The Department Executive Committee meeting was conducted on June 6, 2020 beginning at 10:00 am via Go To Meeting.

**Executive Committee Members Present:**

Dept Commander Walt Richardson  
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener  
Dept Historian Russ Cantrell  
NEC Michael Strauss  
Alt NEC Bob Scherer  
Imm PDC John Britt  
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Roberta Poulos  
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Ron Price  
Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Robin Rucker  
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Jim Kvam  
D-1 Cmdr Jim Jarvis  
D-2 Cmdr Reedy Hopkins  
D-3 Cmdr Bridget Lewis  
D-4 Cmdr Bruce Donegan  
D-5 Cmdr Jack Smith  
D-6 Cmdr Tim Burnside  
D-7 Cmdr Michael Calcutt  
D-8 Cmdr Ed Courtney  
D-9 Cmdr Robert Sweet  
D-10 Cmdr Tommy Sinclair  
D-11 Cmdr Jack Loneragan  
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis  
D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson  
D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt  
D-15 Cmdr Jamie Rumbaugh  
D-16 Cmdr Jim Defrehn  
D-17 Cmdr Jim Thrailkill  
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy  
PDC/PDA Jim Hawk  
PDC Joe Lysaght  

**Absent:**

Dept JA Stephen Lewis  
Dept Asst JA Cody Mitchell  
Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy  
D-19 Cmdr Bob Gibbons  
D-20 Cmdr David Mills  

**Also Present:**

M. May, Dept Exec Director  

Department Commander Richardson called on Chaplain Mullinax for the opening prayer.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, June the 6th, 2020, welcome to the meeting. I’d like to remind everybody that 79 years ago today, the largest military invasion in history took place. We had over 6900 ships, over 2300 aircraft, 1800 (inaudible), all with D-Day. We had over 156,000 casualties, that’s U.S, Britain, and military, that’s why we’re here, that’s what The American Legion is about, to honor those people. Also, I want welcome for the first one, whoa, here comes Ed, where’s Ed? Alright, ok, we have some new people joining us this time. From District 13, Rick Gibson, Rick, you out there?

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I am.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, I do not see you but I’m sure you’re out there somewhere. Alright, from District 2, we have Reedy Hopkins, Reedy, you there?
D-2 Cmdr Hopkins: Audio only, yes sir. Alright, District 4, Bruce Donegan?

D-4 Cmdr Donegan: Yes, I’m here.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: They told me you were going to New York.

D-4 Cmdr Donegan: I only went to New York and back, and Florida also.


D-8 Cmdr Courtney: I’m here.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, that’s good. Welcome aboard and if you have any questions, please, we got a good, good Executive Committee. Please don’t hesitate to ask and we’ll go from there. Alright, Adjutant, can we have the roll call?

Dept Adjutant called the roll and told Cmdr Richardson he had a quorum.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, thank you very much. Alright, first thing we have to do is we have to listen to the readings of minutes of the previous DEC meeting, unless I have a motion.

**D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I have a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting.**

**D-5 Cmdr Smith: I second the motion.**

Dept Adj Diener: Gentleman, you need to say your names, so we pick it up.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, we have a motion by Commander Defrehn to accept the minutes, seconded by Commander Smith? Any discussion?

D-2 Cmdr Hopkins: Yes, this is Commander Hopkins.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes, Commander Hopkins?

D-2 Cmdr Hopkins: I never received a copy to take a look at.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: You were not the Commander when those minutes were taken, and you would not receive them, and we don’t put them out electronically until they’ve been approved by this body. You can get a copy once we take this vote, you can get a copy of them online, they’ll be no problem with that.

D-2 Cmdr Hopkins: Alright, then I’ll abstain from voting.

**Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright. Any other discussion? Hearing no discussion, all in favor say aye? All opposed? Motion carried. (motion to accept the minutes of the previous DEC meeting was passed and so ordered)**

Dept Adj Diener: Commander, can I interrupt just a second, please? Because one of the things that we did not do that I forgot with us being electronic here is I need to find out if any of the PDC’s or non-
DEC members that were not on the roll call that are online with us so we can get it down for the record. I see we have Joe Lysaght on there. Do we have any other PDC’s on there?

PDC Hawk: Yes, Jim Hawk.

Dept Adj Diener: Any others or any non-DEC members? Ok, thank you.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, old business. Seeing how have no old business, we’re going to jump right into the new business. Alright, first item will be the finance committee report?

