



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 30, 2021



The meeting of The Department Executive Committee meeting was held beginning at 10:00 am, May 30, 2021, at the Columbia Marriott, 1200 Hampton St, Columbia, SC 29210

Dept Cmdr Ron Price
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener
NEC Michael Strauss
Imm PDC Walt Richardson
Dept Historian Suzy Spurgeon
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Jim Jarvis
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Jim Kvam
Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Bruce Donegan
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Jim Rabon
D-1 Cmdr Darlene Walton
D-4 Cmdr-Vacant
D-5 Cmdr Jack Smith
D-7 Cmdr- Vacant
D-8 Cmdr Ed Courtney

D-11 Cmdr Jack Lonergan
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
D-13 Cmdr-Vacant
D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt
D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman
D-16 Cmdr Jim Defrehn
D-17 Cmdr Jerome Childs
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy
D-20 Cmdr David Mills
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax
Kevin Joy, Dept Sgt-at-Arms
PDC Jim Hawk

Absent:

Alt NEC Bob Scherer
Dept JA Stephen Lewis
Dept Asst JA Cody Mitchell
D-2 Cmdr John Coy
D-3 Cmdr Bridget Lewis
D-6 Cmdr Tim Burnside
D-9 Cmdr John Comins
D-10 Cmdr Doug Dilleshaw
D-19 Cmdr Gerald Brown

Also Present:

Alt NEC Elect Joe Lysaght
M. May, Dept Exec. Dir
Jerry Hamill, Post 193
Tom Yarborough, Post 12

John Lenotte, Post 214
Carolyn Hamilton, Unit 6
Jim Thrailkill, Post 133

Department Commander Ron Price opened the meeting and called on Chaplain Mullinax for the invocation. Commander Price read Resolution 288, lead the DEC in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to the Constitution.

Dept Cmdr Price: I don't have a fantastic memory, so throughout the year you will see me read, just indulge me. I'd like to start off with giving thanks to God. I would like to say thanks to you, my fellow Legionnaires. I am truly thankful for your support; I'd not be here today without it. I also must say thanks to my lifelong partner, who has been there every step of the way. She has guided me and kept me grounded. Although Carolyn couldn't be here today, she knows I love her. Unfortunately she

had to leave, she is taking her father to the hospital. So where do we go from here? First, we must give thanks to PDC Walt Richardson, he has led the state for the last two years. He got us through the pandemic while breaking new boundaries. He had to make some very tough decisions on various programs, we had posts that were closed for over a year with no meetings. But with all that, Commander Richardson left the Department and closed out his tenure with two successful Rifle Raffles and membership drives. I have some big shoes to fit into to, and without your continued support, with your continued support, I believe I can do that. I'm looking forward to the upcoming year and my goal is to keep moving forward together as a family. I ask you to carry this message back to your posts. When you recruit a veteran, recruit the family. Go after the spouse for the Auxiliary, the children, the Sons of The American Legion and Junior Auxiliary. Take that opportunity to grow our family, not by one, but by several. As one team, we will continue to move forward. Adjutant, will you do a roll call?

Dept Adjutant Diener called the roll and announced there was a quorum.

Dept Cmdr Price: I appreciate that. Ok, I'd like to call for a motion to dispense with the reading of the previous Executive Committee minutes.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I make a motion that we don't' read the minutes of the previous meeting.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I second that.

Dept Cmdr Price: Any discussion? All in favor? We need a motion to approve the minutes as well.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I make a motion to approve the past meeting minutes.

Vice Cmdr Donegan: And I'll second that.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, let's get this started right, because if I don't, I'm going to hear and Maggie's going to get on me. So, if you need to say something, please stand, please say your name, please say where you're from. That way we can get that right and we start that off right, and we'll have a great year, ok? Maggie, were you able to get who that was?

Exec Dir May: Yeh. (Laughter).

Dept Cmdr Price: So, so move. All in favor of approving so aye? All against? So move. Alright, with that said, if you would, Adjutant?

Department Adjutant Diener read Commander Price's committee appointment, and by the way, I'm only reading those who are being replaced and who the Chairman will be. After completing the appointments, Adjutant Diener asked for a motion.

NEC Strauss: Mr. Commander, I'd like to make a motion that we approve the committee appointments and have the Department Commander, at his discretion, be able to fill any vacancies currently or in the future, be able to fill any vacancies that come forward.

Dept Adj Diener: Do I have a second?

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Second.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, the motion's been made and accepted to accept the appointments and to allow the Commander to fill any vacancies. Do we have any discussion? All those in favor say aye? All those opposed? Motion carries.

