



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 31, 2021



The meeting of The Department Executive Committee meeting was held on October 31, 2021, at the Columbia Marriott, 1200 Hampton St, Columbia, SC

Dept Cmdr Ron Price
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener
NEC Michael Strauss
Alt NEC Joe Lysaght
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-2 Cmdr John Coy
D-3 Cmdr Kevin Brown
D-4 Cmdr-Wayne Southworth
D-5 Cmdr Jack Smith
D-7 Cmdr- Robin Rucker (not present at roll call,
arrived later)
D-8 Cmdr Ed Courtney

D-9 Cmdr John Comins
D-10 Cmdr Doug Dilleshaw
D-11 Cmdr Jack Lonergan
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
D-13 Cmdr-Rick Gibson
D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt
D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman
D-17 Cmdr Jerome Childs
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncey
Dept J/A Stephen Lewis
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax
Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy
PDC Jim Hawk
PDC John Britt
PNEC Bud Hennis
PDC Bob Scherer

Absent:

Dept Asst JA Cody Mitchell
D-9 Cmdr John Comins
D-16 Cmdr Jim Defrehn
D-19 Cmdr Gerald Brown
D-20 Cmdr David Mills

Also Present:

M. May, Dept Exec. Dir
Russ Cantrell, Post 25
William Feick, Post 178
A.L. Hough-Everage, Post 74
Sherri Scherer, Auxiliary

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: At this time, I'm going to ask Chairman, Chairperson, of the Children & Youth Program to give us a report on how we've done this weekend.

C & Y Chairman Gooden: You're not ready for me?

Dept Adj Diener: We have to do the roll call first.

Commander Price called on Department Adjutant Diener for the roll call.

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

Dept Cmdr Price: Wow! Again, thank you for being here so let's get started with this. **If you would, I'd like to get a motion to approve the minutes for May 30th and August 14th, as it stands.**

Vice Cmdr Kvam: I make that motion.

District 1 Cmdr Walton: I second that motion.

Dept Cmdr Price: I have a motion and a second to approve the minutes. All in favor say aye, all opposed? (all present voted in favor of approving the minutes of May 30th and August 14th) Ok, now that we have the green thumb to go ahead, if you would, Miss Kimberly Gooden, please?

C & Y Chairman Gooden: Good morning once again DEC members. I bring greetings from the C & Y program, and I want to thank you all for all your donations that you gave during the conference. My committee member, Russ Cantrell, thank you and also Richard Allen, who couldn't be here today. Um, just as the Commander said we will be visiting your Districts and your Posts so please open us with welcome arms and your pocketbooks. Because like the Chaplain said, he has given us a mission and we will exceed that. So our goal is to raise \$5,000.00 but I think we can raise at least six or seven thousand dollars, what ya'll think? Because so far, we have raised, for this weekend, we have raised \$580.00, and we have already started visiting the Districts and the caucuses that we attend. And from those meetings, we have raised \$323.00, which have given us a total of \$903.00 so we are we are well on our way to meeting and exceeding our goals. So once again, thank ya'll very much. So when we contact you all, don't say no, because we coming anyway. Ok? Just remember, be receptive and bring your pocketbooks because each time we visit, our goal is to raise at least a hundred dollars. Can ya'll help us do that? Alright, so I'm counting on you all and I'll see you at your district meetings and your post meetings. Thank you, Commander, for having me here this morning. (applause).

Dept Cmdr Price: Thank you. Awesome job they did. I really appreciate their time and effort; I really appreciate your giving. Just another note on Children & Youth a lot of you aren't familiar with. You've heard me say, streamers are important, streamers identify some of the achievements that we have accomplished throughout the year. A streamer that can easily be gotten is that of C & Y. The only thing that's required is that you send in one dollar for every member in your post. So our goal should be to get every post a streamer, to get every post to submit that one dollar per member and get their streamer this year. We can do that; you can do that. Ok, new business, we're going to start off with the finance report, the Department Adjutant can do that.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, good morning, the finance report should have already been passed out to everybody. The finance chairman couldn't be here today, so he's asked me to go over this real fast with you. I'm not going to go through all the numbers, but we are sitting in very good shape. The Rifle Raffle income is showing on here, we ended up bringing in \$163,490.00 to the Department on the Rifle Raffle, which is about \$23,000.00 which was projected and budgeted for, so we did well on that. Key thing is if you go to the very last page on it, on the finance report, you see that for the year, our projection on the budget was to have a net income of 82,000.00, and right now we're sitting at

\$144,000.00, so that's a 174% of what we budgeted so we are doing very, very well on the finance report. Any questions?

Imm PDC Richardson: What caused the significant increase? Just ballpark it.