Dept Finance Chairman Jarvis: Alright, we’re weathering the storm, you know, with our rentals with the Auxiliary leaving and down below, the baseball people leaving, our rentals are low but, and COVID-19 has played a major part in here. But overall, we’re doing alright. If you take out the National Convention incomes and the expenses as well as the Department Convention income and expenses, they compensate for the rental losses. We’re only about a hundred dollars behind schedule. The expenses are going as normal, income is kind of in a mess because we don’t have the rentals and we’re also behind in membership but overall we’re within about a hundred dollars of what we had planned on. So I consider that not too bad, we’re doing alright. We’re getting ready for the next membership year that begins in July. We got to hit it running because we haven’t really been out there with face time so keep in mind that membership is a vital part of our income. As far as COVID-19 loans are concerned, we’ve had three posts request loans, three posts have been approved for about $5750.00 between the three of them, That was Post 1, Post 66 and Post 210. They’re the only three that have come in. Sweepstakes, we’re getting toward the end of that. As of Thursday, we had $29,972.00 from the Sweepstakes. Which isn’t bad but that could be better so please put the word out to your posts that this is winding down and we need to get some more participation. The only other big thing on the finance side is the realtor, they’re working the down below rentals. As you can imagine it’s been a little bit problematic with the COVID-19 part. We have most of the interior of the old Auxiliary building clean, painted, repaired, that type of stuff. We still got to get the inside and the outside of the baseball area painted but we have the money for that in our maintenance, budgeted maintenance area. The realtor has some (inaudible) so maybe it will start picking up a little bit. Commander, that’s all I have for the finance area.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Do I have motion that we accept his report?

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I make a motion that we accept the finance report.

D-4 Cmdr Donegan: I second it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, the motion’s been made by Jim Defrehn and seconded by Bruce Donegan. Do we have any discussion? All in favor say aye? All opposed nay? Motion carried; report accepted. (The motion to accept the finance report was passed and so ordered) Alright, membership report, Chairman (inaudible is not here, I think Nick’s going to be giving it for her?

Dept Adj Diener: Yeh, I’ll take it. Again, you know, membership has came to a, with everything going on, it’s came to a screeching halt. And we need to keep trying to push out there, you know, up through June 30th here, to try and get some in. We’re sitting at 97.5% of our Department goal that we set. But we’re still almost, well, about 350 below that goal and right now we’re in danger of losing members again this year and not at least gaining by one overall. Got seven of the Districts out there that are doing great, that have hit a hundred percent. Congratulations to them. Some of you all are very close, keep pushing it. We will go all the way up to June 30th to determine who becomes eligible for the $100.00. Now, for you new District Commanders that took over for somebody else, the old person will get the
$100.00. Ok? If ya’ll want to argue over it, you can try and re-work that but the person that got it to 100% ends up getting it. Unless I have any questions, again, need everybody to trying to push it, you know, those last few could make a big difference.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: I have a question for Nick. You said the old Commander, the one that got them to a hundred gets the $100.00.

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, but Jack, we need to look at yours with you coming in, yours is a little different with coming in in the middle of the year. I’m talking about the District Cmdrs that just got elected.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: Oh, ok. Because I was fixing to say, my District had, didn’t hit until after I became Commander.

Dept Adj Diener: Yeh, yours is a little different situation because you came in the middle.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: Thank you Nick.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Any other questions? Do I hear a motion that we accept the report?

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Motion to accept report.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Got a motion made by Cmdr Defrehn to accept, seconded by Cmdr Lonergan. Any discussion? Hearing no discussion, all in favor say aye? All opposed say nay? Report accepted. (motion to accept the membership report was passed and so ordered).

Alright, next up on the agenda is the Post 300 update. What happened was we created a post, got it approved, got the charter from National and we started transferring members in there. We contacted 180 people and then we realized we could move all of them in there. When we moved all of them in there, National got wind of it and they’re not very happy with the state of South Carolina, let’s put it that way. And so what National has done, they have cleaned out post 300, everybody that was in there is no longer in there and they’re back in 172. The Department is not all satisfied with that and we’re in the process right now of writing a letter to our National Commander to find out exactly what the hell’s going on. We don’t think it’s right that they can make a decision that affects 15% of the Department of South Carolina and we’re not even going to be involved in the decision. We were supposed to get a report from NEC ‘man Strauss today but him being a policeman they’ve probably got him somewhere protecting us.

NEC Strauss: I am here.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Mike, you here?

NEC Strauss: I am here. I was punching in the wrong code.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I that case, Mike, can you tell us what you found out?

NEC Strauss: I did talk with the National Adjutant, Dan Wheeler, this week, and it’s not really any big news to report to you. I think a lot of the same talking points that Jack (Querfeld) used, the National Adjutant used. But in a nutshell, he basically said the reason why the decision was made is because for National to lose all those members would make the DMS program a money losing operation to them.
They put a lot of money into the postage and all that stuff and they just couldn’t absorb that much of a hit on the DMS, is basically the gist of what the conversation led to.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, I can understand that.

