

Minutes of the
FALL CONFERENCE
October 22, 2022
(Susitna Valley Post 35)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by President Anarene Robinson.

A prayer was offered by Department Chaplain Connie Landmesser. The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

ROLL CALL

Present

National Officers

National Executive Committee Member Penny Mazonna
Alternate National Executive Committee Member Sue Diaz

Department Officers

President Anarene Robinson
1st Vice President April Sinclair
2nd Vice President Lori Fruhwirth
Secretary Barbara Nath
Treasurer Diana Estrada
Chaplain Connie Landmesser
Historian Annette Gwalthney-Jones
Sgt-at-Arms Frances Bedel
Executive Committee Member Robyn Downs

Standing Committees

Alaska Girls State – Lori Fruhwirth
Audit – Sue Diaz
Auxiliary Emergency Fund – Colleen Newman
Children and Youth – Robyn Downs
Community Services – Shirley Shadbolt
Constitution and Bylaws – Sue Diaz
Distinguished Guests – Penny Mazonna
Finance – Lisa Boyles
History – Annette Gwalthney Jones
Junior Activities – Nina Ketelsen
Leadership – Keri Blace
Legislative -- Penny Mazonna

ROLL CALL (continued)

Present

Standing Committees

Membership – April Sinclair
National Security – Frances Bedel
Past Presidents’ Parley—Jane Larson
Poppy – Marge Blankenship
Public Relations – Beverly Eads
Veteran’s Affairs and Rehabilitation – Lori Fruhwirth

Units

Jack Henry Unit 1
Joseph T. Craig Unit 3
Seward Unit 5
Merlin Elmer Palmer Unit 6
Dorman H Baker Unit 11
Sitka Unit 13
Matanuska Valley Unit 15
General Buckner Unit 16
George H. Plumley Memorial Unit 20
Spennard Unit 28
Muldoon Unit 29
Peters Creek Unit 33
Susitna Valley Unit 35
C. Russell Huber Unit 57

Past Department Presidents

Marge Blankenship	Susan Caswell	Sharon Cherrette
Sue Diaz	Jane Larson	Penny Mazonna
Sue Waldhaus		

Excused

Standing Committees

Americanism – Carole Johnson

Past Department Presidents

Linda Schmidt Lisa Williamson

ROLL CALL (continued)

Absent

Department Officers

Executive Committee Member Josette Kinslow

Standing Committees

Education and Scholarship – Samantha Funk

Units

Lynn Canal Unit 12

Robert G. Blair Unit 17

Ninilchik Unit 18

Gladys M. Heintz Unit 27

Con Miller Unit 30

Chappie James Unit 34

Peter Heyano Unit 442

Past Department Presidents

Eva Aulston

Betty Bumala

Beverly Eads

Francisca Guilford

Debbie Lowndes

Jill Pawson

Barbe Wolkoff

Lynn Bash

Jean Clayton

Rheta Foster

June Haas

Carolyn Null

Jean Shandy

Ruth Brown

Lavonne Collier

Lori FitzSimons

Laverne Kearns

Evelyn Oliver

Etta Singleton

MOTION: by Sue Todd and seconded to appoint Sue Diaz as Parliamentarian for this meeting.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to be read.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business to come before this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Several community agencies were invited to give a presentation to those present.

USO– Rita Conley (Expeditionary Program Manager

Rita explained her job and some of their needs. They have a “Tasty Tuesday” dinner and need help cooking or donating food. Donations to help at the Centers are also needed (snacks, granola bars, Rice Krispie treats, etc.). There is a monthly birthday party as well as baby showers and other events. They are looking for volunteers to help with different events. Rita goes to remote areas and does many things online. They come into the Legion and have a Bob Hope reading program. This involves reading a book on video and sending it to families. She is trying to come twice a year to every location. There are coffee connections to bring people together. When money donations are made, unless it is a large amount, it goes to the USO overall. In kind donations goes to Alaska. Rita is located on the Elmendorf side of JBER. She can be reached at 208-591-1292. She will meet anyone with donations because it is hard to find. Jeanne Ostnes indicated that they want to use them for entertainment at Jack Henry Unit One’s 100th birthday celebration

Fisher House – Theresa Nedrow

Theresa is the house manager for Alaska Fisher House. There are two houses in Alaska. Everyone staying there has an emergency medical need. Sometimes they come for something they think is minor and it ends up being more extensive. From September to September, they served 1,353 families who stayed from one night to 18 months. There is no cost to stay at Fisher House. No one goes hungry. There are hosted meals and donated food. Over 220 volunteers were logged in this area. Fisher House affects the entire footprint of Alaska. She invited everyone to come for a visit. You will be able to see who you are impacting and what the house does. The Patriot magazine comes out twice a year. Alaska Fisher House was highlighted 5 times. Alaska is unique.

Theresa is one of eight members that makes the Anchorage house phenomenal. They do all the work and make her look good. She shared some stories – NICU babies, joyous times, as well as heavy hearted time. Anything you can think of to brighten their day would be appreciated. It helps because they are away from their family. There are always general needs such as blankets, scarves, hats, etc. You can take all of the 14 Air Force Fisher Houses and combine them and Alaska outshines them all.

