



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2024



The Post Convention Department Executive Committee meeting was held on September 7, 2024, at The American Legion Department of SC

Dept Cmdr Bruce Donegan
Dept Adjutant Michael Strauss
NEC Jim Hawk
Alt NEC Phillips (elected held at this mtg)
Imm PDC Jim Kvam
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Jim Rabon
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Jack Lonergan
Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Russ Cantrell
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Patricia Dandy
D-1 Cmdr Darlene Walton
D-4 Cmdr Lou Morse
D-7 Cmdr John Galloway
D-8 Cmdr Harry Malpass
D-9 Cmdr John Comins
D-10 Cmdr Wayne Hipp
D-11 Cmdr Peter St. Onge
D-12 Cmdr A.L. Hough-Everage
D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson

D-14 Cmdr Terry Weeks
D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman
D-16 Cmdr Jim Defrehn
D-17 Cmdr Jerome Childs
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy
D-19 Cmdr Charlie Strickland
NVC Joe Lysaght
Department Chaplain Clarence Shuford
Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy
PDC John Britt
PDC Bob Scherer
PDC Cecil Phillips

Absent:

Dept J/A Cody Mitchell
Dept Asst J/A Stephen Lewis
D-2 Cmdr Dana Richardson
D-3 Cmdr Kevin Brown

D-5 Cmdr Bonita Wells
D-6 Cmdr Bill Simpson
D-20 Cmdr Harold Donnelly

Also Present:

M. May, Dept Exec. Director
Post 207 Cmdr Mark Dorsey

Dept Finance Chairman Tom Yarborough

Dept Adj Strauss: Alright, before we go on the record here, this is a special called meeting, we can't really have reports, we can only stick to what was specially called. But we're just going to go through some stuff real quick and stuff that you guys need to know as the Executive Committee. Everybody can hear me ok online? Alright, very good.

- 1) our tenant, one of the tenants that we had, the church down here, that's the white portion of the building down at the bottom. The tenant has broke their lease and they have gone belly up so we have a vacant building right now. We've been working on upgrading some

of the paint job and cleaning and disassembling their stage and stuff like that and we do expect to put that back up for rent shortly.

- 2) Oratorical Contest, the mailer has gone out so all the schools got the Oratorical book everybody here should have gotten one. One thing about that, if we don't know that your town has schools, then they're not getting the mailer. We don't have somebody that gives us a great list, it's always being updated constantly if a school moves or something like that. If there's a high school in your town, if you can get the mailing address.
- 3) You'll probably hear this at your District meetings, we have members not showing up on the roster. If you do a mylegion look up for your roster, going into reports and labels, instead of looking like, paid 2024 or paid 2025, don't just do '25 if you're looking for '25. You want to do '25, '26, '27, '28, click all four of them, and that way, because they're going to show up by the year, the last year. So tell them if you're just doing a search on '24, make sure you include '25, '26, '27, '28, all up the list, and that will show up all the people on there. We also give, you know, you can search in there too, to mark off the deceased, if you don't want the deceased on there, like if you're doing a mailing list or something like that. The reason why, and we get that question a lot, why does a deceased person stay on the roster even though they're deceased, you know. If they're paid, they're going to show up on the roster until their membership expires. So, that's just the way it is. People have insisted they want the deceased on there because when they do the post everlasting, that the member be on there from X-Date to X-Date, they can do a member search for people who have died this year. So it's kind of inconvenient for some but you can kind of modify your roster when you do a look-up for those. So if people ask you about that, make sure you kind of tell them that's how you can fix that.
- 4) September 11th, that's this Wednesday is the 50% cut off. date. So if you're kind of new to the game, you want to let your posts know that this Wednesday is the cut-off date so if they're on their desk, make sure they get processed. Because the reason why that is, anybody after September the 11th, if they process them after, they're still going to get a renewal notice. So everybody after September 11th that hasn't processed their dues is going to get a renewal notice in October. The next renewal notice comes the first week of October, generally that's when it's mailed out. So, make sure you let your posts know if you got them sitting on their desk, everybody's that been in here has some experience with people getting angry about that guy who paid back in August and still getting membership renewals, so let's to make sure that happens.
- 5) Rifle Raffle. It did well, but it did not beat last year. So, I'll also tell you, I had in the handouts out there, membership history. We had three years in a row that we lost dues and that doesn't sound like a lot, but our membership went down three years in a row. It 'looks like Jim Kvam has stopped that slide, he has surpassed the '23 numbers already, so, that's great. But when you look at the list, those three years, we lost, \$29487.00 in revenue, per year. So that's a lot of revenue to lose when we lost those memberships, so that's why I kind of pass that membership history out. So you can kind of see how that affects us, you know. Our Rifle Raffle is the main reason why we have not had to raise dues. Everybody says, when are you going to raise dues? As long as the Rifle Raffle stays good, we don't have to raise dues, ok? But we can't keep going down, down, down, and our membership going down, down, down, and expect to maintain a high level of scholarships and stuff like that. Because that's probably the first thing that's going to be cut, is programs, you know. Just throwing it out there, that's usually the first thing's that cut. So the Rifle Raffle stuff's going to be coming out soon, so, please, please, promote our Rifle Raffle, you know. Get your posts, bring tickets and say, hey, let's sell some tickets, you know, it's a great way for you to raise money, ok. That's \$80,000.00 for the National portion, if you're wondering why they had to raise dues, there's a lot of