Dept Adj Diener: Well, if you remember, the fundraiser came in at more than what we expected. We had the additional, that bond that came in that helped raise it up. And everybody's membership's doing good, everybody's just doing good on where we're at.

Imm PDC Richardson: So the big one was the bond?

Dept Adj Diener: Yeh.

Imm PDC Richardson: Ok, thank you.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, any questions? Alright, one thing that the finance chairman did ask me to pass on to you is that he will be shortly, they're finalizing next year's budget, lots of figures have to be adjusted there because of me, looking at what they're doing on everything getting picked up there because of a replacement. So he is going to be putting that out for ya'll by email for ya'll to review ahead of time and the next DEC meeting is when we'll be looking at voting on that. So when you get that email, be looking for it (inaudible).

Imm PDC Richardson: Question, since we had such a good year, and it looks like we're about \$60,000.00 above where we wanted to be, would it be appropriate, possible, to go ahead and put that money against the mortgage?

Dept Adj Diener: It's possible but we're basically not at that point yet to say that. One of the things that I have had discussions on with the finance chairman is to look at what are we going to do with that and come back with a recommendation (inaudible). Any other questions? Commander.

Vice Cmdr Kvam: I make a motion that we accept the finance report as given.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I second.

Dept Cmdr Price: All in favor of accepting the finance report as given, say aye? All opposed? (all present voted in favor of accepting the finance report as given).

Dept Cmdr Price: Next, we're going to have ladies fastpitch softball presented by PDC Scherer.

PDC Scherer: I won't take up all your time with the facts and figures in front of you. As you well know, last year was our pilot program for ladies fastpitch softball for The American Legion of South Carolina. We decided last year we could make it a test program to make sure it's what we wanted for the young ladies of this state, and it's proved to be a very successful program as you can see right there. We were second in the nation to have a ladies fastpitch softball team. Matter of fact I talked to the gentleman from North Carolina, they started out with eleven (inaudible) five hundred people. You can see by the figures there it's very, very successful. **So I'm asking that the DEC at this time to sanction this that it become a regular program for The American Legion Department of South Carolina.**

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I make a motion that we sanction Ladies Fastpitch Softball. We have the initial committee of a director or a chairman, whichever you want to call it, of Bob Scherer. Since he has two divisions, we need two members, at least at this point. I recommend Bill Lyons of Sumter Post 15 of the one division to the right and Robbie Wells, from Post 125, as the other division person to the left. And the next step after this I recommend that we make the changes that we have to submit to the constitution & bylaws committee to put this into our constitution.

Vice Cmdr Rabon: I second that motion.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, we have a motion, we have the second. All in favor say aye.

NEC Strauss: Eh, eh, eh. Discussion? (laughter) Thank you.

Dept Cmdr Price: You sound like a damned seal (laughter) Ok, is there any discussion?

NEC Strauss: Ok, I do have some discussion on this. I did speak to Jim before this, but I want to make this clear. When we make a committee or a recommendation like this, I think we need to have a bylaws change. And he did mention that there was going to be a bylaws change but we need to certainly who's going to do the change, who's going to write up the change and is the DEC going to be writing that change, I guess is the question. So the first question is who is going to be bringing it to the Executive Committee to submit to the committee. There needs to be a fairly fast turnaround time because we do have that limit on the (inaudible) so I do want to clarify that. I also want to clarify, you know, in the baseball there is a director. He did mention that he wanted two divisions but I think we do probably need to give the baseball committee flexibility. We do have a big group of people educated on softball here so I don't think we should limit it to two divisions and I think we should authorize the baseball committee, if they decide to move forward, that they be authorized to ask or appoint an additional chairperson.

Dept Cmdr Price: I believe I can answer that. Bob Scherer is going to submit the changes through the DEC for our bylaws and I think what the first vice was saying was one person per league. If we have one North and South but it would be one individual every time we expand another division.

NEC Strauss: That wasn't the motion.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, well, it should be for every division.

NEC Strauss: I would ask the committee to consider...

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: That's got to go into the write up for the amendment change, they'll have to explain that.

NEC Strauss: For the temporary one I think we should adjust the motion, if he's ok with adjusting the motion...

Dept Cmdr Price: Are you ok with adjusting the motion.

NEC Strauss: ...to authorize the committee to expand if they want to.

Dept Cmdr Price: As needed?

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I amend my motion to add that.

Dept Cmdr Price: Do you second that?

Vice Cmdr Rabon: I second that.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok?

NEC Strauss: I think so (laughter).

Dept Cmdr Price: Any other?

Imm PDC Richardson: Yes, just to make sure that I understand. What we're doing is we are making the motion to amend the constitution?

NEC Strauss: No. It's the ad-hoc committee that we made basically, until we can amend the constitution.

