



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2017



The Department Executive Committee met on Saturday, April 29, 2017 at American Legion Department Hdqtrs, Columbia, SC 29210.

Dept Cmdr Robert Scherer
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener
Dept J/A Stephen Lewis
NEC Bud Hennis
Alt NEC Gary Mitchell
Dept Historian Matt Gooden
Imm PDC Joe Lysaght
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Mike Strauss
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr John Britt
Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Walt Richardson
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Roberta Poulos
D-1 Cmdr Jim Jarvis
D-2 Cmdr Dwight Cargile
D-3 Cmdr Clyde Mabery
D-5 Cmdr Jack Wright
D-6 Cmdr Jim Kvam
D-7 Cmdr John Coaxum
D-8 Cmdr Bill Wade
D-9 Cmdr Isaac Miller
D-10 Cmdr Russ Cantrell
D-11 Cmdr Richard Lackey
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt
D-15 Cmdr Ron Price
D-16 Cmdr Jim DeFrehn
D-17 Cmdr Jack Lonergan
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy
D-19 Cmdr Grady Richardson
D-20 Cmdr Robin Rucker
Dept Chaplain Bill Quarles
Dept Sgt-at-Arms George Oxner

Absent:

D-4 Cmdr Stew Koontz
D-13 Cmdr Carlton Patterson

Also Present:

PDC Bob Gibbons
PDC Cecil Phillips
PDC Frank Whittle
M. May, Dept Exec Dir
Darlene Walton, P-130 Adj
Melvin Pearson, P-3 Cmdr
Sherri Scherer, Unit 200

Cmdr Scherer opened the meeting and called on Chaplain Quarles for the invocation. The Commander read Resolution 288, led the Pledge of Allegiance and then asked everyone to join him for the Preamble. Cmdr Scherer called on Adjutant Diener to call the roll. Adjutant Diener called the roll and announced the Commander had a quorum.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: The reading of the previous minutes, do we want to do that or...

D-19 Cmdr Richardson: I make a motion to dispense the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting

D-12 Cmdr Davis: Second

Dept Cmdr Scherer: And a second to not read the minutes. All in favor say aye, opposed? Carried. Finance? I'm sorry, approve the minutes as typed. All in favor say aye. We're going to do membership first, Robin?

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Good morning everyone. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you that have worked this year, so far we've got a little ways to go. Many of you have probably seen my e-mail. We've been # 1 in the nation for five different weeks. Right now we fell down this past week to # 2 but we're tied but they list us as # 2 because Mexico only has to get like 44 members, ok? We need approximately 130, right Nick?

Adj Diener: 137.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: 137 to be where we were last year plus one, ok? So what I'd like for you to do, go back and talk with your post. If they're holding any or some haven't got sent in, send them in, we can make this. I want to congratulate five of our districts, D-6, D-5, D-9, D-19 and D-20, do have all of them? Nick?

Adj Diener: Yes.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Have got 100% on membership. Let's give them a hand (applause). We have 68 posts that are 100%, ok. We have 38 posts in the state that have three or less that they need to have, members, if they get three or less within the next ten days, they'll have 100%, ok? We have eight districts out there that only got to have 5% of their total membership or less to be 100%. I think D-15 is the closest, they only have one more, ok? You've done a wonderful job and I appreciate what you've done, the membership appreciates all that you have done. We continue to work membership, you've got the numbers in front of you. But we did these district revitalizations, have been great, we've got one more, next weekend is Jim Jarvis's. And I just appreciate what you've done and where we've come. Because of you is where we're at and because of what you've done with your posts. Those of you that may be a little short, go back and push them, that's what it's all about. Talking to people. Also, we've got almost a thousand new members this year. Last year we had 600, this year we've got almost a thousand. Now think about what you've done, ok? That's pretty doggone good I think, 19, almost 20,000 people.

D-15 Cmdr Price: I gave you a membership this morning, we're at 100%.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I knew you were going to say that. Nick, you got anything you want to say?

Dept Adj Diener: The only other thing that I'd like to add because he won't say it but it's on the report, Cmdr Rucker's district, all seven of his posts have hit 100%. (applause).