Departments that lost money. \$29,400.00 for us is \$80,000.00 for National each year, that's a huge amount of money.

- 6) The National Convention produced some news, Joe Lysaght resigned as the Nec'man, to run for National Vice Commander and got elected as National Vice Commander (applause). With that vacancy in his spot, Jimmy Hawk moved up (applause), and we will have...today we'll fill that vacancy by having an election. Sgt-at-Arms. We will need some assistant Sgt-at-Arms. If you see some people out there that are...Sgt-at-Arms are some people that have to do heavy lifting and a lot of walking and follow directions and be where they're supposed to be when they're supposed to be there. So it cannot be somebody in a walker or something like that generally, because they have to lift heavy boxes and do a lot of the stage set-up at the convention. They have to be able to come to the convention too, and fall conferences, and conventions. So if you see a person that you might can mentor can get into that spot that's a go-getter, you know, bring it to our attention.

D-12 Cmdr Hough-Everage: I have a person, does the requirement just attending the spring and fall convention and conference? What are the responsibilities in terms of time commitment?

Dept Adj Strauss : That's....the spring and fall conference, that's pretty much our (inaudible). We have our general every day Sgt-at-Arms, that comes to the regular meetings..

Exec Dir May: That's you. That's you, Kevin (laughter).

Dept Adj Strauss: Alright, that's all the announcements I've got, we've come again to the regular business. Oh, finance had something today and the membership guy had something to say. Tom, do you have something to say?

Finance Chairman Yarborough: No.

Dept Adj Strauss: Richard, do you have something to say?

Membership Chairman Dorman: Good morning. I'm going to talk a good bit about the Big Board, the hand out there. We've got our Quadrant 3 Membership Workshop at Post 15 in Sumter.

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: By the way, that's Sumter, not Sumpter. (laughter).

Membership Chairman Dorman: I've changed that (laughter). I know better than that, too. I used to live there. Quadrant 4 will be at 28 September at Goose Creek. I already sent out reminders about that. If anyone missed the previous meetings, you can attend one of those meetings. I want to highlight a few things, we've got seven districts that's already at 50 + %, that's great. That's going down the list of district commanders, Walton, Wells, Simpson, Comins, Hough, Gibson and Dorman, so give these people a round of applause. (applause). Good job, good job. We've got ten districts that is at 40% or more and many of them are right at the 50%, so please get those posts to get their membership information in by Wednesday, and then we've got three districts that's below 40%. So, those district commanders, I've asked if you would, please work with your posts and try to help them out to get their membership, you know. Our sort of a theme is renew early so that's what we're shooting for so that we don't run into situations like this. So if we get them in the habit of renewing early, then we can hit our goals across the board. And if you haven't talked to them about renewing early, please talk with your