NEC Strauss: I did bring up the fact that we would like to part of the solution. That I would like to see the MP&A Committee or Internal Affairs review what happened and see if they can come up with an alternative or guidance to the Departments and he said that he is going to be sending it to Internal Affairs and if they’re going to pass it to some other group, they will. So look for that to happen. But it’s probably going to happen in the Fall though, it’s not going to happen…they’re going to be meeting, apparently, instead of meeting like they normally meet, they’re going to meet just like we’re meeting here today, through a Zoom or Go To Meeting type app. I spoke to him, but like I said, I didn’t think we were going to get much progress and we didn’t. That’s pretty much where we stood with that.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Listen, I appreciate that. The one thing we did get was we got a straightforward answer from somebody, the Adjutant. Letting us know why. Just like our Adjutant’s been saying, it’s because of money. That’s our first positive step that we’ve had on this thing. I appreciate you calling him and thank you for the information.

Dept Adj Diener: Can I make a comment?

Vice Cmdr Rucker: How about the 180 that we actually put in there with their approval?

Dept Adj Diener: National has, and Walt, I can answer that. National has took those out and as of right now, National is saying we can’t put them back in there. For those of ya’ll that don’t actually understand all of the DMS and why we’re hitting this. National, when they set our goal up at National level told us that they want us to get 75% of the DMS moved out to posts. But when we tried to do that then they’re turning back around and saying oh, we don’t want you to move them too fast because of the money. Well, they can’t both be priorities and that’s where we have the problem with it of you either want us to move them out or you don’t and so that’s some of the battle.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: What about the 180 that we got permission on and they won’t give them to us? What’s they’re excuse for that?

Dept Adj Diener: Because they say that Post 300 is not a traditional post. And that’s the argument with them. We don’t agree with that decision but they, I have relayed that that up to them that we want them back in. We got a second answer back from them that said they don’t consider it a traditional post and that they weren’t moving them back in and that’s one of the things that Walt is going to be addressing to them in his letter to the National Commander.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: Yeh, part of the issue is National’s looking at Post 300 as another holding post for the state of South Carolina. And that’s the issue they’re having with it, they never gave us an opportunity to explain the plan. We had a three-phase plan and the first phase was to get them and starting to work a virtual and then getting them into regular posts. But we were never able to get that far and nobody ever wanted to listen or ask us the question. Bottom line is they see 300 as a holding post, just like 172 and that’s what they’re not buying so until we can get that straightened out, we’re going to be messing around with the 180 people. I have an M & PA meeting soon so I can see that, anything can happen in that teleconference. So I’ll have more news, at least from that committee after this meeting.
Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you, if you’d keep us informed, we’d appreciate it. What we’re doing is we’re writing a letter to the National Commander.

PDC Lysaght: Are we still going to be able extract and transfer once Post 300 is resolved.

Dept Adj Diener: You can access them now; we just can’t put them in Post 300.

PDC Lysaght: What’s in there now, can we access that?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes. Post 300 has zero members right now.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: They’re all in 172 and we can draw anything. Why we put them into 300 was that way we got their renewal dues and not National. That’s where the rub lies. Right now, everybody’s in 172 and everybody’s free to any post.

PDC Lysaght: (Inaudible)

NEC Strauss: I just want to add too that he mentioned that California, I talked about the other states and he also said that California had hired telemarketers to transfer to people in. They hired telemarketers to call people and that’s what they did, and they called all day, every day to transfer people in. That’s what the answer was I got about California. Just making you aware of that.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: That’s good because that was one of my arguments coming up on the next meeting.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: It’s awful hard for any telemarketer to get 100%. I don’t care who they are. If they’re at 100%, they’re not being paid enough. But anyway, one of the reasons that 300 was developed was so that the Posts wouldn’t take the hit on membership. We developed that so that posts, and Robin can tell you that taking a hit on membership can be devastating to a post. So there were numerous things is why we developed Post 300 and all of them were very legitimate reasons and we were straightforward with them, truthful all the way down and now we’re having decisions made that cut us off at the ankles, we don’t know who’s making the decisions, we don’t know why they’re making the decisions. They’re making decisions that’s affecting a large part of our membership and we’re not even being consulted. So we’re writing a letter right now and I can tell you that right now I will send you, I’ll send every member of the DEC a copy of the letter before I send it to the National Commander, so you can see what’s going on. So if anybody comes at you, you won’t be blindsided, you’ll know what’s going on. Right now, Post 300 is still in limbo, to be honest with you.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: NEC Strauss, to California, am I understanding that they set up a separate holding post and they were allowed to transfer into that post because they hired their own telemarketers?

NEC Strauss: I don’t know what type of post the telemarketers were putting them. My presumption is that they were putting them into the local posts.

Dept Adj Diener: They were putting them into local posts. But what they’re saying us they sent out 17,000 letters and they got close to 9,000 to respond back and tell them affirmatively that they wanted to go into a local post. Having done this, those must be, I’m like Walt, those must be awful good telemarketers because if you can get a 50% return rate on telemarketing, you’ve done a pretty good job.
D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Ok, to the comment earlier and the DMS and it cost National a bunch of money. What is our part of that, as far as South Carolina goes? If that’s the issue, if it’s not a ton of money, can we not reimburse them (inaudible)?

