

**The American Legion  
Department of Nebraska  
Department Executive Committee Meeting  
Ramada Inn - Columbus, Nebraska  
June 23 – 24, 2022**

Department Commander Dan Benes called the Department Executive Committee meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 23, 2022, at the Ramada Inn in Columbus. The Colors were in place and saluted. Prayer was offered by Department Chaplain Alex Borzych. The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion were recited in unison. The POW/MIA banner was placed on the empty chair.

Department Adjutant David Salak called the DEC roll call. Present were Commander Dan Benes, Senior Vice Commander Don Suchy, Area A Vice Commander Michael Sheridan, Area B Vice Commander William Berney, Area C Vice Commander James Doyen, Area D Vice Commander Monte Warner, Past Department Commander Jim Costello, Past Department Commander Lyle Bartels, District 1 Commander Judy Walters, District 3 Commander Michael Ellis, District 4 Commander Beth Linn, District 5 Commander Marv Donnelly, District 6 Commander Julie Schnitzler, District 7 Commander Gerald Schulte, District 9 Commander Dennis Kennedy, District 11 Commander Rodd Paul, District 12 Commander William Lawrence, District 13 Commander Larry Borchert, and District 15 Commander Ed Muggy. National representatives in attendance are NEC Fred Craigie and Alternate NEC Jim Costello. Motion was made by Jerry Schulte to seat District 2 Vice Commander Kelly Hanvey. Second by Marv Donnelly and carried. Motion was made by Michael Sheridan to seat District 8 member Dave Doolen. Second by Jerry Schulte and carried. Motion was made by Beth Linn to seat District 10 Vice Commander Don Nelson. Second by Larry Borchert and carried. Past Department Commander Gary Wooten absent. A quorum was called by the Department Judge Advocate.

Commander Benes welcomed everyone to Columbus and thanked them for attending. He started the meeting by discussing a potential building that was located for a new headquarters building. He asked Senior Vice Commander Suchy to address the DEC about the building. The Auxiliary DEC and members joined the Legion DEC meeting to hear the briefing. Motion by Michael Sheridan for the Legion to continue the conversation about the potential building and to see the exact figures that would be in play. Second by Jerry Schulte and carried. Motion by Crys Bauermeister for the Auxiliary to continue the conversation about the potential building and to see the exact figures that would be in play. Second by Vicki Cyboron and carried. The Auxiliary returned to their meeting.

Commander Benes then made committee appointment recommendations to fill vacancies on standing committees. Appointment recommendations are as follows: Americanism – Dean Chase, 4 years; Mike Landkamer, 4 years; Vacant (Area C) - 2 years; Athletic – Dean Beck, 4 years; Anthony McCreery, 4 years; Tim Riskowski, 3 years; Boys' State – Richard Colson, 4 years; Children & Youth –Michael Sheridan, 4 years; Vacant (Area C) 3 years; Constitution and Bylaws – Ken Stenka, 2 years; Convention – Rod Rose, 4 years; Ken Schmid, 3 years; Ruthanne Dimmock-Rever, 2 years; Dennis Kennedy, 1 year; Finance – Shannon Falk, 4 years; Membership – Richard Baxter, 4 years; Publications & Public Relations – Steven "Kade" Bussen, 4 years; Vacant (Area A) 3 years, Beth Linn, 2 years; Rehabilitation & Employment – Daryl Harrison, 4 years; Boyd Yochum, 2 years; Scholarship – Lisa Shore, 4 years; Legislative – Wade Graft, 2 years; and Veterans Home Board – Virgil Hagel, 2 year. Motion to approve the recommendations and accept the appointments was made by Beth Linn. Second by Mike Ellis and carried.

Commander Benes asked Judge Advocate Harris to read the Rules and Procedures. Motion to accept the rules and procedures by Beth Linn. Second by William Lawrence. Motion to amend the rules by changing rule 4 section a to add National Executive Committeeman and Alternate Executive Committeeman after Senior Vice Commander. Second by Jim Costello and carried. A vote to approve the original motion with the amendment was taken and carried.