post commanders, those adjutants and membership teams and talk to them about it and talk to them about why. And one of the why's is we want to get our department at 100%. And we've got to drive that, we've got to talk to them. Another thing when it gets to November, December, around the holidays, money gets tight. Well, people aren't that willing to pay for dues at that time, and that puts pressure on our membership teams. It's easy, just renew early. It's not simple because people have those habits and they're used to doing it on their own time-frame. So let's encourage them, talk to them from (inaudible). DMS, Post 172 is at 59.29% so there's a lot of people out there to transfer into the posts, and if we don't have our posts doing that, that's another opportunity that we can use to get members to move into your posts and increase those post memberships. Membership Team meeting, I've been asked about that. Well, my intent was that through these four quadrant meetings that our membership team members would go there so that they could synchronize with the rest of us. Now, my fault for not putting in there "and membership team members", I should have done that. But that was the intent, you know, I put in there, "anyone else involved with membership". So, I was looking to kind of serve as our membership meetings in the beginning. Now, one of the other things that we've been talking about with our membership workshops is we've really got to do a lot more with our younger member's that's out there. Now, there's a lot of them out there but we've got to come up with a plan to get them into our posts. And I think that's one of the focuses that I need our membership team to work on. So after we knock out these next two workshops, then I'll be going with them so we can set up a meeting so we can start working on that. We've got to bring in the younger members for sustainability long term.

Mike already mentioned the goal of September 11th, another thing that all of us can work on, even those that are at 50% or better. We all have one or two posts that is at 20% or 30%, so we need to get with them or talk with them. So, our homework will be, let's work with those posts that's struggling, let's work with our districts that's struggling, and again, let's encourage all of our members to renew early. You know, I threw it out there by the end of October, but certainly by the end of November. So, let's take that as homework and get out there and get that done. Appreciate what all of you are doing, overall we're doing really good. The Department right now is at 50.58%, so we've already exceeded that 50% goal. And I've asked Mike to put another line on there, it's exactly the same on this one as it is on the last one, for the Department. We've got National on there, the National goal, but I'd like to see our Department goal on there, that's more closer to us, if you will. Any questions of me, any suggestions? I've corrected the Sumter spelling (laughter).

Vice Cmdr Lonergan; That is our Department goal, that National gave us.

Membership Chairman Dorman: But I didn't know that, I'm still learning. But to me, if it says, Department of South Carolina, that's directly to what it is, so, but yeah, point well taken. Thank you.

Department Commander, Bruce Donegan, opened the meeting and called on Chaplain Shuford for the invocation. Commander Donegan read Resolution 288, led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to The American Legion and called on Adjutant Strauss to call for the roll.

Adjutant Strauss called the roll and stated that a quorum was present.

Dept Cmdr Donegan: At this time, I call for a motion dispense with the reading of the past DEC minutes.

Vice Cmdr Loneragan: I make a motion

D-8 Cmdr Malpass: Second.

Dept Adj Strauss: I have a motion and a second, all in favor say aye? Opposed? (all present voted in favor of the motion to approve the minutes of the previous Executive Committee, none opposed. Motion passed and so ordered)

Dept Cmdr Donegan: I just want to say, the District 10 new Commander, Wayne Hipp, I just want to welcome you here, sir. (applause).

So, at this time, no old business. New business, I'm going to turn it over the Adjutant.

Dept Adj Strauss: Alright. **So, we got two vacancies to fill on the...the first one will be the Alternate National Committeeman, that person has been verified by the membership card and DD-214, that is Cecil Phillips. Is there any other nominations for Alternate NEC? Are there other nominations for Alternate NEC? Are there any other candidates or nominations for Alternate NEC?**

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Mr. Commander, I make a motion that nominations be closed.

Vice Cmdr Loneragan: I second that motion, that the nominations be closed.

Dept Adj Strauss: There has been a motion and a second that the nominations be closed.

All in favor? (All present voted in favor of closing the nominations)

Imm PDC Kvam: I make a motion to suspend the rules of the election, and have the Adjutant cast one vote to elect Cecil Phillips as the next Alternate Nec'man for the Department of South Carolina.

Dept Adj Strauss: We have a motion, do we have a second?

D-8 Cmdr Harry Malpass: I have a second.

Dept Adj Strauss: We have a motion, we have a second, any discussion? All in favor, any opposed? The ayes have it (applause).

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Speech, speech!

Alt NEC Phillips: I just want to thank you for the faith you have in me, and I'll do my best, my absolute best and to carry out my duties as the Alternate National Committeeman. And we will have a good year and thank you, that's it. (applause)

Dept Cmdr Donegan: Next, Constitution and Bylaws change forms.