Imm PDC Richardson: Ok, as it stands right now, we can't make any appointments until the constitution has been amended, is that correct?

NEC Strauss: The Department's making it temporary.

Dept Cmdr Price: And that sanctions the program until we can get a constitution change. Any further discussion?

Imm PDC Richardson: Quick question, two. How many teams, how many players did we have this year.

PDC Scherer: According to the handout, we had ten teams and 163 girls (inaudible).

Imm PDC Richardson: Second question, what is the projection for next year?

PDC Scherer: Talking to people, this year already, we're hoping it will be twenty teams.

Imm PDC Richardson: So you're looking at a hundred percent increase?

Dept Cmdr Price: Yes.

NEC Strauss: I have one more question.

PDC Scherer: We may not get that but that's (inaudible).

NEC Strauss: I appreciate you letting me ask another question. With this motion, does it authorize the softball team to use The American Legion name and logo as a part of the program?

Dept Cmdr Price: Yes. Further questions?

D-5 Cmdr Smith: I got the name for the northern division, who did you say for the southern division?

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Bill Lyons.

D-5 Cmdr Smith Bill Lyons?

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Yes, from post 15, Sumter.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, no further questions. All those in favor say aye, all opposed? Motion carried.

Ok, next up, if you would please, an update on the Adjutant search update.

Imm PDC Richardson: Ok, brief. The search committee met, we submitted a plan, it was rejected. We met again, resubmitted a plan and it was approved. We have advertised for the position, so far, we've got five applications for that position. The deadline for us accepting application is November the 9th. The committee, which most of them are here today, the committee will meet on November the 15th to make our selection. When we make our selection, we will notify the commander and he will notify the DEC and we will....there's Bud! And the Commander will notify the DEC. We have five applications, and we'll go through them, hopefully we will get some more. Do we have any questions?

Dept Historian Spurgeon: Of those five applications, are they all qualified?

Imm PDC Richardson: No.

Dept Historian Spurgeon: How many of them are qualified?

PDC Hawk: You can't say that.

Imm PDC Richardson: Well, from preliminary review....

PDC Hawk: You can't say that.

Imm PDC Richardson: Some of them are not.

Dept Adj Diener: No, you can't.

Imm PDC Richardson: Ok.

PDC Hawk: The committee hasn't seen the applications so that's unfair to whoever applied.

Dept Historian Spurgeon: That's what I was wondering because if some of them aren't qualified (inaudible).

Imm PDC Richardson: And I understand that, appreciate (inaudible). Any more questions?

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Is there a plan if we don't like any of the five, or whatever we get in between? Is there a plan to say, ok, November 9th, did you say? Is there a plan to reinstitute another period of time?

Imm PDC Richardson: We will cross that bridge when we get to it, not to cut you short.

Vice Cmdr Rabon: Does the DEC have to approve finances, the salary and all that?

Dept Cmdr Price: Yeh, once a candidate is selected.

Imm PDC Richardson: Yeh, it will come back to us, we'll have final say-so. Questions? Going once, going twice

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, keeping this moving, if you would, NEC Strauss?

NEC Strauss: Good morning. So the National Commander, Paul Dillard, has decided to cancel the Washington Conference as an in-person event. This decision was prompted by health concerns, extremely limited access to Congress and the availability of alternate means of getting The American Legion message to our elected representatives. However, the National Commander will be presenting testimony at both the House and Veterans Affairs Committee on Wednesday, March 2nd. At this point we don't know if the testimony will be presented virtually or in-person. We do know that the chairperson of the Legislative branches and the Legislative commissions will be invited to attend the testimony, along with the President and Executive Director of the ALA, and the National Commander of the SAL. The American Legion Washington based commissions will meet virtually, so if you're on one of those be listening out for that virtual date. In lieu of in-person Washington Conference, the National Commander is encouraging all American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL to make appointments to meet with the Congressmen and Senators at their home offices. The American Legion Department Service Officer School scheduled for Washington DC for the first week of March has also been cancelled as an in-person event. So those scheduled to attend will receive information shortly on accessing the virtual substitute meeting.

The Department received \$1,680.00 from Emblem Sales as a result of royalties and license sales from Legion Emblem Sales. That's when you order your flags and everything through the Emblem Sales. The Department receives 20% based on those license sales. The COVID-19 continues to affect the divisions operations and financial performance through advertising sales. They're up nearly 5% from the down year of 2020 and 18 new advertisers have been part of the space and magazine and digital media through 2021. However, the magazine, The American Legion magazine has a 9% increase in manufacturing cost because of the worldwide shortages that are going on.