Dept Cmdr Scherer: I really appreciate all that you've done for membership. It's really nice to get e-mails from the Cmdr saying that it's about time that some small departments gets up there and kicks butt like Wisconsin, Minnesota so I appreciate that. Walter?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Short, sweet and to the point. The rifle raffle is doing much better than what we thought it would originally do. As of today, right now, we've got \$99,460 in the FR account, in the basket, that's where we keep all our tickets, we've got \$4,280, the posts, for their coffers, have made \$24955, which gives us a total of

\$128,795.00 for the Rifle Raffle so far this year. Gentlemen and ladies, please understand, that is with 49% of the posts sending in the tickets. That is one half, 49% of our posts sending in the tickets, that's it. As far as the tickets are concerned, we have issued 20,374 tickets. We have sold 5,151 tickets and 1600 have been returned, that's how we can issue out (inaudible) because some of them have been returned.

That gives us a total of 13,622 tickets that we do not know the status of, they're out there. We don't whether they've been sold or people are just keeping them or doing whatever. I do know, I've seen with my own eyes \$10,000 worth of tickets that have been sold that have not been turned out, thank you Jack. (laughter) Anyway. If you will take and simply extrapolate the numbers, if we go from 13623 and we say 10% of those tickets are sold, that's 1300 tickets, multiply that times \$25 that's another \$35,000 for The American Legion Dept of SC. That would bring our total to \$162,852. Ladies & Gentlemen, that's good any way you look at it, that's good. I send updates out every two weeks, please keep sending them to your posts. If anyone wants these numbers, please see me afterwards, I'll run you a copy. There are two things I want to bring to the DEC. On every one of my updates I make sure they understand the final dates for tickets, June 16th at the close of business. That if we do not have the tickets in the dept by close of business on the 16th, what I would suggest is that we take and we send these tickets back to the post and have the post return the money. Two reasons. # 1 is how are you going to feel if we put those tickets in there and someone that did it late, won. That's not right. # 2, it's going to impugn our credibility if we don't stick by the rules. What I would like right now, I would like to do a motion that we stick strictly with the November, I'm not believing I said November. June 16th deadline.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Does that include the ones that are postmarked by the 16th?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: You didn't read by update did you?

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: No, I haven't.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Because I put that in bright red. That doesn't mean postmarked. It has to be here by the 16th.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Are we still selling them at the convention and if so shouldn't that date to get it in be at the close of convention?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Yes, I understand. Yes, we are going to be selling them at the convention and we will stop selling them on Saturday June 3rd. What's going to happen there is that's going to give you two weeks to make sure you get all your tickets, all your money to the dept. That's what that's for. The rifle raffle is over June 3rd but that gives you two weeks to get them to the dept.

Dept Historian Gooden: Make a motion we stick to the 16 June deadline.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Second.

Exec. Dir May: Shouldn't the motion say if we receive them after that return the tickets to the post? Isn't that what you asked for?

Dept Historian Gooden: 16th June deadline and everything else will be returned to the post and the post will incur the cost on those tickets.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Second.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: You heard the motion because it's a long thing to say. All in favor? Opposed? Carried.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Last thing and I'm going to sit down. When we started this we gave the posts 20% of all tickets that have been sold. And it's going extremely well. We worked the numbers this morning and if we allow ourselves a meager 10% increase next year based on the number of tickets that we sold this year. And I'm

going to recommend to the finance committee next year that the posts not get 20% but they get 40% of every ticket that they sell. We will still make, if it all works out, we will still make as much money as we made this year the next time we do it. I'm going to recommend that to finance and we'll go from there.

Imm PDC Lysaght: What do you anticipate, because you don't know yet, what do you anticipate that we will appreciate as a bottom line profit?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Our expenses are \$27,000 and change. So right now, if we had to end right now, what I know, our profit would be, I didn't figure that one up. I'm sorry. I can tell you what it will be not counting the amount the post get.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: That's probably what we want to know, what the posts get is really an expense.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Our profit will be somewhere in the neighborhood of

Dept Adj Diener: \$64,000, \$65,000?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: No it will be more than that, way more than that. Right off the top, somewhere between \$85,000 and \$95,000.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: After expenses?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: After expenses. And I can sit down and work the figures up and I can get those to you.

Imm PDC Lysaght: No, I've been thinking about that. I thought it would be significant.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: We have not paid for the weapons yet. We have three expenses, the weapons, the mailings and the tickets and they total up to right at \$27,000, which of course as soon as we get the bill from Palmetto State we'll....