Several resolutions had been forwarded to members of the Executive Committee for action to be taken. Judge Advocate Harris presented a report to the DEC. Resolution #122 – Bequests, Resolution #222 – NEC and ANEC on DEC, Resolution #322 – Virtual Department Meetings, Resolution #622 – Parliamentary Procedures, Resolution #922 – Department Officer Succession, Resolution #1022 – Increase National Delegate Stipend, Resolution #1122 – Change in Quorum, Resolution #1222 – NECman Voice & Vote, Resolution #1322 – Rooms and Mileage.

Adjutant Salak gave an update on the responsibilities of the District Commanders during the Department Convention regarding the selection of convention committee members, voting procedures and election of national convention delegates.

Adjutant Salak stated that the National Membership Workshop will be July 29 – 30, 2022 in Indianapolis, IN. The Department Commander, Department Membership Chairman, and five District Commander plan to attend.

Adjutant Salak went over the proposed schedule for the 2023 District Conventions as well as other District events. Several additions and corrections were made.

Adjutant Salak made a power point presentation on plans for the 2022 National Convention to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 27 – September 1, 2022. Housing will be at the Drury Plaza Hotel, with a room rate of \$160.55. First night deposit is payable with reservation and due July 11. Information was shared regarding dress code, required registration, delegate fee, committee and commission meetings, Nebraska Caucus, parade, and Tri-Stack Party. Information regarding the National Convention, housing, etc., will be available to all elected delegates and alternates immediately after the Sunday morning election at this convention.

Adjutant David Salak provided an update on Nebraska's revenue enhancement program participation. The label campaign as of June 16 has brought in just over \$9,549.00 Fall Label program. The lottery mailing donations totaled \$35,127.00. The gross profits from the lottery minus expenses were \$18,920.00. USAA revenue incentive has not been received yet, but it typically runs around \$16,000.00. Bequests of \$8,000 was received from the Stoldorf account in January and it was deposited into Morgan Stanley. \$4,000 was transferred to the Department in October for the membership incentive awards. The Legionnaire Insurance Trust held their annual board meeting in Scottsdale, AZ this year. The department received three checks for a total of \$53,610.00. Adjutant encouraged everyone to keep on promoting this program. He stated that Nebraska had been involved with the LIT since 2005. National Headquarters sent a check for \$19,028.00 for Nebraska member donations that they received from their mailings. A check for \$3,482.12 was also received in April from National for Emblem Sales royalties.

National Executive Committeeman Fred Craigie was introduced for remarks on activities at the National level. He extended greetings from National Commander Paul Dillard and the National Headquarters staff. There were three resolutions from the membership which included crating a multi-year membership, personalized digital membership cards, and a rolling membership. He shared that the 2025 National Convention will be in Tampa, Florida and the registration fee will be \$35. The American Legion has urged the White House to consider judges with expertise in veterans' law for appointment to the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. They also urged the VA to hold any VA employee or VA contracted vendor found guilty of misconduct be held fully accountable. Another resolution was put forth to ensure any servicemember who received a discharge under honorable conditions receive full education benefits from the VA and retroactive benefits be provided to those service members who lost their GI benefits as a result of receiving a general discharge under honorable conditions. There is a resolution to create a Bronze Brigade award for those that recruit 12 – 24 new members. Craigie spoke about the Veterans and Children's Foundation and the resources it provides and the levels of membership for donors.

Commander Benes shared that there are 11 Posts who are currently under the 10-member mark. He asked the District Commanders to reach out to those Posts and assist them. He also shared that it might be time to start talking about District 15 joining District 12 instead of remaining its own District.

Commander Benes stated that each District Commander is to turn in to Adjutant Salak a list of County Commanders certified and signed by them. County Commanders not certified as such will not be able to register or vote as County Commander at the convention.

Adjutant Salak shared that he had received one application from District 2 Vice Commander Kelly Harvey to attend the 2022 American Legion College December 11 – 16, 2022 in Indianapolis, IN. Department Adjutant recommended her to National and she was accepted to attend.

