



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2025



The Post Convention Department Executive Committee meeting was held on May 18, 2025, at the Doubletree Hotel, Columbia, SC

Dept Cmdr Jim Rabon

Acting Adjutant NEC Jim Hawk

Alt NEC Cecil Phillips

Imm PDC Bruce Donegan

Department Historian Vacant

Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Jack Lonergan

Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Patricia Dandy

Dept 3rd Vice Jerome Childs

Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Vacant

D-1 Cmdr Darlene Walton

D-2 Cmdr Dana Richardson

D-3 Cmdr Brad Kennedy

D-4 Cmdr Lou Morse

D-5 Cmdr Bonita Wells

D-7 Cmdr John Galloway

D-8 Cmdr Harry Malpass

D-9 Cmdr John Comins

D-10 Cmdr Wayne Hipp

D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson

D-14 Cmdr Terry Weeks

D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman

D-16 Cmdr Vacant

D-17 Cmdr Vacant

D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy

D-20 Vacant

Department Chaplain Clarence Shuford

Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy

PDC Bob Scherer

PDC Jim Jarvis

PDC John Britt

PDC Jim Kvam

PDC Joe Lysaght

Absent

Dept J/A Cody Mitchell

D-6 Cmdr Bill Simpson

D-11 Mike Cook

D-12 Commander Hough-Everage

D-19 Cmdr Charlie Strickland

Also Present:

Dept Exec. Director M. May

Dept Admin Assist S. Kennedy

Sherri Scherer

Department Commander, James Rabon, opened the meeting and called on Chaplain Shuford for the invocation. Commander Rabon read Resolution 288, led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to The American Legion.

Commander Rabon thanked everyone for electing him as Department Commander and allowing him to serve them for four years as their Vice Commander and looks forward to

working with all the committees this year. Commander Rabon's project this year is Operation Comfort Warrior (OCW).

He stated he is concerned with membership and would like each person on the Executive Committee to work as a team member on the membership team to ensure the Department meets its membership goals and obligations. Commander Rabon asked all District Commanders to come forward that didn't come forward the previous day to get sworn in that was elected this year.

Commander Rabon swore in District 7 Commander John Galloway and called on Acting Adjutant Hawk to call the roll. Acting Adjutant Hawk called the roll and announced there was a quorum present to conduct business

Commander Rabon asked for a motion to dispense with the reading of the previous Executive Committee Minutes.

Motion made by Imm PDC Donegan, seconded by D-4 Cmdr Lou Morse. All present approved the motion to dispense with the reading of the previous DEC minutes.

Commander Rabon called on the Department Officers for reports. He asked Vice Commander Lonergan for an update on the sign for the road in front of Department Headquarters.

Vice Commander Lonergan said the company he's been working with in Florida has not responded so he's contacted another company in Sumter. He's looking at a sign that's lit. Commander Lonergan stated he'd have an estimate within three months, stating the estimated price would be between \$17,000 and \$20,000.

Commander Rabon called on Membership Chairman Dorman for his report. D-8 Commander Malpass, D-2 Commander Dana Richardson, District 19 Commander Charlie Strickland and past D-17 Commander, Jerome Childs are all 100% Districts. He said on May 15th, 2025, the Department was # 6 in the Nation and # 2 in the Southeast in membership. South Carolina moved down slightly on the most recent membership report but stated that being in the top ten in the country was a positive thing. He suggested that the post consider paying dues for members. D-4 Cmdr suggested that the Department pick up the dues for unpaid members for the National portion.

Acting Adjutant Hawk said that's a Department finance issue and post issue. He stated the membership committee would have to make the recommendation to the finance committee before the finance committee could study the recommendation and bring it to the DEC. He also asked that everyone please state their name and title for the record so the recorder can pick it up. Raise your hand so the Commander or Chairman can recognize you. Adjutant Hawk stated that membership goals will not be given to the Department until August, that was a delay by National in the conference date this year, so every post should maintain the goals they have now until further notice. As far as Membership cards, we received them this week, but National manuals have not come in.. We'll let everyone know when the cards are sorted and ready to be picked up by the Districts. We'd like to distribute the cards and manuals together.

Commander Dorman concluded his report and Commander Rabon called on the finance report from Chairman Yarborough.