Dept Adj Strauss: Constitution and Bylaws change forms, you guys, everybody got them in advance, and you should have a copy of them. We were made aware of one change on the SAL one, and it was just a grammatical error, we didn't have 2024 on one of the pages, but we changed that grammatical error. Are there any more errors on any of those forms that I need to

be made aware of or any discussion about of the forms? There being none, do we want go over each form or do we want to make a motion to approve them all at the same time?

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: I make a motion that we approve all of the Constitution and Bylaws information at the same time, as well as the Resolution

Vice Cmdr Cantrell: I make a second.

Dept Adj Strauss: We have motion and a second to approve of the forms, and they will be published as soon as possible. You've heard the motion, we have a second, all in favor? Any opposed? (All in favor approved the motion to approve all the forms, none opposed) Ayes have it.

Dept Cmdr Donegan: Good meeting today, folks. I've got my little cheat sheet. Again, I just want to thank everybody for coming here today, the weather's... well, it's raining out, so drive safe. We're doing alright, we heard some reports today, finance is out there, we heard from membership, we heard about the Rifle Raffle. My project, that's going pretty good, we got a good donation today and some other ones so bring that up to your posts and district meetings.

Exec Dir May: Commander, do you want to tell them they get a pin if they donate?

Dept Cmdr Donegan: Yes, we have a pin, American Legion Supporter, you get a pin if you donate a hundred dollars!

Exec Dir May: Yes! Look, I'll demonstrate. Do you want to model it?

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Can I buy one?

Exec Dir May: \$100.00 (laughter)

Dept Cmdr Donegan: I know we said a dollar for each member but I fully understand and I said that myself so I'll stand by my word, so whatever the post can donate toward my project will be fine, we'll take whatever they can donate. In your packet we got this form here, four rules of An American Legion program, I haven't really seen it myself before. So you can read it at your leisure and promote that at your meetings also.

Some of us went to the National Convention, it was a good time, we were sitting there. They were doing membership awards, Florida went up, we were number 15, so we could still see the stage. So we were at the Membership Workshop meeting, I said I want to be number one in the country. We're not rich enough to buy our way in like some other departments. But I always say, we're a small state with a big heart. I'm tired of sitting there and they're going on and on and hear cheering and everything like that, there's no reason why we can't. My slogan is working together.

Dept Adj Strauss: "Together we Can".

Dept Cmdr Donegan: I should know that, I've been using that my whole life (laughter). But together we can, I've always said this before when I go out to do my visitation. I don't give two hoots about myself, all these years, I've been fortunate to be able to do what I've done. I've got three boxes of plaques and certificates of everything. This is for our guys out there. When we

walk in, I want to see more plaques on the wall and have people clap and cheer for us next year when we get there. So we just got to work a little harder, we got a good team this year. Commander Dorman sends out these emails that says, "Hey Team", you know what, I like that, we're all a team. I think about that, that kind of gets everybody energized up and that, well, I'm part of that team now, and everything. So, that's why I like that.

I can't think of everything. Sometimes people think, the Department Commander, you're supposed to know everything. Well, guess what, I don't know everything, You learn everyday, it's a work in process. Thank you so much, I'm looking forward to a good year. Our next meeting will be at the Fall Conference.

We're working on the Fall Conference, we have a planning meeting on the 16th, I hope we have something different this year, everybody says, we do the same stuff. Well, we're not doing the same stuff this year. We're going to do some other stuff this year, make it more exciting, more learning, we're working on Legion College, kick it off and have it in the Spring and that, and National Commander two years, Troiola, said our Department needs to have one. Commander Defrehn and myself got invited to North Carolina's, that's the second time I've been invited there. I like that format and I think we're going to use that format. So we're working and building a good strong foundation to move up. Other than that, that's it. Do you have any questions of me, real quick.

Dept Adj Strauss: I will say we have two candidates for American Legion College and they're both in this room today, Jerome Childs and Patricia Dandy are both going to American Legion College (applause).

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: God help them in Indianapolis, that's all I got to say. (laughter).

So with that, we can have the closing comments.

Dept Adj Strauss: Jerome put out a hand-out after the others were given out if you just want to grab Jerome's on the way out.

Commander Donegan called on Chaplain Shuford for the closing prayer and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Michael D. Strauss
Department Adjutant