Dept Adj Diener: National pays for the lists, basically they go out and buy listings from all these different places, ok? They haven’t shared the buy costs and all the details of that. But when they pay that but when people get invited to join and they get a pocketknife, National eats the mailing and pocketknife expense and all that. But then National keeps the $25.00. The second year these people renew their rates go up to $55.00, which is our normal 172 rate, National gets to keep 100% of that $55.00. The third year they renew, National gets to keep 100% of the $55.00. After that then they revert back to us. So National says they need all that money but like I say, they say that out of one side of their mouth saying they need the money. The other side of their mouth they say we want you to transfer 75% of them out to a post. Now, you got to remember, we’re talking 3,000 people here, just for South Carolina. So it would still be a fairly, if they charged much back on that, it would be a bunch.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Any more questions?

PDC Lysaght: Would it not be a consideration, could not we do the same thing California did and have the Department of SC, since all the revenue would end up with us anyway, hire marketing team to do nothing but recruit out of 172 and put them into our posts?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: The first thing we would have to go is through finance to see if we could afford it.

Dept Adj Diener: You could theoretically do that, ok? I don’t see how they’re getting 50%. We’ve gone through some of these efforts, if we can get 10% to 15% to even answer the phone, I mean, we do good once they answer the phone. But the problem is you can’t get them to answer the phone. And, you know, we have found that we can get 15% to 20% results and somehow California has come up with that they’re getting well over 50% results. My personal opinion is I don’t think they’re getting permission from every one of them.

PDC Lysaght: We probably need to learn more about that particular issue because I agree, you’re not going to get kind of return on mailouts. When you consider 15,000 pieces of junk mail is delivered just in Charleston County and most of it goes in the trash can. These people are not looking at that. We tried it at 147, we sent out letters only to those veterans that we could identify as being WWII, Korean War and Vietnam veterans. And we had an assist program where the WWII guys came in for free, we paid it, the Korean guy got a discount and the Vietnam guys got a discount. We sent out 1500 letters and we recruited 41. That’s it. I just wondered if we went statewide, what consideration could we do now on those 3,000. Right now if we could pull 300, the Department could be at 100%

Vice Cmdr Rucker: One thing you’ll run into with the experience I’ve had from DMS is probably 40% to 50% don’t have a contact number or an e-mail, so that’s one of the problem we run into, like you said. When they get it, they throw it in the trash can if they don’t have that personal contact, so I don’t see how they’re getting 50% with telemarketer unless they’re better at getting phone numbers. National needs to make sure they’re getting a phone number from them DMS people.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: Yeh, Nick and I were looking at it. We have almost a thousand DMS people, we don’t have a phone number or an e-mail for so I mean, I just have a really hard time buying what California’s dishing out and I think that’s been going around a lot. I personally think Alabama’s done it. We know exactly what North Carolina’s done. The telemarketing might bring in four or five hundred, it
might be something to consider, we never really thought about it, at least I never really thought about it. But it’s on the plate now. And it’s something that Darlene and I are looking at as far as what it would take to get them to just work the DMS area. But right now, we’re in limbo, 300’s going to be in limbo, National’s not going to buy it no matter what we do and we’ve got to make it as much of a traditional post as possible and the only way of doing that is to make it a virtual post and that’s what we’re working on right now. Because once we make that a virtual post, National’s got to buy that or they’d better shut down all of them, because there are a lot of them out there. And we’ll have a constitution, we’ll have officers, we’ll have community involvement, we’ll have virtual meetings, the whole nine yards and we can do that legitimately, in my opinion, with 300. But until we get to that point, National’s not going to buy it.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: One thing I have tried, and it does work, I don’t know if the Department wants to invest in it. With a lot of these guys you don’t have an e-mail or a phone number, as Jim said, you have an address, ok. There is a product out there, reverse phone number book, where you can look the person up by their address and it gives you the phone number, ok. You can buy these books, alright? There might even be a program online for you to use that will do it. But I think the one online, you pay like 99 cents per look up or something like that, so it’s expensive, but you can get the books. The other thing and Roberta’s well aware of it because she’s been to my house. When I call these fellows to transfer, I get about 70 / 75% of them to transfer to my post from 172. Basically what I’m telling them is you’re in a Columbia Post, we’d like to bring you into a community post, local to you and then if they have a problem, I say, well, the dues will support the community, here, where you live. And I…no problem, they come right on over. Because I tell them it doesn’t cost them anything for me to transfer them. The bottom line, I really don’t give them a choice.

Dept Adj Diener: Jim, the bottom line is, all of us that have been involved in that, if you can get hold of the people, the success rate of getting them to transfer is probably 95% of them, I mean, very few say no. The problem is you can’t get a response, they don’t answer the phone, we sent out 1200 emails, when we got those 180 people we sent out 1200 e-mails and the Vice commanders called about 450 telephone numbers or tried to call 450 telephone numbers, ok. The net result of all that effort was 180, you know. And now you go take, when you start talking paying somebody to do all that, if we get 90 of those 180 to renew next year, we will have significantly moved the curve. So, you know, you can very quickly use more money, or spend more money on this then what you’re going to get on a return as far as, you know, renewal members.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: Commander? Nick, is there any way that you can send out the list of those names? Because, I’m not going to call out his name, the former cmdr gave me a list of names one time and I went out personally and visited those people that were former members of The American Legion and out of eleven I got seven. Because I went to them personally as the Post Cmdr. And they were in my community, that would be something, if you could get a list of names for people in that community and have the Cmdr’s, you know, go out and see them.

