



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2025



The Department Executive Committee meeting was held on July 9, 2025, at the American Legion Department of SC, Columbia, SC

Dept Cmdr Jim Rabon
Acting Adj / 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-4 Cmdr Lou Morse
D-5 Cmdr Bonita Wells
D-6 Cmdr Bill Simpson
D-7 Cmdr John Galloway
D-8 Cmdr Harry Malpass
D-10 Cmdr Vacant
D-11 Cmdr Mike Cook

D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson
D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman
D-16 Cmdr Mark Dorsey
D-17 Cmdr Winston Boddie
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy
D-19 Cmdr Charlie Strickland
Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy
PDC Joe Lysaght
PDC John Palmer
PDC Jim Jarvis
PDC Jim Kvam
PDC Bob Scherer

Absent

Dept J/A Cody Mitchell
D-9 Cmdr John Comins
D-3 Cmdr Brad Kennedy
D-12 Commander Hough-Everage
D-14 Cmdr Terry Weeks

Also Present:

Finance Chairman Tom Yarborough
Dept Exec. Director M. May
Dept Administrative Assist. Sabrina Kennedy
D-20 Cmdr David Kenner

Department Commander, James Rabon, opened the meeting and called on Acting Adjutant Hawk for the invocation. Commander Rabon read Resolution 288, led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to The American Legion, and called on Acting Adjutant Hawk for the roll. Acting Adjutant Hawk called the roll and announced there was a quorum to conduct business.

Commander Rabon asked for a motion to approved the previous DEC minutes. A motion was made by District 13 Commander, Rick Gibson, a second by Imm PDC Donegan, all present approved the motion to approve the previous DEC minutes. Commander Rabon asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. Motion made by Vice Commander Lonergan, 2nd by Vice Commander Childs. All present voted in favor, none opposed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS

EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS

Commander Rabon called on Adjutant Hawk for reports from the National Spring meetings. NEC Hawk stated that most of the report was in the last Connector, a couple were pretty interesting. One was the new history book format; it's all going digital. August 1st to us and August 8th to National.

Another thing that came up was background checks, that's coming up everywhere. 250 Celebration coming up, Baseball anniversary coming up and the Fall conference info is in the Connector as well. Another item was Doug Ammon achieved one of the 4th runner ups in recruiting nationwide. He received Recruiter of the Year for the Department and National has now recognized his achievements.

We gave out a tentative schedule of events for Commander Rabon's year. Wednesday is not a popular day in somebody's mind, but we've had DEC meetings on Wednesdays in the past. We've had DEC meetings on Sunday at 2:00, we've had DEC meetings on Saturday. The Commander wants the DEC meetings on Wednesday, and he has the authority to do that. Please check the calendar to see that it doesn't interfere with anything that you have coming up. We're here Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 40 hours a week, and many weeks, more hours than that. We've also had pre-DEC meetings on Thursday before conventions and conferences. So don't get zeroed in on one day.

The leading candidate, Jay Bowen, will be here at Fall Conference, a letter will be going out for contributions to his campaign. Every Department does it, costs of running for National Commander are astronomical, hundreds of thousands of dollars. We'll be giving him those donations at the Fall Conference. Oratorical mailing goes out in August. In your hand-outs is the Code of Procedures for Detachment Convention, we need your approval for that.

Commander Rabon asked for a motion to approve the Uniform Code of Procedure for Detachment Convention. D-13 Commander Rick Gibson made the motion to approve, a second was made by Vice Commander Lonergan. Commander Rabon called for discussion, there being none, all present approved the motion to approve the SAL Code of Procedure for Detachment Convention, none opposed. Motion carried.

Adjutant Hawk stated that the Department had just received the SAL Detachment Rules of the DEC. That is a positive thing, and they are presenting segments to bring them up to speed. Once it's approved, we'll send it out to you for approval.

We had training for the Vice Commanders and the District Commanders, it went well, this has always been one of my goals when I was your Department Adjutant, train, train, train. We get a lot of new people, the E-board has to make a lot of tough decision. Like Joe said, it comes through here, and then it becomes policy. This staff and Commander keeps you up to speed on National issues, legislative issues, convention, and NEC issues that we have to abide by. I hope it will be an annual thing.

I'm also working on an officer's retreat at the conclusion of our Department Convention, or in the future. The last one we had was when Gene McDaniel was Department Commander in 2013. Everyone elected goes on a retreat for three days, we have fun but it's a learning thing, and a bonding thing. We're going to cost it out and see what it is. **We left there as a unified body,**

that's why we 100% in membership eleven years in a row and three all-time highs.
Because we were all talking out of the same book.

Five year plan, we've had discussions with the vices so we can come up with a five year plan. That's for everybody, that becomes our mission statement, our progress for the post, our process for the District, our progress for the Department, is in that five year plan. Right now we have no plan, we're splintered, to a certain degree.