Alright, we also have to approve the ALR Officers. (Adjutant Diener read the ALR elected officers)

NEC Strauss: I'd like to make a motion that we take the Riders recommendation and allow them to move forward as their representative.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Second.

Dept Adj Diener; The motion's been made and seconded, do I have discussion? All those in favor say aye, any opposed? Motion carries.

(Department Adjutant Diener read the list of elected SAL officers).

Dept Adj Diener: Do I have a motion to accept these officers?

NEC Strauss: I'd like to make a motion that we accept the nominations for those positions for the Sons of The American Legion.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I second.

Dept Adj Diener; Any discussion? All those in favor say aye? Any opposed? Ok. (motion carried to approve all elected SAL Officers).

Ok, and I do have one administrative announcement. Of course, tomorrow's Memorial Day so the office will be closed on Memorial Day but given the amount of time that we've put in, I'm also going to close the office on Tuesday so we can catch our breath a little bit after everything we've done for getting ready for convention. Commander, that's all I have.

Dept Cmdr Price: I do appreciate that, Adjutant. I will say that sitting here and watching ya'll, I now know who has good knees and who are able to get up and down (laughter). I appreciate that. I've got a few things that I do want to go over. First, I want to say to everybody, a sincere, very sincere, when I say, we will work together, we will move forward together. That is the only way we can do business. And that includes the Auxiliary and that includes the SAL, the Sons of The American Legion and the Riders. With that said though, I want to talk a few minutes about a report that I got from Sons of The American Legion. And if you don't know this. I'd like you to look at your posts within your Districts and see where you stand. Currently there are 24 Squadrons and all 24 are at 100%, they reached that by May 18th of this year. They have 1312 members, they are working to add 131 more members prior to the National Convention and then they will have met the National goal. We have a lot of posts out there with a lot of Legionnaires that have sons that are not involved, that are not members of the Sons of The American Legion. I ask that you reach out to your posts to see if we can make this possible. Right now, the Sons of The American Legion in the State of South Carolina is ranked 8th in the national, that is very awesome, that is awesome. We are roughly 75 members short of reaching our 20,000-member goal, if we go back and we work, we can get those 75, 70 members, and we can make

that 20,000 goal this year. If you have to, I see nothing wrong with your post giving them a break on the dues so that we can get them in this year, so I encourage you to do that. And again, as I talked about the SAL, I encourage you to go back, well, first, check yourself. Is your wife, I'm sorry, spouse a member of the Auxiliary? If your spouse is not a member of the Auxiliary, why? You go out there, you preach family, we're going to grow as a family, well then, don't preach it, live it. get your family involved, let's grow as a family. As I said, we've got to move forward together. One of the things that Commander Richardson started a couple years ago with Bob Scherer was the Ladies Fastball Pitch. And I think that is one of the greatest programs that we will be able to add to our Department as a program. This year is going, it's kicking off. Bob Scherer has sent out his schedule. I need you to do be there. I need you to have your hat on, I need you to show these young ladies that we support them. Please encourage your posts, even if they don't have a team, encourage your posts to be at the game. This is how we get the posts excited, next year, guess what? They'll probably have a team if they don't this year. So, let's continue to push the Ladies Fastball Pitch. As you know, the University of SC, Clemson, and several other universities throughout our Nation, issue very large scholarships to ladies who play Fastball Pitch. This is another way of taking care of our veterans. We take care of the children, we take care of the veterans, so let's do that.

Again, Commander Richardson, two years ago, he got with the Past Department Commanders, and he realized that there was a thing called a Foundation, it had been started many, many years before and had laid dormant. He got with the PDC's, and Michael Strauss headed it up so we could bring this to frutality. Michael has been working on this hard, we need to make this happen, but at this time, if I could, Michael if you would please stand up and give us where we're at.

NEC Strauss: Thank you, Commander. Good morning, just an update that where we stood with the Foundation at the last meeting, we received a lot of great input. I really didn't have a lot of expectations to get a lot of input, but we did have a lot of input on it. And a lot of input was implemented on the final document that we had. We brought the...completed the document, we had a meeting amongst the Commanders, a lot of discussion there about things we liked and things we didn't like. And the final document was completed, and it was sent to Stephen Lewis for review, or it was sent back to Commander Richardson for review, and I believe that he has sent it to Stephen Lewis who is looking at the document. So that's where we stand on that, and I think it's going to be back in their hands to look at pretty soon. Thank you.