D-15 Cmdr Price: You said next year we're looking at giving 40% to the post. This year we're giving 10%.

Vice Cmdr Richardson 20%.

D-15 Cmdr Price: The difference between the 20% this year and the 40% next year, how many additional tickets will we need to sell next year in order to be at the level where we're at?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: 500.

D-15 Cmdr Price: 500 more, that's the difference.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Right now we're at 5151 tickets that we have sold and I can tell you right now that I do know of certain posts, not to mention no names that have got approximately 500 tickets that have not been turned in. (laughter). Once again, just contact me. And please, one last thing, ideas. Please, if you've got an idea, send it to me. You know, please you know, we've got a list in there that we're going to try incorporate next year. We got an idea last week and I cannot believe that no where on that ticket do we have "join The American Legion". Nowhere, but rest that it will be on the next one.

Finance Chairman Richardson: I'm going to wait until you get these in your hands. Looks like everybody's got one. I'm going to be a little bit briefer than our previous speaker. If you'll look at this, very easy to read. One thing I want to point out if you look at total membership, we're only at 14%. That's because that's most of our membership as you know for the year, comes in after July 1st. That's when we start bringing most of the membership for the fiscal year. Insurance, all that income. Walt gave you an update on the rifle raffle. We only

have actual income of \$71620.00. That's because Maggie does this as quick as she can at the end of the month and a lot of stuff has come in since this was done. She doesn't go in every day and adjust this so that's why there's a difference in here and what Commander Richardson said. We've got right now percent of income right at 26%, we're about one fourth the the way through the year so we're right on budget with that. If you go down, everything looks pretty much in line, we've got one over expenditure, that's flood insurance and those of you know insurance it goes up because an agent wants to go up, that's one thing we have no control over but we still got to have it. Rifle raffle (inaudible) we'll put the rest of the expenses in once we do the raffle. It should be right around \$27,000. Page two, everything's going right along, it's pretty simple. 25% of the year is gone, little bit more, little bit less. We're right on line, expenses, one thing. We've got conventions coming up. We've got our convention, we've got National Convention, we've got a budgeted amount for these events. I've been asked several times by several people, asking conferences and conventions, can we do that, can we do this. People, the finance committee sets the budget. We're not going to sit down and say alright Nick, you can only get but four microphones for the convention. This has been told, it was told at the last finance committee meeting, stick within the budget. That's why we do a budget. If you look at the National Convention budget, we did up it for previous years. For one reason, it's a long way to Reno, Nevada and it's going to cost more to send the people, the Commander and all those people, that's why we went up on that. Look on the last page, everything is falling right in line, one thing, Washington meeting that was held, it came under budget on that. That's a good thing. If you look at the very last line, total budget, you've got income at 26% and expenditures at 23% so we're right in line with our budget. (inaudible).

D-15 Cmdr: Under Sweepstakes, is that both our sweepstakes?

Finance Chairman Richardson: Yes sir. I appreciate that. Anyone got a question. Thank you very much appreciate it.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: I make a motion to approve the finance report

D-6 Cmdr Kvam: Second.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: We have a motion and a second to approve the finance report. All those in favor say aye, opposed? Carried. Nick, do you want to do your thing?

Dept Adj Diener: Just for the record, D-9 Cmdr Miller is present now. We talked about convention, a reminder that May 1st is the deadline for hotel reservations for the right rates after that they will change so let all your folks know that. I've just got a couple things I need to bring you up to date. The first thing is the last meeting ya'll approved for us to try and go sell Pamplico and then we came out in an e-mail message because we got an offer on that immediately and we sent out an e-mail message and and ya'll approved for us to accept that offer. Well, current status we sent that letter on March 20 out to the individual along with a contract and he received it by registered mail on the 24th and we have not heard back from him. We sent out another letter on April 21st and basically told him if we haven't heard from you by May the 1st we withdraw the offer. That letter we sent that by registered mail as well and where we checked on that, they tried to deliver and they said there was nobody was there that could sign for the letter and at this point there's nothing in the system to show that they've ever gone and actually signed for it. We don't know what's going on, I've tried to call the individual and his telephone is disconnected. So in the event that we don't hear anything, we'll revert back and contact a realtor and get that up for sale. We didn't do any of those pieces because we thought we had a sale going.