Fall Conference, parking is included with the room, if you stay at that hotel, parking is included.

Rick Gibson said he called the hotel and couldn't make a reservation. Maggie said the link is live as of this morning. We have to wait for the hotel to send that link and it won't be live until they send it, but as of this morning, it is now live.

Gun Raffle, we drew the names, the first winner came from Post 132, District 19. We thank every post and every Legionnaire; the post gets \$10.00 a ticket.

Commander Rabon said he talked with a post commander that was still unaware that anyone that wins gets a gift card when they win, they can utilize that to purchase whatever they'd like or get the weapon they won. If anyone that would like to volunteer to be the Rifle Raffle Chairperson, please let the Commander know.

Department Hdqtrs will be closed, all staff attend National Convention, from August 19 until they return on August 29. However, that is a Friday, so staff returns after Labor Day.

PDC Kvam did a great job on the rules of the DEC, there are some things that can be eliminated, we don't have boards, for example, so I think we're going to amend it a little bit, alleviate some of this stuff. We put this new agenda together for you, we'll bring this information to you, thanks Jim (Kvam) for doing that, well done.

This is Irmo News, this is free PR for your post. In this newspaper, students participate in Boys and Girls State, this goes to everyone, and it lists all the boys and girls that went to Boys and Girls state from this area. Go and talk with your local newspaper and talk to them. The post should do one thing and one thing good, youth programs. Take the initiative as leaders to see what's going on.

This is the membership pie, Take your membership and put it in the pie, you need this much by this date, the visualization aid is simple, and it works, just simple stuff and it works.

Commander Rabon called on PDC Britt for his report from the Spring meetings for Internal Affairs, he said that was his first time there. Some general information was discussed, and he would have a report next time.

Commander Rabon called on Vice Cmdr Dandy for her report from the National Spring meetings, She stated most of the discussion was about baseball, she stated there was a pin that would be for sale. She briefly discussed Americanism programs at the Department level.

Commander Rabon called on Harry Malpass for the report from the National Emblem Committee. He said they met a day and a half, covering three different sections, finance, marketing, and merchandise. He said he has complete slides, he said he would send them to Maggie, and she could distribute them. He has a year end analysis, key performance

indicators, royalties, flag sales. Operation report, we talk about inventory in the warehouse, new technology in the warehouse and updates, vendor spotlight and our main vendor that does caps for us, shipping, new toys, meeting updates and sideline stores. We've come out with these new sideline stores that only last a few weeks or months and they go away. We don't supply that product, we just sell it.

Then in Marketing and merchandising, media that gets sent out, the paid advertisements, flag rewards, we need to sell flags to the posts. A lot of posts don't do any of that, you get points for that.

Old merchandise and some new merchandise. And at the end, it's a committee of nine, we approve the reporting from the emblem sales staff.

Vice Commander Lonergan stated that every car dealership has big flags and Emblem Sales has those flags. If you do that and that car dealership purchases that flag, then your post gets the points for that.

Commander Rabon called on Finance Chairman Yarborough for the finance report. The Rifle Raffle income came out better than anticipated and the LIT income was over what was anticipated. Two years ago, we paid off the mortgage. That freed up a lot of money. I'd asked Maggie to send the DEC to send anything they'd like to add to the budget; you can send that to Chairman Yarborough or Maggie.

Chairman Yarbough wanted to talk about the stipend, or reimbursement of expenses that you incur. That was not approved until the Convention in May. So the amount approved will be 1/2 of the amount for the remainder of the year, and in 2026, the full amount will be available to you.

When the previous adjutant, we found out there were a bunch of CD's scattered around, and the only person on the signature besides him was me, so that kept me pretty busy. I thank Jim Jarvis and Jim Hawk for agreeing to come onto the signature cards, and I think right now we're down to one or two CDs. When they mature, we move them to the new organization with South State Bank which the DEC approved several months ago and the management of that is working very well for us. When the other CD's mature, we'll move them also.

There is some discussion of the Reserve Fund, it's Article II, Section 1 of the Bylaws, what it provides there is each year that \$2.00 per member is put into the reserve fund. And there it talks about the uses of those funds that go into the Reserve Fund Any expenditures out of the Reserve Fund requires a 2/3rds vote of the DEC. Since it's been established, no withdrawals have been made.

We depend a lot on the full time staff to assemble the information for the budget. So in addition to the National and Department work, they are also doing landlord type work. They spend a lot of time on that and do a very good job of it, just want to make you aware of that.

Vice Commander Lonergan stated in the past that the Department of Texas has sent us checks when we had floods and when we had other things. Can we send \$10,000.00 since they helped South Carolina.

NEC Hawk, I'm in touch with the Department of Texas, they're still assessing everything. A 30 foot wall of water is unimaginable. South Carolina was a recipient from the Department of

Kentucky for Liberty Post 67, so we are in a brotherhood of Departments. When we find out what they need, we'll let you all know in an email.