Dept Adj Diener: I think Jim Jarvis is wanting to answer it down there.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: I’m going to just (inaudible) that Jack because it’s a classic example of the District Cmdr not doing their job. As a District Cmdr, you can go in, a Post can go in, a District Cmdr can go in. You can go in mylegion and get those lists and you could be working that issue. You can do it yourself.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: I know Jim. I got eleven pages right here, ok? (inaudible) at the District five meeting. But also the Post Cmdrs can go in there and get them too and I’m going to show them that.
Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, let’s keep this thing moving, we’re starting to walk off from things.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: Cmdr. Richardson, I have to go to M&PA.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Give ‘em hell, Jim. Don’t take nothing from them. Alright, are there any more comments on this Post 300? Rest assured that we will keep you informed of what’s going on and you will know what’s going on. Alright, comments on 300? Alright, Nick, do you want to do the amendment form?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, sir. In the e-mail that I sent out to ya’ll, I an example of a revised amendment form that the Const & Bylaws Cmte wants to use for next year. Really, if you looked at it, the only real change in that was putting, instead of trying to put the date on the instructions every year, we set the date to say it’s the first Tuesday in March of every year. That way we don’t have to every time get this thing re-approved. And then the other change that they made, in our packet, was they put in an example of how to do an amendment. But since they did change those, the rules, or the wording in there and that was something that you all previously voted on, you all have to vote to approve those changes.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, do I hear a motion?

(Vice Cmdr Poulos identified herself)

Vice Cmdr Rucker: I make a motion to accept.

Dept Cmdr Richardson : Do what now? Roberta?

Dept Adj Diener: No, Robin Rucker made a motion to accept

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, Robin Rucker made a motion to accept? Jamie Rumbaugh?

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: I second it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Made a second, is there any discussion? Hearing no discussion, all in favor of the changes signify by raising your hand. All in favor of not.

Dept Adj Diener: Walt, there’s some people that are on by phone, they can’t just raise their hand.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Oh! Alright, all in favor in favor of the motion signify by saying aye. All against say nay. Motion carried. (motion to approve changes to Const & Bylaws amendment form passed and so ordered).

Alt NEC Scherer: Commander Richardson, I have a question for Adj Diener. I’ve been asked by some of the people why they have to re-do the amendments that were approved last year? Isn’t that just duplicating the effort on both sides, what’s the reason for doing them again?

Dept Adj Diener: Because it’s for a new a new form and it’s for a new year. I can’t just automatically assume that the post wants to resubmit those forms again. And secondly that’s, the other part of it is the Const & Bylaws Cmte, that’s the way they voted to do it or said to do it. But basically, we’re talking a new convention so I just can’t keep carrying them over.

Alt NEC Scherer: Thank you, I just need to (inaudible) this on to people, that’s all. Thank you.
Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, Nick, you want to give them your update?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, sir. I just got a couple of things here for you all. First thing I want to let everybody know; Jodi Donnelly is no longer with us. She chose to go on and do other things so we will be looking at the position. So if you try and contact her, all you’ll get is the message and it will be transferred to us so until we get that position filled you need to make your calls up here to either Maggie or I.

Second thing, Stephen Lewis, in his role as Director of Boys State, just asked me to let you all know that they are working on some plans to allow some of this year’s selectees to attendees Boys State next year. They don’t have all the details on that but they’re getting asked a lot of questions. He said they’re still working that out and in the next couple of weeks, two or three weeks, they plan to have that finalized and will submit it to us so we can let you all know what they’re planning on doing. But basically he seems to think they might be, you know, they might want to consider having a couple of hundred slots that they set aside out of the Boys State for next year to allow some of the kids that really wanted to do it that were selected this year, to attend. Is kind of what they’re looking at but they’re not sure of all the details right now.