Chairman Yarborough went over the profit & loss statement for January through April. He said that there was a proliferation of different financial institutions with the previous adjutant. There are now three individuals on the signature card to insure continuity in the event of a change of personnel. Chairman Yarborough stated that at the last DEC meeting the DEC approved opening an investment account. He said that our bank, South State Bank, is a customer focused organization and we have moved the funds into there and it's being secured by a SIPC and FDIC.

The next item is the vehicle use policy for information only, written by previous finance committee member, John Benjamin.

Next item is the form for the stipend. There is a sum of money to be reimbursed for expenses incurred by the Department officers and District Commanders, reimbursements will require receipts except for mileage. In the original recommendation we were asked not to reimburse if milestones were not met by the District Commanders. The finance committee did not recommend them, they were concerned about an employee relationship, which they want to avoid. And they are also concerned it would create a tremendous amount of work on the part of full time staff to see if the milestones were met.

Dept Executive Director May asked if the finance committee discussed if the District Commanders and Department Officers could send in their fall conference or dept convention hotel bill as part of their expense?

Chairman Yarborough confirmed that they could submit those hotel bills toward their expense.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson asked when the cut-off was, it was confirmed the forms states the cut off was the fiscal year.

Chairman Yarborough made the motion that the finance reimbursement form and car policy be approved and that the full time staff will provide the details on how it will be managed.

A second was made by Vice Commander Lonergan. Commander Rabon asked for discussion, there being none, all present approved the motion to approve the vehicle policy and the finance reimbursement form. None opposed. Motion carried.

Commander Rabon asked if there was any unfinished business.

PDC Scherer asked about the history book that the previous Adjutant had been working on it. He said that the previous Adjutant had told him and Maggie both that he was looking for a publisher but there have been no updates on that.

Acting Adjutant Hawk stated that Mike put together book # four. He said finance has to be involved, look at designs etc. This has been a long time project and it's not a dead issue.

Commander Rabon asked for Acting Adjutant Hawk to read the appointments for the 2025-2026 year. Adjutant Hawk read those appointments made by Commander Rabon to include

The Search Committee

Imm PDC Donegan
PDC Kvam
PDC Palmer
PDC Britt
PDC Hawk
Vice Commander Lonergan
Vice Commander Dandy
Vice Commander Childs
Department Commander Rabon

Ethics Committee/Confidential Investigative Committee:

Kevin Joy, Department Sgt-at-Arms
Chaplain Shuford
John Palmer, PDC

VEAC

Jim Jarvis, Chairman

Legion College:

Those appointments will be made at a later date since this was a new committee approved on Friday, 5/16/25

Also submitted for approval:

SAL

Tom Keyrouze, Detachment Commander
Jack Smith, NEC
Dan Rollins, Detachment Adjutant
Richard Hall, Alternate NEC
Bill Cooper, 1st Vice
Jeff Pino, 2nd Vice
Tim Hall, 3rd Vice
Tom Brady, 4th Vice
Greg Harbin, Chaplain
Vacant- Historian

ALR

Brent Johnson, Director
Darrell Hodges, Assistant Director

A motion was made by Vice Commander Lonergan to approve all the committees and also authorize Commander Rabon to fill any vacant positions.

Second made by District 9 Commander Comins. Commander Rabon asked for discussion. There being none, all in favor voted to approve the motion, none opposed, motion carried to approve Commander Rabon's appointments and to authorize Commander Rabon to fill any vacancies.

Commander Rabon called on Acting Adjutant Hawk for miscellaneous business. Acting Adjutant Hawk covered the schedule of events for the next year through the Department Convention. He pointed out that the DEC meetings will be on Wednesdays. He asked for any questions. Hearing none, he thanked Commander Rabon.

Commander Rabon said he had a few remarks. He said the buck stopped with him. That means that before anything goes out, he wants to approve it before it goes out to the entire Department. He said he did not want emails going out from the Vice Commanders to the District Commanders, he wants to approve it before it goes out, so we are all on the same page and the information is accurate before it goes out.

Acting Adjutant Hawk asked Commander Rabon for a moment. Adjutant Hawk covered the employee personnel policy manual and the search committee job description. He said both had been approved the Department Judge Advocate.