Dept Cmdr Price: We have another issue that's been brought to my attention that I think we should work on, I think it's important. We have, in the past, we have had what we call the history of our Department. And it was a book. And we did this history, it was updated every 20 years. It is now roughly 30 years since that book has been updated. We need to capture the history of this Department. We are losing it; we are falling further behind. We are losing our Past Department Commanders, and with that, we're losing a piece of our history. So I am wanting to put a team together, an ad-hoc team what we call Volume Four, and that is the history of our Department. With that I would ask that Michael Strauss chairs that, Suzy Spurgeon as our Department Historian, part of that, Russ Cantrell, Jim Hawk and Walt Richardson is the team. I would like a motion to set that team into motion.

D-1 Cmdr Walton: I would like to make that motion that we proceed with setting up a team for our history and we move forward with that.

NEC Strauss: I'll second.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok. Any discussion on that? This is great, this is great because like I said, we have missed out, you said 30 years? Can you stand up and tell us?

NEC Strauss: I can, so yes, there are there's volumes of the books right now, the last one stopped in 1989, these books are very valuable for our history. If you've never read the books, I strongly encourage you. You will learn a lot about this organization. You will learn a lot about the founding of the VA hospitals in this state and why they became so valuable and how The American Legion worked at Memorials in the early days after World War I, it's unbelievable history. We want to continue that history in writing. We have minutes, we have a lot of things that are in our archives in our headquarters, we have cassette tapes, we have a lot of things. Post History is in these books, it has Commanders all the way back to the founding of these posts. They have a lot of the information like, say for instance, my post is the Jesse C. Lynch Memorial Post. Well, who's Jesse C. Lynch? You know, these are the types of stories that people need to know for history. How did we come up with the Riders? How did we come up with the Fast Pitch Softball? Are these things important to tell a hundred years from now? How these things got going and who was responsible for doing all this work? These are important facts, I mean I can sit here and tell you tons of facts that need to be told and I recognize this, and I think that we've got on the committee now, are dedicated historians, sort of speak, that know a lot of history. We can plug this thing together, right now we're not asking for any money. Eventually we would ask for money, right now it's going to be a fact-finding mission and putting stuff together first. Once we have the stuff in place, and we kind of have how many pages we may need for this book, then we may start looking into publishing a book on that, that would be sale for everybody to bring back home. And I think it's a wonderful thing. We're going to need...obviously we have some people on the committee, this is not a committee-based thing. We're going to ask posts to give us the names of their Commander's and Adjutants, it's going to be a lot of people that we're going to talk to and get history from and ask that things...as we go in different parts of the book, and I think it's a real exciting time for The American Legion and I hope everybody gets behind it. It's a great idea and I hope that we can move forward with that mission. So I look forward to updating you here and there on that and let's get to work. Thanks.

Dept Cmdr Price: Thanks very much, I do appreciate that, and thank ya'll, this committee is extremely important. They will tell a story as to who we are years down the road. So with that said, is there any business...

Vice Cmdr Jarvis. Do we need to vote on that? We had a motion...

NEC Strauss: That was discussion. She made a motion; I made a second.

Dept Cmdr Price; So we had a...any other discussion on that? Ok. All in favor of approving that say yes? Yes aye? All against it say nay? Motion moved. We're good. Alright, look, we're going to have, we're going to have disagreements. Not everybody likes the same idea that I have, and that's fine, we'll have discussions and then we'll go from there, but the bottom line is we work as a team, we must work as a team. If you have an issue, please do not hesitate to bring it to me, I will tell you I will spend as much time as I can at the Department, I don't know that I'll make it a full-time job like Commander Richardson did as far as me being at the Department, but I will be there as much as I can. I still take my hat off to Commander Richardson, the things that he accomplished is extremely amazing during that period of time. But we can continue to grow on those accomplishments if we work together. So go back out to your Districts, tell them thank you for me for their support, tell them we move forward, we will continue to grow, and we are united as a family and that means Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and the Riders. If you work on getting on some of these Riders, it was put

out on Friday, Alan Osborne did a really good breakdown of it. But the bottom line is the Riders is a way to lower the overall age of your post because most of the Riders are young. Now, there's exceptions, there's me and there's Walt (laughter) but most of the Riders are young. So if you try and recruit some Riders, you'll bring that median age down by doing so. So try to work on some Riders, you'll also find, like at Post 71, our Riders, they do the bulk of the work. If you want to know what's got to be done, whether it's Memorial Day services or Veterans Day services or raising money for the Post, it's our Riders, they do it. And with some posts, it's the Sons of The American Legion, they do a lot of the work there, but at our post, as it turns out, the Sons of The American Legion is also our Riders. We have several members at Post 71 that are dual members, they're Auxiliary and they're Legionnaires. I know that you have members in your Districts, in your posts that could be dual members. Let's make it happen, let's grow this family. Thank you.

Commander Price called on Chaplain Mullinax and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener
Department Adjutant

ND/mm