Second, at last meeting, we brought up the building we have in Eastover. I brought that up a little prematurely. Our concern was that it's the department's building now and we have no insurance on it and it's just sitting there and you all voted to let Commander Jarvis go and look at that since it's in his district. He's done that and Post 119 in Eastover have really worked it, they've got some plans in place and have some commitments in place to get people in there to help them re-do the roof and repair it, ok? And get that building up to speed to where it needs to be. The mayor of Eastover is continuing to support that post 100%, you know, so they will have that going in their favor as well so bottom line. And I brought this to the finance committee and the finance committee approved, bottom line what I'd like for ya'll to do and what Cmdr Jarvis would like for ya'll to do is

transfer that building to Post 119 and allow them to take possession of it and what we would in the quit deed is stipulate in there they can't sell it without our permission and if they would fold that the building would come back to us? Cmdr Jarvis, do you have anything you would like to add to that?

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: They're all for that, they've got a plan in place to try and work it out. Once it's transferred to them then we don't have that liability.

Dept Adj Diener: I guess what I'm asking for is I need a motion from you all to transfer the bldg to them with the stipulations that they can't sell it and if they go under it reverts to us.

Imm PDC Lysaght: I so move on that motion.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Second.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: All of you have heard what Adjutant Nick said, you heard the first and second, (inaudible).

All that approve the motion, opposed? Carried

Dept Adj Diener: The last part and I hate doing this but I also need to ask you all, I've got a couple of updates on post matters that you all voted on before. We need to go into Executive session but they are items we need to cover in Executive Session rather than open session.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I make a motion we move into Exec Session.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: Second

Dept Cmdr Scherer: All in favor say aye.

Dept Adj Diener: We need to amend the motion to let staff to stay

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I'll amend to let staff stay

Dept Cmdr Scherer: Do you still have a second on that?

D-5 Cmdr Wright: Yes

Dept Cmdr Scherer: All those in motion say aye, opposed? Carried.

(EXECUTIVE SESSION)

D-6 Cmdr Kvam: Make a motion we come out of executive session.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Second

Dept Cmdr Scherer: I've got a motion and second that we come out of exec session. All in favor say aye, opposed? Carried. Bring them on in.

Vice Cmdr Britt: Cmdr, we need to ratify that action. I make a motion we ratify the action we took in executive session.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I second.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: All those in favor say aye, opposed, carried. Ok.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: I've been stewing on this for the last year. Those of you that know me know I have only one purpose and that's to make sure that The American Legion is taken care of. I'm not here for self-worth or anything else, I'm here for the Legionnaires in this department. I hope you realize that and know that. . There's a song that goes and there's a phrase in there that goes " Oh, Lord, don't let my intentions be misunderstood" So what I say now, it's not against any one person or against any one district. I'm saying it for the betterment of the Department of SC. Because guys we've let things go so long they're just habit. Ok? First of all, we'll talk about attendance. I know that's a sore subject but back in 2013 it was approved by the DEC that any one that missed 50% of the meetings would be expelled by 2/3rd's vote of the DEC. We have not done that. Why? Because I believe in giving people second chances. Maybe something came up or maybe we're so used to doing things we forget about what we're really supposed to be doing. If we were really doing that I have a list here that shows you how many people wouldn't be here today. I have one that missed six, one that missed seven, one that missed five, of these meetings, they wouldn't be here today. When you signed on and took the oath that you'd do the job that required you to come to DEC meetings. I'm not going to name names. But if you're not going to do the job guys, like Commander Stone said, put your pretty little white hat over here and we'll get somebody else to do the job for you. You took on the job, you should do it from your heart, it's a volunteer job. If you can't do it from your heart than don't do it. There are too many Legionnaires out there that are suffering because we're not giving them the information they need. I go out there and ask them certain questions and they have no idea what I'm talking about. I even went to some posts and talked about the Rifle Raffle and they had no idea what it was. I went to another district and said we're not going to do it and I said why not. They said, we were told we had to buy the tickets. That's not right. Another one said if we don't sell them we got to buy them all. Well, guess what? That's some misleading information and where did it come from? It had to come from here. When you vote on something as a member of this Board, you approve what we're going to do whether you like it or not, you're going to do it. Whether you like me or not as Commander I'm still the Commander. That's irrelevant. We need to step up to the plate and do something on that so hopefully our next Commander will set forth and do a better job of this because right now all you got to do is say I want to be out of there, that's wrong. We had somebody call in today and say he didn't want to come in because he had to wear a suit and tie. Is that a good excuse? I don't think so. I would hope that we change some of these things and that will be up to the new Cmdr and his staff and the department that we don't do any more excused or unexcused. Unless you're dying or someone in your family is dying and I don't mean your grandma for the third time either, that you're here.