Commander Benes stated that there were several Districts that still had Posts who had not yet submitted their Consolidated Post Report. He requested that the District Commanders contact their posts and complete the reports by the end of the convention on Sunday.

Committee reports were given as follows:

Junior Shooting Sports Liaison Report was given by Department Adjutant Dave Salak on Liaison Doug Frahm's behalf. He stated the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual American Legion JSSP competition will be held July 21 – 23 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Nebraska had five clubs that registered for the 2021-22 postal match to compete at the National Competition. State champions were determined in the first round of the postal and the second round determined the top scores nationally. The highest 15 scores in both classes were invited to attend the national JSSP. The top Nebraska shooter in the Sporter class and the top team has received trophies provided by the Detachment of Nebraska. Austin Rahmig of the Western Nebraska Shooting Sports Club sponsored by Gering Post 36 received the highest score in the Sporter discipline and is the state champion. The Western Nebraska Shooting Sports Club received the highest score in the team competition and is the state champion. Austin placed 7<sup>th</sup> nationally and Julia Windstrom of the Dead Eye Shooters placed 11<sup>th</sup> nationally and they have been invited to participate in the JSSP competition. Motion to accept the report by Rodd Paul. Second by Larry Borchert and carried.

Boys' State Committee Report was given by Chairman Doug Boldt. Boldt reported that there were 209 boys who attended and graduated the 2022 Boys' State session. He also shared that 225 had submitted an application, but 8 cancelled with a refund and 8 cancelled without a refund. He expressed how much the morning flag raising ceremony meant to everyone in attendance and how important it is for the youth. He stated that the joint sessions were great again this year and that Dr. Jo was the hit of the week yet again. Boldt reported that Governor Ricketts was in attendance this year for the Wednesday night joint session. He shared that the Samsung winner was Ethan Hinkle this year. The new Boys' State Governor is Vikram Menon from Omaha. He stated that there was a joint Boys' and Girls' State meeting on Friday of the session and there are items that both groups will take back to their respective organizations. Both groups will be considering shortening or changing the format of their programs. The 2023 session is scheduled for June 4 – 10, 2023 on the UNL campus. Motion to accept the report by Don Nelson. Second by Marv Donnelly and carried.

POW/MIA Liaison Report was given by Liaison Boyd Yochum. He shared about the POW/MIAs from the Vietnam era and that only 2% of them successfully escaped. He also shared the story of a POW from Vietnam named James Rowe. He was scheduled for execution and escaped his captors to be rescued by the Americans. Yochum was part of that rescue group and remembered Rowe well. Motion to accept the report by Mike Ellis. Second by Julie Schnitzler and carried.

Membership Committee Report was given by Chairman Steve Bartos. Chairman Bartos shared that the committee met earlier on Thursday with only Dave Bruckner and himself present. This was the second meeting that only the two of them were present. They discussed the Stoldorf awards and the future of the program. After discussion, the committee feels that the program should be discontinued due to lack of

participation. They discussed the 2022-23 membership awards. The Early Bird award for 2023 will be a \$500 award. The committee looked at the Posts who were under 10 members and those who were getting close to that level. They are going to work with those Posts to see if they can assist in membership recruitment. Bartos addressed the new MyLegion program and the issues that it still has. He also shared that a lot of departments who are traditionally high in membership were much lower at this time compared to past years, he attributes this to the missed renewal notice from national. Motion to accept the report by Julie Schnitzler. Second by Mike Ellis and carried.

Convention Committee Report was given by Chairman Ken Schmid. The committee reviewed upcoming dates for Mid-Year and Convention. The 2024 Mid-Year Conference will be held January 19 – 24, 2024. Registration fee for this convention will be \$10.00. The 2025 Department Convention will be June 26 – 29, 2025. There was discussion regarding the changing of the dates for Department Convention to May in future years. A resolution will be brought forward next year. Member excused was Ruthanne Dimmock-Rever. Motion to accept the report by Mike Sheridan. Second by Dennis Kennedy and carried.