Third thing I have for ya’ll is membership cards. We’d previously put out a message we were going to have the card part ready by the 15th, that there was going to be some, you know, that you could come the week there to pick them up and that we were going to be open on the 20th to have folks be able to pick them up. The, right now, as it stands, that part would only be for cards. Because the rest of the manuals and everything else are not in from National. We just got a message in from National that they are hoping to have the manuals and everything that go out, this is the manuals for the posts, but they’re hoping to have those shipped by the end of next week. Which would take two or three days for them to get us. So I guess my point that I’m saying I think that the 20th of June we will probably have everything in and have it all to where you can pick it up. If you come in to pick up cards any time before that, you’re going to end up having to come back on the 20th and pick up all the manuals to take out to the posts too. So you’re going to be making two efforts to do that. My recommendation would be instead of coming next week to pick up, or during that week of the 15th to pick up, is that everybody just plan on doing it on the 20th and come get them to where you can get everything all at once. ‘Cause, ‘cause the cards are important to get out to the people but so are all the manuals. And National had a delay in the printing. Normally we would have had them by now but, you know, they really, my personal opinion, it really needs to be you hand the post the cards and you hand them their packet of all their manuals and everything for the next year. As I say, if they happen, if those things happen to come in any sooner than that, our plans now are to jump on them but, you know, it takes us a day to pull all those manuals out, sort them, you know, because we’re talking a couple of pallets worth of stuff that comes in but we will be jumping on that to get the rest of those packets out, or ready, just as fast as we can. If we get them any earlier than that we will certainly send an e-mail out but there’s still a question of, there’s still a chance that even on the 20th that could run into a problem. And again, we’re hitting on that 20th date and they haven’t got here, and we know the shipping date, we’ll certainly let everybody know that too. Any comments on that? Problems?

D-2 Cmdr Hopkins: If you’re suggesting everybody come on the 20th, are you going to expand the hours a little longer then 10:00 to 2:00 or……?

Dept Adj Diener: I mean, we can, I mean, which way do we need to expand them? Because I mean, you’re only talking 20 people coming.

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D-2 Cmdr Hopkins: Ok, I’m just making sure you have enough time with everybody deciding to come on one day, that four hours is enough time for you?

Dept Adj Diener: Yeh, that’s plenty of time. And I guess I would say it too of at that point of somebody just can’t make it down on the 20th, I mean, if you need to come down on that next Monday, you know, it’s fine too. But we really need to have all, not only the cards, but the packets, we need to try and have them in the post’s hands by the 1st of July. And so that’s the effort that we’re working on here.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: Nick, Nick, are you grilling steaks for us?

Dept Adj Diener: No, we thought maybe we might throw some hamburgers or something out there and we were going to have the Vice Cmdrs come in and do that so they can see their District Cmdrs. (laughter)

Vice Cmdr Rucker: I can do that; I don’t mind a bit.

Dept Adj Diener: Oh, and you have to clean up afterwards too.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: Oh no, I ain’t cleaning up, now.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: My District mtg is going to be the 20th of June.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, well, the problem is I can’t guarantee ya’ll I’m going to have the stuff before then. You know, I mean, like I say, if it gets in house here, we will scramble to get everything together just as fast as we can and let everybody know just as fast as we can. I understand those problems but until I actually see those things in hand or get something from National that says we shipped this day, they’re going to be delivered this day, you know, I can’t tell you for sure. We certainly understand your all’s problems or the problems that it causes you all, but I don’t know what else to tell you unless you’re willing to make all kinds of trips down here. Pending any other questions, Commander, that’s all I have.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, any other questions for Nick? Alright, a couple things and they’re going to knock it off. Number one, the Rifle Raffle is coming up soon. Now, if you remember we used to do this every two years. We switched that to only doing it every year, we’re going to do it every year. We’re going to use the time from July to January or December to plan for it. We’re going to sell tickets from January the 1st to June the 1st and then we’re going to award the rifles every day, 52 of them from June the 1st to August the 15th. And we’re going to do that, and it’s going to become, I think it was Tommy Sinclair, it will become institutionalized. And that’s what we’re working on, trying to get this thing done. The problem that we got now, we got to have somebody to run it. And so be thinking about it because you’re going to be getting a phone call pretty quick asking for ideas and names. So be thinking about, if you know somebody, we’d like to have somebody that’s knowledgeable on guns and knows what they’re talking about when they go and talk to these people. Now, we have been in contact with Palmetto State Armory and the big difference between this year and the last time we did it is we’re going back to name recognition. We’re talking about Browning, Benelli, Berettas Remington, Winchester. These are names that people recognize so they will buy them. And then we’ll go from there. Tickets, we’re still going to work on the price of the tickets, probably, can’t say for sure, it will still be at $25.00, Post getting $10.00 and we’ll go from there. But we’ve got to push this Rifle Raffle. Alright, next thing, CPR’s. Right now, we have got 77 Posts have started working on their CPR’s. The deadline for these CPR’s is June 15th. People, make sure, make sure that you get these in. Remember, you get $25.00 and so far I’ve only got one person that’s going to get the $25.00. And that’s Jack Smith.
People, I have a bad problem with letting Jack Smith beat me on anything, I’ll just be honest with you. But anyway, we keep a running total of people that have turned them in. So if you can get these posts to turn these CPR’s in, that will help us. We’re already up to 77 and I think we, our totally normally is somewhere around 50, is that right Nick?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, that’s right. The highest we’ve had since I’ve been here is, we had 65, was the highest. And last year we were below 50.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: So make sure you get all these posts because the deadline is the 15th. Alright, Jack?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: When we had our Quadrant meeting with you, you told us how many posts had submitted their CPR’s and that was based off of mylegion.com And I see that myself. I went and called all my, or I sent an e-mail to all my Cmdrs who hadn’t submitted their CPR’s and three of them came back and said that they’d sent it in Is there any way that we can, so we don’t continue to badger our Cmdrs, know who’s sending it by snail mail versus mylegion. I’m pretty sure I have eight of nine turned in. But….