The DEC is the governing body of this state. The State had all this out ahead of time so the four meetings were out that you know you have to be out. Circle them, I don't care what you have to do, tattoo them on your forehead or whatever but you're supposed to be here. I would say instead of absent or excused from now on I would say occurrences. You can't be at two places, like Walt said the other day, you're either here or you're not. And if you miss so many then the DEC has the right by a 2/3rd's vote to remove you for the rest of the year and I think that's fair. The Legionnaires deserve that, you're their representative, you're the liaison between them two. Enough on that. Now I got that out of the way. Job descriptions. Everybody asked about them and there was a big deal about them and everything but the job description for the adjutant has been completed and the membership/program director and executive director. All those in attendance approved, the DEC doesn't have to approve those, that comes under the jurisdiction of the adjutant. The gentlemen that were on that committee are no longer on that committee. It's disbanded. If they want to do anything else it will be under the jurisdiction of the new commander. We're not working on the personnel committee. Once that's done it goes to the J/A to make sure it agrees with all state laws and then it comes back it goes back to personnel handbook committee and then to the DEC to approve. There is no personnel committee, I made that mistake, I want to make that perfectly clear too so once that's done that will be disbanded also. So anything else that comes up after that will be handled by what it says in the handbook. You'll get a copy of that. Another thing that we need to look at, that will be underneath Cmdr Strauss and his officers. We've gone through and looked at everybody else's stuff but what about the district cmdrs? When was the last time that was updated? 2010, something like that? So I recommend Cmdr Strauss and his group look at not only the district cmdr's but the vice cmdr's and the state cmdr. We have jobs to do but are we really doing them. Can you really look in the mirror when you get up in the morning and say I've really done what's required of me? I can say I haven't, I have done my best but I haven't done everything. So those are things that we need to look at.

I can't tell you how much I really appreciate ya'll working so hard for the membership team and all the guys that are on it. I think they really deserve a big round of applause (applause). Now, according to the const & bylaws I'm supposed to tell you what I'm going to say at the convention to the Legionnaires so please don't fall asleep while I do this. And again, don't let my intentions be misunderstood. I'm speaking from the heart because that's the only way I know how to do it. We need to, all of us, to go out and speak from the heart. Not a prepared speech and say this what we're going to do, blah, blah and don't do anything about it.

I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude for allowing me to represent you as the State Commander for the state of South Carolina. Words are inadequate to express how I feel right now as I address you for the last time as your State Commander.

As I have traveled the state the last 5 years I have found a spirit unwavering in the legionnaires that cannot be put down. The spirit of volunteerism!!!!

Volunteer is giving of one self without seeking monetary or self-acclaim, but giving from the heart for a cause they believe in. Helping veterans and their families and wanting things better for all throughout South Carolina.

This year alone we have seen a rejuvenation throughout the state where the legionnaires are working hard to help change things and were excited to know that for a first time in many years, they can make 100 % membership by simply getting one more member than they did last year. Due to membership training by our membership team, revitalization of districts, and this new excitement, South Carolina has lead the nation in membership more than once this year and we have over 50 posts that have hit 100% and 5 Districts that have hit 100%. When was the last time this has happened? What a great time to be a legionnaire in the state of South Carolina!!!!

We cannot leave out the rifle raffle that is causing such a stir and putting money into the posts coffers without any output of monies by the post. All we asked was for them to sell the tickets and keep \$5.00 for the post. Some of our posts have well over \$1,000.00 that has been added to their finances thanks to their members going out and selling these tickets.

The aforementioned are just some of the reasons we have a new revitalization, but I believe another big reason is the presence of our District and our Department officers visiting our posts and attending our District meetings. This helps to solidify what I have been saying the last five years, that the department is there for them and we are and will continue to listen to the wants and problems of our legionnaires and that our posts are experiencing.

This all sounds good, but what can the legionnaires and the department do to keep communication open and what can we expect of our elected officials?