Scholarship Committee Report was given by Chairman Carroll Mohlman. He stated that all committee members were present for the scholarship judging. There were a total of 64 applications for the Maynard Jensen and Boschult scholarships. There were thirty \$1,000.00 Maynard Jensen scholarships and four \$500.00 Boschult scholarships for the 2022 year. He shared that the committee will still decide the Hurlbert Scholarship during this meeting. Motion to accept report by Mike Ellis. Second by Don Nelson and carried.

Rehabilitation & Employment Committee Report was given by Chairman Daryl Harrison. He stated that the committee discussed the employee shortage at the Nebraska VAs and how The American Legion helped push for higher wages. He shared the progress of the Highway 20 project and that there are now 23 large signs. He urged the DEC to lobby their Senators and Congressmen to keep the Hot Springs VA open and operational. Harrison finished by stating how important it is for all veterans to be on the watch for veteran suicide. The National Commander just watched the President sign the Pact Act into law which will help with this initiative. Motion to accept the committee report was made by Rodd Paul. Second by William Lawrence and carried.

American Legion Riders Liaison Report was given by Liaison John Arias. He reported that Nebraska currently has 45 Chapters with over 1,200 riders. They rode over 150,000 miles ridden and 10,000 hours of community service doing escorts, Quilts of Valor ceremonies, funerals, parades, events, etc. He shared that the 2022 Nebraska Legacy Run will be August 12 – 13 and that the National Legacy Run will begin August 21 in Mobile, Alabama. Motion to accept the report by Michael Sheridan. Second by Julie Schnitzler and carried.

Candidates seeking Department offices addressing the DEC at this time included: Don Suchy for Department Commander; John Henry Percy for Senior Vice Commander; Carl Lorenzen (announced by Commander Benes) for Area A Vice Commander; Ken Meyer (announced by Commander Benes) for Area B Vice Commander; Dick Binder (announced by Commander Benes) for Area C Vice Commander; Gene Von Forell (announced by Commander Benes) for Area D Vice Commander; Fred Craigie for NEC; and Jim Costello for Alternate NEC.

PDC Costello gave the DEC an update on the Nebraska American Legion co-sponsoring with the Kiwanis its first team at the College World Series. This year the team was Texas.

Finance Officer Report was given by Finance Officer Mark Novak. Novak reported on the Department investments and reviewed the financial statements and proposed budgets for the general fund. Novak also reported on the Department investments and stated that our investment portfolio continues to exceed our expectation, even with the current market trends. He shared that the Department is yet again doing well and will not need to take a disbursement from the investment fund. Novak stated that he created a Bequest Account at Morgan Stanley, and it has approximately \$79,222 to date. This account has specific requirements as laid out in the Constitution & Bylaws and this is the reason for Resolution 2 to change

these requirements. If Resolution 2 does not pass, the funds will remain in the restricted account. He presented the proposed budgets for the 2022-23 Fiscal Year. He stated that the Finance Committee and himself were both in agreement that resolution 13 should be rejected due to the fiscal ramifications. Motion to accept the report without approving the budget by Larry Borcher. Second by Rodd Paul and carried.

Following announcements by Adjutant Salak, the meeting recessed at 4:55 p.m. with a salute to the Colors.

The DEC reconvened at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, June 24 at the Ramada Inn. Opening ceremonies included a salute to the Colors and a prayer by Chaplain Alex Borzych.

Adjutant Salak called the roll with all members of the DEC present except District 4 Commander Beth Linn. Seated in place of the District Commander on Thursday were District 2 Vice Commander Kelly Harvey and District 10 Vice Commander Don Nelson. Motion to seat District 6 representative John Arias by Rodd Paul. Second by Jerry Schulte and carried. A quorum was called by the Department Adjutant.