Vice Cmdr Lonergan made a motion to approve the employee personnel policy manual a second was made by Imm PDC Donegan. There being no discussion, all present approved the motion, no one opposed, motion to approve the employee personnel policy manual was carried.

Acting Adj Hawk covered the Rules of the DEC, when John Britt was Department Commander, he asked the Department Constitution and Bylaws committee to work on the rules for the DEC. PDC Kvam picked up the project and refined it. The idea is to get the sub-committees and commissions on the agenda to report for the record.

D-9 Commander Comins made a motion to approve the Rules of the DEC, a second was made by D-13 Commander Gibson. There being no discussion, all present voted in favor of the motion, none opposed. Motion carried.

Acting Adjutant Hawk asked Commander Rabon to call for a motion to go into Executive Session.

D-8 Commander Malpass made a motion to go into Executive Session, a second was made by D-4 Commander Morse. All present approved the motion to go into Executive Session.

Commander Rabon asked everyone that was not a DEC member or staff to leave the room.

EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS

EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS

Commander Rabon continued with his closing remarks. He said again he wants to approve everything that is sent out on behalf of the Department. Sometimes when things get sent out, it causes drama and confusion, and we want to be aware of that, so we understand that, and it's been discussed already. We've had a couple emails that have gone out in the last month ago and the Department knew nothing about it because the Department was bypassed. Do not send out anything if it's of any significance.

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: Does that include the National Security Reports? I have to send it to you before I send it out? You're going to be inundated.

Department Commander Rabon said he'd send it back to the sender to approve.

Acting Adjutant Hawk said the idea is that we've been blindsided by emails that was against Department policy, and that's a no-no. And as National Commander Lysaght can attest through his travels, you have to be very careful what you put out on behalf of the Department. You don't want to pull this body into something. You send it to the Department, why? The Department has an administrative function. The Department Commander is the only spokesperson for the Department; that's every Commander that comes through. We're there, staff wise, to support him or her. But the Commanders do not know everything in the Department. And neither to the the Vice Commanders and District Commanders. That gets back to the Commander's visitation form. That goes out, that's the only thing he's requesting you to do. He's not going to accept anything unless it comes through us because of dates. He or she might have to go and represent the Department that's urgent at that time.

The bingo thing is not as terrible, to my understanding, at the Department level, it is not as terrible as it is being put out. I don't know what's in the law that will be passed, nobody does, because it hasn't been passed. It's being negotiated between the house and senate. To my understanding, here's the state where all bingo stuff comes from, here's the promoter of bingo, here's the post or auxiliary or whatever. To my understanding the post is not going to suffer, or the state, the promoter is the one that's going to suffer. The money they're talking about is a portion of the profits. And I'm paraphrasing because I don't know the final status. Some of the proceeds will be donated the Veterans Trust Fund for South Carolina. And that portion of that revenue there will enhance the funds for that fund. There is a board of trustees, there are thirteen individuals on that board, and I sit on that board. You have to go before the Senate, just like everyone else, to get confirmed. The South Carolina Legion is represented on that board, the VFW, the DAV, and some other people. But we've also got outside people.

But that money enhances the Trust Fund's ability to award grants to veterans, families, towns or whatever, under the law. And the Secretary McCaffrey has been part of the process to get this done. The only thing now, you notice when you do taxes, you check off a block to donate money to the Veterans Trust Fund.

The big thing is it's being put the posts will be hurt, I don't think they will. I think it will be the promoter, and the promoter is pushing opposition to the bill. We'll find out more about it. I've answered the best of my ability to answer because we don't know what the answer is going to be? Any questions? Ok. Thank you, Mr. Commander.

Commander Rabon said one reason he wanted this discussed was he probably received over 20 questions the previous day regarding bingo. People are very concerned, and Commander Rabon said he'd spent a lot of time trying to explain something he had very little knowledge of since he'd been blindsided about what had been put out. He thanked the Adjutant for explaining the issue. Commander Rabon reiterated the invitation form, he said if his schedule allows it, he would accept the invitation, but please get the invitation in.

Commander Rabon called on Chaplain Shuford for the benediction, called for the salute to the flag and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Jim Hawk, NEC
Acting Department Adjutant

JH/mm