First of all we need to go back to the basics and elect only those commanders that are willing to give of themselves and do the job they were elected to do. Know who you are voting for and if they are not qualified, do not elect them. Every District Commander has the responsibility to be the liaison between the department and the posts to insure all information is passed onto them so they are informed as to what is going on in the department and state. They are to hold four district meetings a year, visit every post in their district and attend all meetings that are held as their being part of the Department Executive Board. There should be an amendment put in place in our Constitution that if a member of the Department Executive Committee, excluding Past Department Commanders, miss more than two meetings, they can be removed from the DEC by a 2/3rd's vote by the Department Executive Committee. There should no longer be excused or not excused, they should be occurrences. Either you are there or you are not. (There are to be very few reasons why the officer is not in attendance.) You, other District Commanders and Department Officers deserve this if we are to move forward and work together. If not, we don't need those that just wear the "pretty little cover." Elect those that will do the requirements that go along with the position, or vote them out, you deserve to know what is going on. This includes any office, post, district, or even state.

We also need to look at our sub committees as during the last 5 years, very few of these committees meet and very few even give a report as to what they have done during the year as required by our Constitution. So, the question being is does the state need 24 sub-committees or can some be

eliminated. Certainly, we need legionnaires that are actually willing to serve and not just be there. We need to revamp nearly all our sub committees to put qualified and active legionnaires on them. What I have said may seem harsh to some but rewarding to others. We have a great state and great legionnaires, they deserve the best and we need to assure our members that we must do everything possible to make sure our members are well informed and are definitely a part of the American Legion, Department of South Carolina.

Even though I will be leaving office, I have told the department, department officers, and many of our District Commanders and legionnaires that I will continue to travel throughout the state attending Department Executive Meetings, District Meetings, and Post meetings as requested. I want to stay abreast of all that is happening within the state so if I am asked to speak at a post I am giving out the correct information.

In closing let me once again thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to be your State Commander and for supporting me throughout the last five years. I ask that you now support our newly elected officials, keep the excitement going throughout the state, and continue to support our veterans and their families.

May God continue to bless each and every one and be by your side and grant you safe travels always. I really mean that guys. Jim?

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: I can be shorter than the two Richardson's. (laughter) Last year at the state convention it was brought up about the possibilities of re-districting. Cmdr Scherer put together an ad-hoc committee of which I happen to chair and this is our results and what I'm asking is just take these with you. Look them over, and please get with your posts and there's a cover letter in there that's pretty much self-explanatory. We don't really want to talk about it now but we want you to look at it and see how it goes. Don't open it now, that's why we waited until the very end. We went to great pain, and you'll see with one thing, we didn't want to know what the post was, we didn't want to know what the district was, we didn't want to know what city it was, we were strictly going Geographic's. And in the moment when you have 168 posts, 20 districts, mathematically that's 8.4 posts per districts. Our goal was to try to get every everybody with 7, 8 or 9 posts and we've got that out of 15 districts. The Constitution says we have to keep 20 districts so we have 20. We're trying to keep everybody geographically together and at the same time bring the numbers down to a manageable level. Right now we have one with 16 and one with 4 and we'd like to get that a little more equitable. But what I'd like you to do is take these, look them over. talk to your posts and in the letter there I asked you to get me in writing, please so I can present this back to the committee and hash over your ideas. That's all I got Cmdr, thank you.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: I was supposed to let you out the door as soon as he handed those out so please don't open them because I don't want to cause a riot. If you look at them and start steaming, don't say anything, do that when you go out the door.

D-11 Cmdr Lackey: I assume at some point the DEC will get to vote on this.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: Yes sir.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: I hope to get the input by the 11th July and we'll have it for the next DEC at the end of the summer, or whatever.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: At the next DEC meeting. Hopefully that meeting will be set in the next week or two. When our DEC meetings are set it's easier for the District cmdr's to set their meetings. (inaudible)

J/A Lewis: I asked Cmdr if I could speak about Boys State I apologize for my more than usual casual state but I'm going from here to help my son move out of his dorm so I apologize. I want to give you, first of all, give you some encouraging words about Boys State and second I want to talk to you about two issues that this year are very important to us.