Commander Benes urged District Commanders to get the CPR reports filled out and returned to Adjutant Salak as soon as possible. There were still three Districts who had not turned in a CPR. NECman Craigie made a presentation to Commander Benes on behalf of National Commander Dillard.

Committee reports were given as follows:

Finance Committee Report was given by Chairman Dan Stramel. Chairman Stramel reviewed the minutes of the December and May meeting. Items discussed included the investment portfolio, USAA, Legionnaire Insurance Trust, revenue enhancement programs, budget expenditures, charitable donations, the sinking fund, and the possibility of moving expenses if the building is sold and moved. He stated that the financial statement has been trending in a good direction this year and the Department is right on track. Chairman Stramel noted that the committee voted to approve Resolution 122 pertaining to bequest money that is received and Resolution 1022 pertaining to National Convention delegate stipend, and the committee voted to reject Resolution 1322 pertaining to room and mileage rate. The committee created two budgets to present to the DEC, one with Resolution 1322 passing and one without Resolution 1322 passing. The committee believes that this resolution will increase all committee and officer expenses up to 33%. He spoke on the Veterans and Children's Foundation and that the committee believes that there are many other Nebraska and National programs are just as worthy and all funds should not be directed to that. Motion to accept the report and approve the budget, depending on what happens with Resolution 1322 by Larry Borcher. Second by Gary Wooten and carried.

Sons of The American Legion Liaison Report was given by Liaison Mike Reimers. He stated that the Detachment currently had 163 Squadrons in the Detachment and there were 6,605 members. The Detachment chartered five new Squadrons and they have one cancelled charter this year. He stated that there are two Squadrons that have turned in zero members and many still have zero. The Detachment offered a scholarship this year for the first time. Meetings will start this afternoon and go through Sunday. Motion to accept the report by Mike Ellis. Second by William Lawrence and carried.

Americanism Committee Report was given by Chairman Jim Scott. Programs reported on included Americanism Awards, County Government Day, Law and Order Program, Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, Firefighter/EMS of the Year, Oratorical Scholarship Program, Eagle Scout of the Year, Flag Etiquette, Junior Shooting Sports, and Teacher of the Year Award. 17 counties held a County Government Program, and 73 counties did not report. Eagle Scout of the Year is Braden Capek of Milligan. The Nebraska Oratorical contest winner was Juliana Scheopner of Peacehill Academy. There was a resolution from Illinois to adjust the current Oratorical contest and it was tabled until the Chairmans meeting in September. The state champions for Junior Shooting Sports were Austin Rahmig, Sporter, of the Western Nebraska Shooting Sports Club and the Western Nebraska Shooting Sports Club received the highest score in the team competition. Cindy Backemeyer of Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools was chosen as the Elementary Teacher-of-the-Year, Colleen O'Shaughnessy of Adams Middle School was chosen as the Middle School

Teacher-of-the-Year, and Kristi Robison of Pawnee City Schools was chosen as the High School Teacher of the Year. Motion to accept the report by Rodd Paul. Second by William Berney and carried.

Children & Youth Committee Report was given by Committee member Don Hilger. Hilger reported that members of the committee present were Bruce Gubser, William Nelsen, and Senior Vice Commander Don Suchy. He noted that only 50 Posts fill out the Children & Youth portion of the Consolidated Post Report. He hopes more Posts will start doing this and reporting what they are doing. He noted that each District has Posts that will receive a certificate for their Children & Youth reporting on the CPR this past year. Motion to accept the report by Jerry Schulte. Second by Michael Sheridan and carried.

Publications and Public Relations Committee Chairman Richard Colson had no report to give.

Department Historian Historian Jennifer Laux was absent.

Department Service Officer Service Officer Levi Bennett was absent.

Homeless Veterans Liaison Liaison Bruce Husted was absent.

PDC Wooten brought to the attention of the DEC of doing a challenge coin for Nebraska. He moved that the Department design and purchase challenge coins to sell and give to dignitaries. Second by Larry Borcher. Discussion was held. Motion was carried.