The American Legion, through the Legislative, is urging the Secretary of Defense to award the purple heart to active-duty military veterans injured in the combat zone who suffer from traumatic brain injury and if diagnosed by a medical doctor.

Columbus, Ohio and Kansas City are in contention for the 2027 National Convention.

Through the first nine races of the Indy car season, The American Legion received over 12.6 million dollars in media value through broadcast and media. That number, even with six races to go, at that statistic, already exceeded the two-year cost of the investment that we put into the program.

Veterans and Children Foundation signed a new deal with the Veterans United Mortgage Company, who in turn donated two million dollars to the Veterans and Children Foundation.

As part of the June 30th Emblem Sales, they had sold 1,700,080 flags, currently 2,2016 posts are registered in the flag rewards program and 27,000 schools and businesses and churches have signed up. So if you sign up through Emblem Sales, you can get your Post name on there, you can get a kick-back very much like the Department does, for your post.

Legislation related to toxic exposure, such as expanding presumptive conditions for Agent Orange, for exposure to burn pits, is getting a lot of momentum on Capitol Hill. So if you have talked to your Senators and Congressmen about the Burn Pit legislation, it seems to be moving, so keep on talking to them about it. A lot of this is a big issue for a lot of the younger veterans, much as it is for Agent Orange type veterans but it's happening a lot sooner than the Vietnam veteran's era before they figured it out so keep on talking to your Congressman and Legislators about that.

The National Cemetery Committee chose to highlight the NCA's (National Cemetery Committee) goal of increasing veterans' population to reasonable access to burial options of within 75 miles of a veterans home. So ultimately the goal is to get a cemetery located within 75 miles of everybody's house. We've done a pretty good job of doing that in South Carolina already but, you know, those guys and veterans that are out there in the desert, you can imagine, some people have to travel a very, very long to get buried in a National Cemetery and for the families to go visit their family members if they have to travel three or four hundred miles. That's something that we're trying to get through legislative funding and get these National and state cemeteries funded for veterans.

Post 300 had been officially cancelled at the Fall meetings.

Six changes to the Baseball rule book have been recommended. I have those but one of them was banning fake tags by a defensive player that was causing injuries and fights. Your post baseball team can no longer exceed 7500 for the 10th, 11th and 12th graders, your total amount of allotment of schools can't exceed that number, that was the recommendation of the baseball committee.

The 2021 American Legion Samsung Scholarship runner-up was from South Carolina, she was a Southeastern Region winner, Hannah Behrman, she won \$1,250.00, and the Samsung American Legion winner was Valerian Alexander Bruce, who won \$5,000.00. Mr. Lewis can tell you that was from The American Legion Boys and Girls State programs, that Samsung gives those scholarships. So that's a really good benefit to go out there and sell when you're out there talking about The American Legion and what do we do. Well, right there are two good examples of South Carolinian's receiving a very substantial scholarship.

Through a System Worth Saving, The American Legion plans to visit several VA medical facilities in January, one of those is the Columbia VA. At the last visit, as you know, they found the colonoscopy that caused a death, they found a lot of problems with the way that way that those devices were being cleaned and it made a pretty big thing in the newspaper there and a lot of changes were made as a result of that. Also, the ROR, you know, the Feds, love their acronyms, but the ROR is basically the Regional Office Review, they plan to visit 12 Regional Offices, one of those in sites is the Augusta VA, that's coming up in January. I know I let Darlene know personally because I know she's very involved in VAVS.

That's another thing I want to talk about, VAVS, everybody know what VAVS is? Don't remember that anymore because it's no longer going to be called VAVS, So the Assistant Under Secretary for Health Operations recently re-aligned VA Volunteer Services and was moved to VHK Communications Office, it now falls directly under the AUSHO. With this realignment to further

reflect the scope of the service, the VAVS name change also occurred. VAVS became the VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement, the CDCE, ok? CDCE, the change was necessary to the rebranding issue from the volunteer/voluntary inconsistency. volunteers losing sense of belonging to something bigger and the downgrading of positions at VA medical facilities.

So let's move on from that. So Chairman Jewell, from Junior Shooting Sports (JSSP) requested that the program manager give an update on the status of a resolution by the Department of Alabama to hold The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports in Anniston, Alabama starting in 2023. They put a bid to the National Headquarters. Many of you don't know, we had the Junior Shooting Sports in Colorado Springs, CO, and one of the things that happened is they were supposed to handle it and the COVID happened. And they would not allow our shooters to use the facility right at the last minute. So all of these shooters showed up and didn't have a place to shoot. So thankfully through some hard work of some dedicated Colorado Legionnaires, they converted an old Macy's building into a place where we could shoot the air rifles and have our competition anyway. It was very successful and very little happened. They did have to do a lot of work at the last minute to accommodate those children. As ya'll know, we had the Junior Shooting Sports Champion, because we're on the record, Maya Cameron from Nations Ford High School MCROTC, affiliated with Post 34 in South Carolina, the Sporter winner from that group.