Some events:

- Secret Elf program. Every day in the summer a different group hosts each family with stockings,
- Holiday event – Christmas trees, gift cards, don’t have dates yet. Will have an open house that day.

Theresa thanked the American Legion Auxiliary for our continued support.

Quilts of Valor – Linda Kau and Judy Killian

Linda explained that she was introduced to Quilts of Valor by Nancy Rohan who is quite a quilter. The founder was asked to present a quilt to a soldier who had just come home. He had severe wounds. He said quilts equal healing and this was the first time he saw this soldier smile since he got back. He asked her to send some quilts to the field hospitals over there. They made 100 quilts and sent them to the field hospitals. She put it on the internet in 2005 and that's where it started. They have covered over 325,000 with quilts of valor. In Alaska we have covered 3,500 members. Linda and Judy were thankful for being able to come here today. There are about 200 quilters in Alaska. "Touched by war" means all veterans who say they have been touched by war. This is a 100% volunteer organization; there are no paid employees in Alaska. Normally all quilts made in Alaska stay in Alaska unless it's requested for someone outside of the state. To receive a quilt, the person must be living – it can't award posthumously. It is a once in a lifetime award.

VAVS – Jeanne Fox

Jeanne is a veteran and received a quilt of valor. She has been with the VA for 5 years. After completing a program at the Domiciliary veterans go to a temporary residence then to a permanent residence. The VA has created baby bundles, and cancer items, and has received over \$250,000 in non-monetary donations. There are over 130 volunteers and 75 are current. They have a lot of different programs. The name has changed to the Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE). Jeanne noted there is an increase in female veterans. She also stated that there is no inpatient clinic and 5 outpatient clinics. Per capita, Alaska has the most veterans.

Revive Alaska Community Services – Carmen (Comfort Home) and Prince Nwankuch

There is a gala on November 12th benefiting struggling veterans. The goal is to raise a half million dollars to do what they can to move this forward. We were asked to tell everyone in our sphere of influence as to what is going on and to get the word out. They want to get in front of the right people. They are refurbishing 14 units. There are 240 veterans in Alaska right now. No veteran deserves to be on the street. There are veterans helping veterans and community helping veterans. By 2023, there will be 40 apartments with 2 bedrooms each which will be completely furnished. This group has been in Alaska for eight years.

Western Division National Vice-President – Eva Wallace

Eva is delighted to be here. She lived here for seven years. She has been to the Wall of Honor in Wasilla. She will share this with National President Vickie Koutz since her project is remembering POWs/MIAs.

Eva spoke about the Creative Arts Festival. She encouraged people to attend if possible and noted it would be something you will never forget. The American Legion Auxiliary is a co-presenter with the VA. The VA covers expenses of veteran and NP Vickie Koutz has a special project of covering the cost of caregivers to travel with the veteran.

Fisher House – Eva talked about a Coast Guard family in Alaska and said they were staying at Fisher House. She spoke with Jim Pisa who got ahold of people to visit the family. The family was so appreciative of what was done for them.

Eva also mentioned the following:

- There is a patch for POW/MIA table.
- There are many ways to honor youth. Nomination forms are at alaforveterans.org for Youth Hero or Good Deed awards.
- Elections are coming up – get out and vote. Do a town hall and ask about support for veterans.
- We are trying to get all WWII veterans into the VA health care system.
- Veterans day is next month. The poppy is an important remembrance of their service.
- She talked about various resources – social media, Facebook, web sites, etc.
- The pin for donation per individual of \$100 or more. This can be done directly to National or through the Department to National.
- You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. You have to decide what kind of impact you will have.

Membership – April Sinclair

Eligibility is 2 degrees from veterans. Grandchildren are not eligible. April asked for confirmation of email addresses for all membership chairs. When you send out membership cards, you could include a note. Be sure to encourage people to go online and register. Make sure that application forms are complete. Do not submit it if it is not complete. Call the new member and see what information you can get. Remember that the signature is very important.

We received a challenge by New Mexico. Whichever department reaches 100% first will receive 2 bottles of wine. April has a challenge with the Northwest Division to see which gets to 100% first.

April mentioned some awards that are available

- Member 10#3 in 2023
- Unit Award – 100% by November 11th
- Department Membership – there is one for 75% and one for 85%

The goal for Alaska is to reach 100% by the time of the Iditarod Race. That would be March 4th. April shared the status of different units as of October 20th.

She reminded units not to send in dues twice. You will not get repaid. There is a change to the transmittal record. Credit memos are the responsibility of the unit – make sure you submit the credit memo information. Submit form alphabetically.

In 2024, the amount of dues to go to national will be going up to \$18.00

ALAMIS– April Sinclair

Fees change in January. You can have two people with access per unit. The recommendation is to have one member with read only access and one member with full access. Fees are:

1. Read only access – \$10.00
2. Write access – \$15.00
3. Full access – \$20

Those who don't have access will have to request and complete training. To get full access, we want you to have experience on ALAMIS for about 6-9 months to be sure you understand it fully.

It is the Unit's responsibility to keep the original and send a copy of the application to Diana. You should keep applications for as long as the member is alive;

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Nath
Department Secretary