Commander Benes had the candidates seeking Department offices that did not get a chance to address the DEC the opportunity to do so: Ken Meyer for Area B Vice Commander and Gene Von Forell for Area D Vice Commander.

Announcements for the Good of the American Legion were made.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. with a prayer and a salute to the flag.

David Salak  
Department Adjutant

**The American Legion  
Department of Nebraska  
Post-Convention  
Department Executive Committee Meeting  
Ramada Inn - Columbus, Nebraska  
June 26, 2022**

The Post-Convention Department Executive Committee meeting was called to order by Department Commander Don Suchy following the adjournment of the Department Convention.

Following opening ceremonies, Department Adjutant David Salak called the roll with all members of the DEC present. A quorum was called by the Department Judge Advocate.

Commander Suchy thanked the members of the DEC for their support and hoped this would be a great year for the American Legion.

Commander Suchy requested approval of the following appointments: Chaplain – Father Alex Borzych; Historian – Jennifer Laux; Judge Advocate – William Harris; Sergeant-at-Arms – Fred Tisdale; Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms – Al Bartek; Public Relations Officer – vacant; Finance Officer – Mark Novak; Service Officer – Levi Bennett. Motion to approve by Gary Wooten. Second by Bruce Gubser and carried.

Commander Suchy requested approval of the following committee chairs: Americanism – TBD; Athletic – Jody Moeller; Boys' State – Doug Boldt; Children & Youth – TBD; Constitution & Bylaws – William Harris; Convention – Ken Schmid; Finance – Daniel Stramel; Membership – Steve Bartos; Publications & PR – TBD; Rehabilitation & Employment – Daryl Harrison; Scholarship – Carroll Mohlman. Motion to approve by Jerry Schulte. Second by Mike Ellis and carried.

Commander Suchy asked for approval of Liaison officers as follows: S.A.L. – Mike Reimers; POW/MIA – Boyd Yochum; Junior Shooting Sports – Doug Frahm; Homeless Veterans Task Force – Bruce Husted; and American Legion Riders – John Arias. Motion to approve these appointments by Ken Meyer. Second by Dan Benes and carried.

Commander Suchy shared that the seniority ranking is Area B Commander Ken Meyer, Area C Commander Dick Binder, Area D Commander Gene VonForell, and Area A Commander Carl Lorenzen. Motion to accept by Jerry Schulte. Second by Ron Wiest and carried.

Commander Suchy asked SAL Liaison Mike Reimers to give a synopsis of the resolutions that were passed so the DEC could ratify them. No resolutions were addressed.

Commander Suchy suggested that members should contact the specific officer to attend a meeting. The dress code will be suit and tie or the equivalent. If the dress code is different, please notify the attending officer.

Commander Suchy reminded DEC members to look at the C&B regarding travel within your respective area. Any additional travel should be approved prior to the travel taking place.

Commander Suchy announced that the date and location for his Department Leadership School and Homecoming will be October 1, 2022, at the Seward County Fairgrounds with Department President Vicki Ozenbaugh. More information will be sent out in the upcoming newsletter and newspaper.

Commander Suchy passed out a document that outlines a District Commanders duties. He expects the District Commanders to read them and do their best to adhere to these guidelines.

Adjutant Salak noted the ADHOC Building Committee terminated with the outgoing Commander and recommended the incoming Commander reappoint said committee. Commander Suchy reappointed the current Adhoc Committee of Dan Benes, Don Suchy, Dave Salak, Mark Novak, and Vicki Cyboron that was formed by PDC Benes. Mark Novak will be the Chairman of the committee. Motion by Jerry Schulte to approve this committee and appointments. Second by Don Nelson and carried.

Adjutant Salak asked Commander Suchy to approve the annual budget now that we are aware which resolutions passed at convention. Commander Suchy asked the DEC to approve the budget since Resolution 1322 did not pass. Motion by Dick Binder to approve the budget presented by the Finance Committee without Resolution 1322. Second by William Lawrence and carried.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 p.m. with a prayer and salute to the colors.

David Salak  
Department Adjutant