#1 Palmetto Boys State ranked number two in the country in attendance of delegates last year. We had 1087 young men and we were second only to Ohio. Ohio had I think 1220, 1230. The good news is Ohio ranks probably in the top five in the country in population, SC ranks 26 in the country in population so if you do the math per capita we're the number one program in the country as far as delegates go. And that is not a surprise to anybody that knows our program and it's not a surprise to any of you who are involved in sending young men. If you're involved in interviewing these young men, you know that PBS is kind of the thing to do now if you're a Junior in high school because the young men that have attended our program have gone back and talked so fondly of it and we have changed and impacted the lives of so many young men that now it's the cool thing to do to go to PBS. And that has more to do with you guys, ya'll are picking great young men to come, that we're just stewards while they're there for a week so we appreciate that. Two issues though, the first is a logistical issue. Because you've done such a good job in sending great young men to us and because we've done such a good job of stewarding them while they are there, we're beginning to have a capacity problem. Anderson University has a certain number of beds and it's not necessarily the beds it's more the facilities, and the auditorium. And if you've been to Legion night there at the auditorium, their fire code, we might need to go into executive session to talk about this. Their fire code is 1065 in the auditorium and we're at 1087 last year and that's just boys. Now, Anderson assures us that they're fine with us putting chairs in different places. Anyway, we're running out of room at Anderson and so this year may be the first year and if you're involved with the selection of boys from your post then you've gotten the letter. This may be the first year we may have to turn young men away just because we simply don't have the room so I want you to communicate that with your post. We've given everybody a deadline of May 15 in order for you to get your delegates to us and not getting your delegates but you need to register them and their parents have to validate their registration by going in by doing an electronic signature on medical forms. So please communicate to your post, I think our number this year is probably going to be right about the same as last year, let's say 1080, the first 1080 boys who are finally registered and validated and paid for are going to be the boys that come to boys state. That 1081st boy, even if he registered in the initial registration before the deadline but if his parents haven't validated his registration then he's going to be on a waiting list so...and we hate that because we think every qualified young man that you guys send to us ought to be able to participate but this year that may not happen. Now, we may only have 1050 this year, I don't think so because our numbers are ahead of where they were last year at this time. So please be aware of that and I don't want to have any angry Legionnaires calling me saying what do you mean the guys that we selected and paid for aren't going to be able to come. Hopefully that won't happen but if it does I hope you guys understand it's just a popular program and that's the downside of being so popular, we're just running out of room. Honestly Anderson is talking about, they're expanding as well, they're talking about putting a balcony in the auditorium which will hold another 300 or 400 hundred people so we're working through it but this year may be problematic in that we may have to turn some people away.

So that's the first thing, the last thing, I don't know how many of you are familiar with Resolution # 16 which was passed by the NEC or promulgated by the NEC in the wake of Colin Kaepernick and other high profile people and their degree of respect of the flag. But Resolution # 16 was sent to us and all the BS programs and we talked about it a lot at the Directors Conference and essentially what it says is if you don't, if you're a participant in a program of The American Legion and The American Legion believes you should show proper respect for the flag and we believe that as well (applause). However, let me read to you the last part of the Resolution and then I want to talk for just a minute about that and I don't know that we need to have a discussion unless you want to but the first few parts of the Resolution

are on you guys. If you're selecting these young men and I assume they're talking about baseball and all that but if you're selecting young men for boys state it's up to you to explain that if they're going to participate in the program then they're expected by both The American Legion and by the staff and counselors of Boys State to show proper respect for the flag. But let me read the last part of the Resolution and then we'll talk about it in a second.

Resolved that if any participant of any program of The American Legion cannot or will not live up to this expectation (*again, proper respect for the flag*), the individual will be removed from the program and not be allowed any further participation. Let me tell you why I'm a little concerned about that. Because here's the thing, we believe as the staff of PBS, that if a young man shows up on Sunday and doesn't show proper respect for the flag, we believe that by Wednesday or Thursday or Friday, that we have such an impact in integrating a sense of patriotism to that young man that by Saturday at graduation when we stand we salute the flag and we give pledge of allegiance, we believe that young man will have changed his mind. And it's not anything that I'll say from the podium, it's not anything that you'll say to them if you speak at BS on Sunday during Legion night. We believe that the relationships that are built with the young men who are counselors who are so patriotic who have given up time and effort to come to BS, we believe that relationship will change this young man's mind about his sense of patriotism. And so I'm just going to ask that you trust me. Now, if we have a young man who's disruptive, a young man who is trying to make a spectacle, a young man who maybe he decided he's going to BS because he wanted to be Colin Kaepernick in SC then he will be removed from the program. There's no question in my mind about that, we had a long lengthy discussion on that in our planning conference about that. But I'm just going to ask that you trust me, if I don't send a boy home on Sunday night, you know. Now, if he doesn't stand up by Wednesday, then we got a problem I think. But by the letter of the law and I'm a lawyer and the J/A, by the letter of the law, probably you could say no, Stephen, as Director of PBS, if he doesn't stand up for the flag on Sunday you send him home. And if ya'll tell me that, then I'll do it. But I'm just telling you, I think we can change this young man's mind and isn't that what BS is all about? Is teaching a sense of patriotism. Because that's our task. That was our task in 1940. If you know me then I hope you know my heart and and you know even though I didn't have the opportunity to serve our country that the first day that I could sign up to be a Son of The American Legion, I did and if you know my heart and you've met any of our staff members and you know their hearts then you know our hearts are aligned with you guys in being patriots of the United States of America. And so I just wanted to bring that to your attention, you're just going to have to trust us that we will make the right decision. That we'll comply with the Resolution # 16 that was passed, ok?