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: …. I’m not positive.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, when we give the update on that, that, the CPR list, Walt, the report that we give you, that is picking up some of the people that mail them in. And then once we get it to National, National picks it up on theirs.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

Jack, you’re District Eleven?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Yes.

Dept Adj Diener: Yeh, right, right now you have seven of your posts that have submitted in total.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Alright, thank you.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok. Alright, any questions? Alright, next thing is we want to talk about this consent to transfer to local posts. Touchy subject. But in order for our Post 300 to be a viable post, we have got to have those. So far, we have got 106 responses. 106 responses for 162 posts, we need all of them. We need all of them. The only District, I think, that has turned all of them in, is District One. And it makes no difference whether they want them, or they don’t want them, we still need them to respond. So if you would please, would please, check your District, check your Districts. And if they have not turned in their consent to accept from, to local posts, please, let us know, turn it in so we can get it going.

Next thing I got an e-mail yesterday that our Deputy Judge Advocate, Anthony Livoti, has resigned. So right now, we’re working on, we’re working with two Judge Advocates. So we’re going to try and find somebody else to fill his shoes and we’ll go from there. But just to, that’s to keep everybody informed and let every….let everybody know what’s going on.
Alright, next, and last on our recovery plan. The virus seems to be going down until what I saw yesterday when they had a kind of spike. And it was an increase in it and the number of deaths increased here in South Carolina. So we’re going to go from there. But The American Legion is going to roll on, we’re going to roll on. On our recovery plan, on our recovery plan, gentlemen, please get your District Meetings in. I know you were sent out an e-mail. Listen, you’ve got to put that information on these dates. When you send it in, you got to have all that information. The Department can’t start filling through everything. They’re going to start printing exactly what you’ve got. So your Commander and your Vice Cmdrs can know when your meetings are. We want to come to these meetings. Please tell your posts. That we want to come, we want to come to the meetings for the posts. Now, just to let you know, that we are formulating with the membership team a…a…a 20,000 pin. That’s going to be our goal for next year, it’s going to be 20,000. The pin is going to be a classy little pin and all it’s going to have on its 20K and that is it, 20K. Now understand this, you cannot get a new member in The American Legion, you’re not going to get one of those pins. You know, in the past they’ve always given the Cmdr a pin, the Adjutant a pin, the Membership Chairman a pin, and, and, and your Mother-in-Law a pin. No, uh-uh, this year, if you don’t get a member, you don’t get a pin. If I don’t get a member, I’m not going to get a pin. And what we want to do is we want to come to these posts, and we want to give the person that got the new member a pin. Now if your new member goes out and gets a new member, I’ll come back and give him a pin. We got to show these posts that we’re up and running and we want to help. Now. Do I have any questions?

D-5 Cmdr Smith: I’ve seen a couple of e-mails that (inaudible) that basically a lot of the smaller posts are not participating in some of the awards and one of them I was talking to some of the people about was the Post Historian Award. One of the requirements for the Post Historian Award is to get five new members. That means members that never been a member of The American Legion and that’s awful high for some of these small posts. I’d like to make a motion that we reduce that number to two.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Before, Jack, before you make a motion, can I tell you this? That we are, that we are right now, we are looking at re-doing our awards and trophies. Our Chairman, Bruce Donegan, is supposed to be getting together and we’re going to re-do it, going to re-vamp all of them. One thing that I, one thing that I am pushing, that Legionnaire of the Year. We got to put meat on the bones for these awards. One thing that I am pushing is that the Legionnaire of the Year gets to go Washington with the Cmdr and lay the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. If you’ve done that, you understand how humbling an experience that is. And that is something that everybody would love to do. So, yes Jack, I understand what you’re saying and yes, we recognize that we have a major problem with our awards and yes, we are working to straighten that out. And it sounds to me like you just volunteered to be on that committee.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: Yes sir, I will Cmdr.

Dept Adj Diener: Cmdr, can I say something?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: My question is not really a question, it’s a statement. Last year when you came out to Post 15, people thought that by transferring new members in, that was considered a new member. So we’re just quantifying new members. I just want to make sure, I understood the way it’s supposed to be, but some people don’t, so it’s quantifying new members.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Exactly, it’s somebody that has not been in The American Legion, not someone that you have transferred from Post 175 to 115.
D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Alright, that’s what I thought, ok.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: My understanding is, and this is from National, that if you take a gentleman, let’s say he last paid dues in 2017 and you’re bringing him in, he’s considered new.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh, three years would classify as being new.

D-11 Defrehn: I think that’s what they said.

