that there are not any awards for Chaplains. During this past year there were over 25,000 cards sent out which include get well cards, sympathy cards, praying for you cards, etc. Arkansas was given the opportunity to speak to their entire department via department meetings. They also conducted 15 minutes of prayer on Fridays. Delaware was awarded a Chaplain of the Year award. It was requested that when doing year end report, we provide a narrative to include the following:

- How year went
- If you sent out cards (how many)
- If you conducted or attended any memorial services
- If you attended any programs like 911 or POW/MIA
- How you, as a chaplain, helped with other programs

Americanism (Jane Larson) -- There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. It was shared that without our Units we would not succeed. Remember sporting events like baseball, oratorical, sports, shooting. Volunteer hours for scouting count under Americanism. We need to promote the Star-Spangled Kids.

Membership (Anarene Robinson) -- There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee. We were at a 95% goal by May 27<sup>th</sup>. While not released until convention, Alaska was at 102% by convention. National was at 98.5%. Any deceased members must be entered on the Department level. Units can sign up for full ALAMIS access after completing a 30-minute virtual training. This will have to be run through Department. While there can be two members with access to ALAMIS per unit, only one can have full access. Units are responsible to maintain the 2 degrees of separation. When a unit makes the Department/National payment through ALAMIS, they must use a credit or debit card.

Community Service (Shirley Shadbolt) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. However, the Volunteer Caregiver Appreciation Award went to Stephanie Ross of the Department of New Mexico. In addition, the most outstanding Unit Community Service Program Award in the Western District was given to Pasadena Unit 13 of California and the Best Department Community Service Program Award went to the Department of Arizona.

There will be no program action plans for this or other committees. However, the purpose information for committees will be moved to Standing Rules.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund (April Sinclair) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska. The largest contribution was from the Department of Delaware. The largest donation per capital was from the Department of Minnesota.

VA&R (April Sinclair) -- There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee. The Western Division Most Outstanding Unit VA&R Program was given to Art Semro Unit 28 of Washington. The Most Outstanding Department VA&R Program was given to Alaska.

Poppy (April Sinclair) -- There were no resolutions for this committee. A recommendation was made to instill education and love in our youth about the Poppy program. The best Unit Outstanding Poppy Program Award went to C. Russell Huber Unit 57 of Alaska. A thank you was given to Sallie Rossman (National Poppy Chairman) for an outstanding year. A poem by 14-year-old Alicia Sullivan from the Department of Arizona was read. Some of the ideas from this year were:

- Poppy Veteran of the month
- Presenting poppy seeds at schools
- Coloring contests to introduce students to the poppy
- Poppy Hat parades
- Signs put up on doors that state something like “A Veteran lives here” or “A Veteran’s caregiver lives here”

Credentials (Barb Nath) – There are no resolutions from the committee. It was recommended to approve the official count of 713 delegates which passed by a simple majority. There were no awards for Alaska. Alaska is 11th of 22 states at 100% or higher. The highest was New Mexico. Less than 10% separated Alaska from New Mexico.

Rules (Barb Nath) – There are no resolutions from this committee. It was recommended to adopt the rules as presented with the correction of the date for the caucus meetings. Rules can be found on page 20 of your convention booklet.

Resolutions (Barb Nath) – There were no resolutions or recommendations for this committee, nor were there any awards for Alaska.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We have about 10 pins from the Department of Alaska which can be purchased for \$1.50 each

Fall Conference is October 22<sup>nd</sup> at Susitna Valley Post/Unit 35.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business to come before the DEC, the meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Barbara Nath  
Department Secretary