Dept Cmdr Scherer: What happens if the parents are 100% against this and you're trying to make the boy do something that his parents don't want him to do?

J/A Lewis: 100% against respect for the flag? Well, the Resolution doesn't say anything about the parents. If the young man...if we believe as a staff, it's probably come down to me and Seth Buckley as Asst Director and maybe the BS Committee, my father, Gene Morehead and Joel Smith, we will meet very quickly to decide whether or not this young man has complied or not complied with the Resolution.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: (inaudible).

J/A Lewis: That's right, if the young man is adamant that he is not going to show what we believe is proper respect for the flag, then he'll go home. I don't have think I have a choice about that. What I do have a choice is if a young man comes and he's heard all this in the paper (inaudible) celebrities or sport figures or whatever, he's just not thinking right, this is my opinion, I think we can change that. He doesn't know Colin Kaepernick or whoever it is by the end of the week he's going to know the other

young men in the city, he's going to know his counselors and hopefully that will have an impact on him that is positive as well. Any other questions on that?

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: If you meet your limit and the boys can't go, will the posts get back their money?

J/A Lewis: Yes, it's just a logistical thing, it's nothing other than that and you'll get back the money.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: Could we get a motion please?

D-11 Cmdr Lackey: Before I make a motion, I want to say something here. My experience with BS over the years it's an amazing number of young men who's lives have changed. I think our purpose here is Americanism and that's where we're at. And I think that given the opportunity that you speak of to impress upon them is what it's all about is what we're about.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: Are you making a motion?

D-11 Cmdr Lackey: Not yet but I think this is important.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: You will but I asked for a motion, please. Thank you.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: I make a motion that we accept the recommendation of the Director of BS to adhere to the amendment that he just gave to us, # 16, regarding respect for the flag.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I second.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: Any further discussion? Mr. Lackey?

D-11 Cmdr Lackey: No.

J/A Lewis: I appreciate that motion but again, if I adhere to the letter of the law of the Resolution and that young man on Sunday doesn't stand up for the flag then I've got to send him home. I'd like somebody maybe to amend to be within the staff of BS or my discretion to adhere to the Resolution.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: I amend the motion to include that by Sunday if he does not adhere for respect of the flag.

J/A Lewis: Leave it up to the discretion.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: Left to the Director's discretion.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I second.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: All in favor say aye, opposed? Carried.

Now, don't forget we also have the Law Cadet coming up, get your things for that. We're going to have a problem for graduation for BS because that's when the Cadet programs starts too. Normally your graduation is not attended by parents anyway so you'll be ok.

J/A Lewis: Last year is the first time we formally invited parents and we had parents and girlfriends and family and we had over 750 attend graduation. You're all welcome to come.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Cmdr, I make a motion that we adjourn.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: Second.

Dept Cmdr Scherer: I have a motion.

D-3 Cmdr Mabery: Cmdr, before we adjourn may I just say a word or two? I want to express my gratitude and thankfulness for this committee. I have Melvin Pearson's the one that's going to be taking over from Post 3. And I appreciate the friendship and camaraderie that I've had and I think I've gained some friends. (applause),

Dept Cmdr Scherer: All those in favor say aye, opposed? Chaplain?

Chaplain Quarles gave the benediction and Cmdr Scherer closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener
Department Adjutant

ND/mm