Dept Adj Diener: Actually, they’re counting……

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: That trip with the Cmdr to Washington? Is that an overnighter?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: What’s that?

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Is that trip to Washington with the Cmdr to the wreath, is that an overnight trip?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes and the Legionnaire or the Post, his Post, will be responsible for the expenses.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Oh, separate rooms? (laughter)

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, yeh, you got it, yeh.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: To answer Jim.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Hold on Jack, you’re not answering Jim Defrehn, you call Jim and talk to him and answer him later. Alright, last thing. Is there anything for the good of The American Legion.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Thank you, Commander. I just want to make a formal announcement to everyone, the Cmdr’s all know, and the NEC knows, that I will be moving to Georgia shortly. But I’ve already checked with National, I’ve checked with my Post, and I’ve checked with the Department. And it would be up to all of you to let me know if you would accept me as going forward in the position that I’m in and vote to achieve later on. I know that the Cmdr had a few phones (inaudible) worried about it. About me not being accessible, about me not being for the state. But if anybody knows where I live, I’ve traveled over 80,000 in the last four years, all in my little red car and all for The American Legion, all for all of us for the state of South Carolina. I have a loyalty here, it would just be up to you, and I just wanted that to be put out there today for everyone. Thank you.

Alt NEC Scherer: Roberta I think you should tell them it’s about the same distance from where you live right now so there shouldn’t be any difference (inaudible) your traveling.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Thank you, sir. Thank you, sir. That’s why I made the reference to where I live down at the very bottom, I’m almost in Georgia as it is. I’m only ten miles away from Savannah, so I travel all over and I would never not do that for our state, for our Department.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: I just want to let everybody know, Post 71 out of North Augusta is (inaudible) to do a 4th of July Barbeque just for the community. It’s going to be a scaled back event; we’re not going to be serving people in house. But we’re trying to kick start the community to let them know that
we’re here and (inaudible). If you want something, we’ll be selling butts and plates while supplies last. We’ve scaled it down quite a bit, but it is going to happen.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, thank you Jamie, Jack?

D-11 Lonergan: Yeh, Commander, just to let everybody know, Jamie sort of stole my thunder. We cancelled our Air Show for May at Shaw Air Force Base, but our 4th of July celebration is going on as scheduled. We start at 5:00 at night with JD and the Breeze which is a local business guy and his band. At 7:00 we’ve got Cassadee Pope and at 8:45 we have Walker Hayes coming to perform for us. We’re going to have rides; we’re going to have food trucks. We’re going to have a cornhole tournament because we’re going to be giving away a Harley Davidson motorcycle, thanks to the help of Thunder Tower in between Cassadee Pope and Walker Hayes’ performance. So it should be a good time, it’s free, as long as you can get onto a military installation. It’s free unless you want to buy food or get on the rides, you have to pay for those.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, anything else?

Dept Adj Diener: Russ Cantrell.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes, Russ.

Dept Historian Cantrell: Yes, I’d like to let all the District Cmdr’s know that I am available to come to their meetings. I’ll be putting together an unusual history book this year because of Covid-19. And I’m going to try to as much information as I can about what a post did in the community during Covid-19. So Cmdr’s, please give me a call, I’m available all over the state, just to let you know.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you. Anything else?

Alt NEC Scherer: Cmdr? Cmdr? Do you think we should give…do you think we should give a vote of confidence to Roberta, so everybody knows that we all agree that we accept her in what she’s going to be doing?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: You can make a motion and we can, we can do it or….

Alt NEC Scherer: I make a motion that we give a vote of confidence to Roberta that she be allowed to be Cmdr.

Unidentified person: I’ll second it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, the motion was made by Bob and seconded by….

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Tommy Sinclair.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Tommy Sinclair. Any discussion?

D-5 Cmdr: She’s going to have a…Roberta’s going to have a Georgia Address?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Yes.

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Dept Adj Diener: But she will still be a member of a post in South Carolina. As long as she is a member of a post in South Carolina, she can hold office in South Carolina.

**Dept Cmdr Richardson:** Any further discussion? Hearing no discussion, all in favor of the motion to show support for Roberta say aye? All opposed? Roberta, motion carried.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Thank you so much, guys. I won’t let you down, honest.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: We know that, we know that. This is good. This is a good day when we can get together and we can talk and discuss things. Remember, Covid-19 is still out there. We still have to work; however, The American Legion MUST keep moving. We must keep moving. The key to our success, this year, is going to be getting out, meeting these people, talking to them and being positive. So anything that we can do, if you need something, let me know, please, please. Tell your posts, and you especially, I want to come visit your District meetings. I want to come visit your posts. That’s what I like, I enjoy that, please. Send me a request, give me a call and let’s get this thing on the road. The sooner we start rolling, the easier it’s going to be. We will keep you informed on the Post 300 and if there’s nothing else, Chaplain Mullinax, put one on us.

Chaplain Mullinax gave the benediction and Commander Richardson closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener  
Department Adjutant  

ND/mm