But Alabama, getting back to Alabama. They wanted to make Alabama the permanent home of Junior Shooting Sports, very much like North Carolina is with Baseball, they wanted to make that a permanent home in Alabama, so they put a resolution in. But it's going to be recommended that they put it out for a bid so I'm telling you now they're putting it out for a bid, if you think your hometown might be a shooting sports mega capital or something like that, be looking out for that. It doesn't look like it's going to be staying around in Colorado Springs for the next year.

That's all I have, it's a long report but it's a lot of days up at the Fall Meetings and I just narrowed down a book about that big into this. I appreciate your time, Commander, thank you.

Dept Cmdr Price: I appreciate your report. Now, if I could get, Stephen, if you'd come on up.

JA Lewis: Commander, good morning. I asked Commander Price to let me speak for just a few minutes to you this morning. I'm not going to be as long as I did with the Post Commanders yesterday, sorry about that. But I want to speak to you on behalf, well, as Judge Advocate and just briefly give you a Boys State Update if you weren't in the Post Commanders meeting yesterday. I asked Commander Price to let me speak to you, I'm going to ask two things of this body this morning. The first is I would like to seek your permission and blessing to step away from my primary role as sort of the lead Judge Advocate, and step into a role of assistant judge advocate. Just over the last, well, year a half I guess, both personally and professionally, my life has ratcheted up. All of you know my dad, or most of you know my dad, and he's just turned 90 in June and I'm sort of his go to guy for a lot of different things. We had a couple of health scares over the last year or so, he's doing fine now, by the way. But it just hit home that, that he's got limited time here on this side of heaven. And so I want to try and make as much time as I can to spend with him. And then, professionally, I've started a new firm with a former partner and two other attorneys and I'm going to be the senior partner and the managing partner in that firm. And that's just going to take an awful lot of my time. And I just don't want to shortchange the Legion by not having enough time to spend what I think deserves to be spend in the role of judge advocate. It doesn't mean that I'm going away, it just means I would love to just be able in kind of advisory role as an assistant judge advocate with blessing of this body.

The 2nd thing that I'm going to ask you is to allow Cody Mitchell to be elevated to the primary role of judge advocate. Cody is a great guy, he's actually a lot more qualified than I am to do the job. He's actually, number one, a Legionnaire, number two, he is in fact a judge, and number three he's an outstanding lawyer with an outstanding legal mind. And he's been around now for the last, what, Nick, three years I guess? Ya'll have seen him in action at a convention, he's very decisive and he's just, he's just a good candidate for the primary judge advocate role. Obviously I don't have any control over that, but I am going to give him my highest recommendation to be the judge advocate in the lead role.

So, those were the two things that ya'll can do whatever business you need to do to take care of that later but the second thing I want to talk to you about is Boys State. 2019 we had our biggest year as far as delegates go, 1087. Obviously in 2020, we had to cancel and then in 2021, this past year, we had the maximum boys we could have based on the limited numbers due to COVID, we had 550 guys there. It was a combination of 2020 and 2021. And it was an outstanding week, I told the Post Commanders yesterday, we required negative tests when they got there we took tests when they got there and then we tested them again on Friday before they left to make sure we weren't sending any of them home with COVID and we tested staff as well, as you know, we've got over a hundred counselors and staff. And so I'm glad to report to you we had 2100 negative tests that week, which was amazing. So, I told the post commanders yesterday it was kind of a God thing, honestly, I just don't know how we would have pulled that off had we not been in step with what the Lord has for our program and these young men who attend our program. We hope that next year we'll be back to full strength. It may take two years for that to happen, we anticipate not having any COVID restrictions next year, but we all know that's subject to change. So we are just back to being an outstanding program and will be for a long, long time.

And the other thing I want to announce to you, is that probably within the next two years, I'm going to be retiring as Director, if it is in the next two years, then it will be, I think my 18th year as Director, and that's just long enough. Because they need some new blood, some fresh ideas, some younger folks in there, and we have appointed, I call him a young man, he's probably 43, think. We've appointed him as assistant director. His name is Jamie Bennett, he's been on staff for probably 30, 35 years, I guess. Jamie will be the first African American Director of Palmetto Boys State. And it's about time, honestly, because we've got a number of qualified staff, African-american, White, Asian, and Jamie is at the top of the list to succeed me.

Dept Cmdr Price: That would be your recommendation?

