

Historian Report October 2024

By Lynda Griffin – AZ Department Historian

Attention all District, and Units Presidents, Secretaries and Historian – Who need a copy of your meeting minutes? Copies of your meeting minutes are to be sent to the Department Secretary Rose Ficklin at secretary@aladepaz.org and to the Department Historian, at Lynda4ala@azdot.gov.

I attended the 103rd ALA National Convention this year in New Orleans and I wanted to share a little History about the ALA and New Orleans Louisiana. President Lisa Williamson lead us into the 103rd ALA National Convention let us remember Burdick's words and renew the vow to the Colors and to everything for which they stand. Let us come together and work as one to accomplish our goals. It's the least we can do.

This year, the conventions was held in New Orleans. It is the sixth time the Legion Family has congregated in the Big Easy for these events. The first was in 1922. It was the second convention for the Auxiliary, and the scars of the Great War were still present, still very real, and very different from any previous war. The government wasn't prepared for the servicemembers' quick return, and medical officials had never seen the types of injuries incurred previously. And — as in any war — loved ones were left behind by those who died. In other words, there was no support system.

The minutes from the 1922 meetings held in New Orleans provide a clearer picture of the conditions facing the Auxiliary created by the Great War and the work not only accomplished thus far, but required in the coming years. It was massive. And our response was impressive. However, there were still numerous concerns, which were different in each state. Bringing the units and departments to best meet the conditions together was imperative. And in those many pages of transcribed minutes, there appears such a moment when those crucial words were spoken by a woman who understood the meaning of *Service Not Self*.

She served with the Salvation Army a good part of her life, and, with her husband, stayed very close to the front lines in France during World War I, making doughnuts, pies, and coffee, offering words of wisdom and comfort, along with prayer to those who wanted them. After the war, she gifted her experience, knowledge, and talents to the Auxiliary, becoming our first national chaplain, serving three consecutive years. Her name was Samantha Minerva "Ma" Burdick.

It was the morning of the convention's second day when the Colors were presented, a gift from the 1922 National Executive Committee. And with these words, National Chaplain Burdick presented them: *Madam President: This is one of the greatest privileges I have ever had, to present to you and these ladies, these flags. I feel more than I can say this morning. I stand beside Old Glory, which is really Old Glory, the beautiful flag of our country that our boys fought for, and I feel we can hardly give it honor enough. Then I stand here with our old organization banner which stands for so much. It stands for our boys who did not come back; it stands for our boys who are here; it stands for we mothers, wives, sisters and sweethearts.*

And I am quite sure that every one of us will pledge ourselves this morning to God to stand by these two flags.

I esteem it a great privilege, Madam President, to present your organization with these banners, and I feel we cannot say enough in honor of them, and the care that we shall give them, and the manner in which we shall work under the two flags, as long as God lendeth us breath. I feel that I cannot express myself this morning. This is very, very close to me because I have loved your boys and I love them yet.

Honor them. Care for them. Work under them. Inspiring words that may necessitate a re-examination as to how we look upon the Colors, as it's too easy to take things for granted when exposure to those things is frequent.

I only had two members in the whole state answer all the eight questions correctly. Department President Patricia Lugo was the winner. I will see you at Fall Conference with your gift.