Executive Director May stated that check from Texas was never cashed.

Commander Rabon asked for a motion to approve the finance report.

Vice Commander Lonergan made a motion to approve the finance report, a second was made by Vice Commander Dandy. There being no discussion, all present approved the motion, none opposed. Motion to approve the finance report as presented was passed.

Commander Rabon called on Membership Chairman Richard Dorman for the membership report. Commander Dorman said that Maggie sent him the report from last year at the end of June we were at 98.08 percent, in 2025 at the end of June, we were at 95.97%.

We are # 8 in the nation, and number three in the Southeast, good job. We were as high as number 6 in the national and at one time we were number one in the Southeast.

As we go into our next period to jump out and get a quick start and get some momentum. Let's talk about strategy, retention and renewals, foster those relationships, make meetings fun and interesting so people think they're doing something worthwhile.

Get people to renew early, some posts don't send memberships until December, we got some to renew early, it doesn't have to be a revolution, it can be an evolution so let's talk about that. If you transfer 172 DMS, you get credit for those members, let's recruit now. The membership team is going to meet monthly virtually. We will meet quarterly on a Saturday; the first date is August 16th. We will be bringing back what our targets are, and our initiatives are.

On July 4th Commander Rabon and Dorman attended the Peach festival, 21 people came up and asked to join the American Legion. What attracted people was the big tent. Wear your hat, use your canopies, and we had the tablecloth as well, they gave us money. Commander Dorman gave it to Commander Dorman for his project. Commander Rabon asked the Membership team to stand up and be recognized. (applause) Commander Rabon said when he asked people to be on the team, he asked the Champions of the Department, all the members were 100% Commanders. Commander Rabon asked every District to have a membership meeting quarterly.

Commander Rabon called on PDC Jim Jarvis for report for the VEAC report. He said the next VEAC is in September in Greenville 902 Perimeter Rd. It's smaller than this one in Columbia. The other issue is the VA funding, I'm talking about these RO's that come out of Columbia, and getting them fed, and getting them hotels, he said that's not happening. So some of them will be virtual, not all, but some. He said he will need help from the District Commanders on this, he has a flyer coming out, he needs everyone to get this to their posts as much as possible. We've helped 4131 veterans so far at six events, this one will be September 11th, 12th and 13th at the Armory in Greenville. We've scheduled the Columbia one in March, and we're working Florence for September 2026 and Ladson in November 2026.

PDC Jarvis concluded his reports by asking for volunteers and golf carts, he said it's a little hilly, so if anyone can lend their golf cart, let him know.

Commander Rabon thanked PDC Jarvis and asked Adjutant Hawk if there was any miscellaneous business. Adjutant Hawk stated there was, the sign committee.

Commander Rabon said we have one person working on the sign and that's really too much for one, it's really better to have a committee working on this, He asked for a motion to approve an ad-hoc sign committee with Mike Cook as Chairman, Teri Meagher, and Mark Stears.

Vice Commander Lonergan made a motion to approve the sign committee, a second was made by Vice Commander Dandy. Commander Rabon asked for discussion, there being no discussion, all present approved the motion, none opposed, the motion to approve the sign committee was approved.

Commander Rabon said he'd like to appoint a 4th Vice Commander, Lou Morse. Are there any other nominations for fourth Vice Commander, any other nominations for 4th Vice Commander, are there any other nominations for 4th Vice Commander, all in favor of approving Lou Morse as the Department 4th Vice Commander say aye, all opposed by the same sign. (None opposed). Commander Rabon congratulated Commander Morse and called him up to be sworn in as the Department new 4th Vice Commander.

Commander Rabon closed the meeting with a few remarks, He said he appreciated everything that NEC/Acting Adjutant Hawk had done to training all the officers, it's imperative that we train, train, train so they are knowledgeable out in the field.

We have a lot going on with Baseball and Fastpitch, Bob Scherer is very concerned right now with a game tonight and the impending rain. Legree is working on it and Mike Cook at the post. He stated he knows it's a lot of work, he was baseball Chairman for 15 years at the post and he was on the road all the time, so he understands the work and dedication involved. He said he wanted to recognize all the new District Commander, asking them to stand up.

Winston Boddie stood up, the new District 17 Commander. Commander Rabon recognized District two Commander Dana Richardson, who came here, she brought her laptop with her so she could work before and after the meeting. Commander Rabon said he wanted to recognize her dedication (applause). He said he knew it would have been very easy for her to say she couldn't come. Commander Rabon said he was very appreciative of all the people that do have jobs that took off to be here today. Thank you Vice Commander Lysaght, and we appreciate our NEC and Alternate NEC, thank you all for being here.

Commander Rabon asked Acting Adjutant Hawk for the closing prayer, asked for a salute to flag, and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Jim Hawk, NEC
Acting Department Adjutant

JH/mm