JA Lewis: Yeh, yeh, that would be my recommendation. The Boys State committee approved him and Assistant Director, it will be my recommendation to the Boys State committee and to this, and to the Legion for him to become Director and I don't foresee any opposition because he is outstanding. In fact I told, I think if he was here, I think if he was here I'd probably wouldn't tell the story, but I told the Post Commanders yesterday when I announced that he was going to be assistant director and called him up the podium at our planning conference and said that it was my hope that the Legion would approve him as being director after I retired. I asked him to say a few words, and he couldn't, he just couldn't speak. And then after a few minutes, he finally did and he just said that he was, he apologized, which he didn't need to. But he just said he was overwhelmed with the gravity of the position of being director of American Legion Palmetto Boys State. Because we believe we're the top program in the country, I really don't think there's a whole lot of question about that. And he understands the importance of the impact that we have on these young men's lives. And I think it just hit him that, good gracious, I'm going to be the director of the best program in the country, and you know, it was

just overwhelming for him. And that says a lot about him, that he didn't take it just, oh great, I get to be director. You know, gosh, I am now going to be the director of an outstanding program. So, anyway, those are the things that I wanted to bring to the table. I'd be happy to answer any questions, but I know we've got a long, another part of the agenda and so I do want to say these though. I really do appreciate being judge advocate over, I don't know, Maggie, how long has it been. I was trying to think on the way down here. I started with Jim and then past adjutant Holland, and then past adjutant Woods, and now Adjutant Diener. It's probably been ten years, I guess.

Exe Dir May: Yeh, probably so.

J/A Lewis: Yeh, yeh, even though some of you have been a royal pain the ass, I won't call any names like Walt or Joe (laughter). I won't say any of that, but I've actually come to love you guys and I appreciate what you do for veterans, what you do for the community and especially what you do for Palmetto Boys State. Se we couldn't be the outstanding program with your absolutely full and unconditional support. So thank you, really from the bottom of my heart. And like I said, I'm not going away, I'm just going to step away into a lessor role and whoever the Adjutant is I am happy to do whatever they need me to do in response to that.

Alt NEC Lysaght: Are you going to relocate campus in the next few years?

JA Lewis: That's always on the table, it really is, I mean, and we told the Anderson folks that, in fact, we had somebody approach us a couple of years ago, and they weren't ready to house because they were building some housing and they knew that we had some capacity limitations at Anderson and we had a real frank conversation with President Whitaker and just said look, we don't plan on going anyway, but we're always going to listen to offers because we just think that's the prudent thing to do. If it's in the best interest of the program, and the Legion for us to move campuses, then we will but we don't have any plans right this minute. Ok, thank you, Commander, appreciate it.

Dept Cmdr Price: First before we go further, I'd to give a strong thanks and a hand to Stephen for the job that has done for the last ten years, it has been outstanding (applause). He has kept us on track, and we appreciate that. With that said though, just letting you know that the position is an appointment position, and I am appointed and at this time I am appointing Cody as the Judge Advocate, I appreciate that very much.

Dept Adj Diener: I'd just like to add a personal point of appreciate for everything that Stephen's done. We have a lot of communications that you all don't ever see, and he's kept me straight on many occasions, and Stephen, I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything that you've done and all the support that you've done for The American Legion (applause).

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, moving forward, I'd like to again, tell everybody, thank you for attending this conference. I believe it was a very successful conference. And I'd like to give special thanks to those that gave the classes and that prepared the information and put that out. You gave the class, you stood in that class, you support that class, for those giving a class, would you please stand up. Thank you so much. It's success was because of you and we appreciate that very much. Chaplain came up earlier and gave a great sermon and talked about a mission. The Lord's mission, our mission that we've accepted as leaders in The American Legion state of South Carolina and what it meant. And we all here, we're here as leaders, we all accepted the position that we've gotten. And with that acceptance, we've agreed to go out and do our mission, our mission, first and utmost is the care of veterans and their families. As I said the other day, the best way that we can take care of our veterans and their

families, is one, by taking care of their children and do that through the Children & Youth Program. Two, by increasing our membership. We increase our membership; we increase our footprint within the state of South Carolina. By increasing our footprint, we increase our programs and capabilities to take care of our veterans and their families. So that is our mission, and I'm asking you to help me accomplish that mission this year, I need support to do that. I've had great support thus far and especially with my vice commanders. I really appreciate that but let's keep pushing forward and let's increase our membership, let's increase our programs, our capability of taking care of veterans. I'm just going to tell a quick story that happened this past week. I was very, very excited. Maggie and the Department got an email from a veteran that was going hungry, that was needing help. The veteran has an eleven-year-old daughter and was afraid of having to be moved out. He'd made all kinds of arrangements to try and reduce the payments as far as the vehicles go, and various things. Tried to go the various food banks but unfortunately or fortunately, the veteran gets paid a certain stipend from the VA, so it just had the pressure on it that he didn't qualify for the food. So he couldn't get food, and he's having a lot of problems. So he came to us to apply for the grant. The National grant's requirement is that you be a member and this veteran wasn't a member of the Legion anymore because his membership had expired. And he couldn't raise the money to pay for the membership. He begged not be left behind, for support. So we contacted that post, and the post paid this year's membership and next year's membership. As soon as doing that, the Department, without hesitation, got that grant application completed and got that moved forward to National. So, that's what we do, And we have so many other veterans, I'm sure, that are out there that need that same support. So when one comes knocking or if you see one out there that needs help, let's give them this kind of support. That is what the State of South Carolina American Legion is about that, that's what we do, I appreciate that very much. That post that rose to the occasion was Post 241. (applause). Again, that's what we do, and I appreciate that very much. Now, at this time, I need a motion to go into Executive Session.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I make a motion that we go into Executive Session.

Vice Cmdr Kvam: Second.

Dept Cmdr Price: I have a motion and a second, any opposition about going into Executive Session? All opposed? All in favor. If you're not a member of the DEC, I must as (all members present voted to go into Executive Session. and

Dept Adj Diener: All nonmembers must leave.

Dept Cmdr Price: If you're not a member of the DEC, I appreciate you're being here, hopefully ya'll have a great day.

Dept Adj Diener: Commander Scherer, as a PDC, you can stay.

Dept Cmdr Price: You can stay, Commander Scherer, if you'd like.

EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS:

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Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, let me give you a little background last in the Department. We had two incidents involving a shooting. And it wasn't at the same post, they were nice enough to spread it out across the state. One of them resulted in a death, the other one is still in critical condition. And with that said there was some questions as to how it happened, why it happened and it was felt that I need, or I feel that I need to appoint an ad-hoc committee to further investigate the two incidents, and it will be two ad-hoc committees.

The first incident was Bennettsville Post 213. That one resulted in the death.

Dept Adj Diener: It's still under investigation.

Dept Cmdr Price: Yep, it' still under investigation. I know that the District Commander has been trying to get as much information as he can and for that ad-hoc committee I would like to appoint PDC Bud Hennis, 3rd Vice Commander Bruce Donegan, and District Commander Larry Pouncy, 3rd Vice Commander Donegan will be the Chairman of that Committee. That would be to investigate the Bennettsville Post 213 shooting.

You'll see what I mean by distance, the next post, the individual, I assume, is still in critical condition?

(unnamed person) Last I heard, yes.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok. Is Woodruff Post 33. For that committee, I would like to appoint PDC John Britt, 1st Vice Commander Jim Jarvis as Chairman, and District Commander, Kevin Brown. Again, welcome to the DEC Kevin Brown (laughter). But we need this done so we can find out if procedures were followed that are in place for these posts and for these bars. Ok, so with that said, those were the appointments on that committee.

NEC Strauss: I would like to say....

Dept Cmdr Price: Excuse me, who are you?

NEC Strauss: I would like to make a motion that we receive your comments as read, received and recorded as information and make your recommendations the policy of the Department Executive Committee.

Dept Cmdr Price: Can I get a second on that one?

Vice Cmdr Kvam: I second.

Dept Cmdr Price: All in favor, say aye, all opposed say no. (all present voted in favor of the motion).

Dept Cmdr Price: I appreciate that very much.

Dept Adj Diener: Do you want me to give them the update on the appeal?

Dept Cmdr Price: Yes, go ahead, please?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Are both these incidents at posts with bars.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Yes. No, no.

Dept Cmdr Price: No. One has, one doesn't.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Ok.

Dept Adj Diener: I need to bring one issue up, I won't go into a lot of detail on it, it's more informative. But as soon as we can coordinate the date with the Judge Advocate, we are going to need to call this body back into place fairly, fairly soon. Because we have Post 186, suspended an individual from the post and the individual has filed an appeal and so this body will have to, you know, they've filed the appeal correctly and this body will have to convene to be able to handle that appeal, ok? And again, the Judge Advocate ends up presiding over that so we've got to coordinate with his schedule to be able to make that to happen. But it will require us calling a special session and bringing everybody in and holding that appeal here, ok? That's just for your...

D-11 Cmdr Walton: Who is Post 186, please?

Dept Adj Diener: 186 is Little River. Ok, that's all I have, Commander.

Dept Cmdr Price: All right, at this time, I need a motion to take it out of Executive Session.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I make a motion that we come out of Executive Session.

Vice Cmdr Kvam: Second.

Dept Cmdr Price: All in favor of coming of Executive Session say aye, all opposed? Ok, we are now, motion carried, and we are now out of Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS

EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS

PDC Britt: We need to ratify actions...

Dept Adj Diener: No, sir. Per Roberts Rules, we do not have to do that. That's civil side but we do not have to do that in the Legion.

PDC Britt: My mistake.

Dept Cmdr Price: We're out of Executive Session, and with that said, is there anything out...let me clarify this, is there anything out there for the good of The American Legion. Not necessarily wanting to know what's going on at your post, ok. So, if you have something that's for the good of The American Legion, please. Kevin?

Dept Sgt-at-Arms Joy: To help assist our Trophies & Awards committee in the upcoming year, I would ask that you reach out to all your post commanders and let them know that when they reach out to all their police departments and fire departments, to pay attention to the form, the award form, that they're actually filling out. There's three on the law enforcement side and one on the fire department side. I can tell you that after looking at, after doing this for the past two years, we've all worn a uniform, we all came in as privates and PFC's, and we all came out as NCO's. Now as an NCO, your job to take care of the troops. I can tell you, after looking at the last awards committee that we had, the only award for the fire department, was from the chief for the fire department of a specific county. Now, you can't tell me that there's not another fireman out there in the state of SC that doesn't deserve that award. On the law enforcement side, there's three awards for law enforcement. There was one post that submitted an award for an officer, and the officer had only ten years on the force, but he put every citation that he wrote on that award. So all I say is, have your post commanders reach out to the department, pay attention to the awards and what they're looking for. They're looking for people that're actually doing something on a daily basis, not for the long period of time that they've been with that department. That's all I've got, Commander.

Dept Cmdr Hawk: For the good of the Order, I'd like to recognize Stephen, once again. I let everybody say the recognition of Stephen. Stephen and I go back a long way and when I approached him to be the Department Judge Advocate when Steve Savitz resigned, big shoes to fill there with Steve there, but that's Stephen. But he stepped to the plate and did it. This young man's been with this Department at it's very best, he's also witnessed this Department at it's very worse. And I have to commend him as the Department Judge Advocate that at our worse time, he was highly professional, he knew a lot of people that would help us get out hot water. But the hot water wasn't on the Department, it was on those that created the water. But we did it, the Legion and the Constitution worked. But I want to thank ,you Stephen for the hard work and effort in putting up with....he once said after a few years, whispered in my ear, what the hell did you get me into. (laughter) But I appreciate (inaudible). We argued sometimes on interpretations, like Nick said, he is our Judge advocate and thank you for dealing with The American Legion, on that side, and once again, your dedication to Boys State. But 2006, 2007, a major thank you for being with us then, (inaudible). Thank you, Commander (applause).

Dept Cmdr Price: Any other information for the good of the Order?

Dept Historian Spurgeon: I've talked with several of you over the past couple of days. One of the things I'm looking at is changing the job description for the Department Historian. One thing is right now its literally once sentence in our bylaws. If you have ideas of what you'd like to see in there, let me know. Because we did vote as a department to keep the Department Historian as an elected position and I would like to make that so like, Mike Strauss, he is the Chair for the Department History Book that gets published. If the Department Historians are doing our jobs from now on, publishing that book should be a piece of cake, in my opinion. We should have all the information that we should be gathering but right now my job description does not say that. So I would like your support, I'm going to put together the necessary paperwork for us to vote on at the convention, so, but if you guys have ideas, let me know.

Dept Cmdr Price: Thank you, thank you very much. That's a great initiative on her part because she's absolutely right, it's just one line as far as her duties go and I agree with her 100%. Part of the Department Historian duties to me, should be, keeping that history book up every year and pushing that through for publication so we don't fall behind. So, thank you, again, Mike Strauss is and has been working on, we've got 15 years or whatever it is since the last publication?

NEC Strauss: 32.

Dept Cmdr Price: 32 years, oh my goodness. So a lot of history that he's having to track down to put back in place. If we had the Historian doing that every year, we won't have that issue again. So, thank you, for that initiative. Ok, any other information for the Good of The American Legion. Nothing said then, I'm going to remind you, for my closing remarks, we have a mission, hopefully you'll take your mission seriously. You'll get out there and you'll look at, especially those that have bars or halls that are being rented out, look at how that's being done, how they're being operated. Are they doing the right thing? Are they making sure that they're members are the only one that's buying alcohol at the bar? A guest should not be paying for the alcohol, ok? There are no such thing as visitors, in other words, where people walk in off the street, and they don't belong to nobody. So just look a little bit at the operation, go in there and have a seat, that's part of our duties, ok? That said, if I could, I ask Chaplain Mullinax, give us one.

Chaplain Mullinax gave the benediction and Department Commander Price closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener
Department Adjutant

ND/mm