

**The American Legion
Department of Nebraska
Department Executive Committee
Minutes
June 20 – 21, 2024
Holiday Inn and Convention Center – Kearney, Nebraska**

The Department Executive Committee meeting of the Nebraska American Legion was called to order by Department Commander John-Henry Percy at 1:00 p.m. Following a salute to Colors, prayer was offered by Department Chaplain Alex Borzych. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the POW-MIA “Empty Chair” ceremony was observed. The Preamble was recited by all in attendance.

DEC roll call was taken by Department Assistant Adjutant Eric Martin. Present were Commander John-Henry Percy, Senior Vice Commander Boyd Yochum, Area A Vice Commander Robert Neel, Area B Vice Commander Don Patras, Area C Vice Commander Brendan Moore, Area D Vice Commander Judy Walters, Past Department Commander Gary Wooten, Past Department Commander Dan Benes, Past Department Commander Don Suchy, District 1 Commander Gary Sones, District 2 Commander Kelly Hanvey, District 3 Commander Nick Tramp, District 4 Commander Steve Stanec, District 6 Commander Burdette Chappell, District 7 Commander Adam Schweitzer, District 8 Commander Rich Klinger, District 9 Commander Ron Wiest, District 10 Commander Don Nelson, District 11 Commander Tom Crisman, District 12 Commander Martin Neal, and District 15 Commander Bruce Gubser. National representatives in attendance were NEC Fred Craigie and Alternate NEC Jim Costello. Motion to seat District 5 member Richard Colson by Robert Neel. Second by Don Nelson and carried. District 13 was absent. Adjutant Salak is attending to the Men’s College World Series and would be travelling to Kearney at this time.

Judge Advocate William Harris declared a quorum and the meeting was declared regularly convened.

Commander Percy extended a welcome to members and guests at this meeting. He reminded all DEC members to submit vouchers to Department Headquarters in a timely fashion.

Commander Percy asked for a motion to approve minutes from January 19, 2024, January 27, 2024, January 15, 2021, January 21, 2022, and March 16, 2023, DEC minutes. Motion to approve the minutes by Klinger. Second by Don Nelson and carried.

Commander Percy called on Athletic Committee Chair Jody Moeller to address baseball operations and allegations at the post-level. Discussion was held and it was decided to wait for the final report from the Lincoln Police Department. Motion to send out a letter to all Post officers regarding the five rules that each program of The American Legion must follow by Martin Neal. Second by Bruce Gubser and carried.

Commander Percy asked for the following appointments to be approved. Americanism – Roxanne Sones, 4 years and Gary Wachter, 4 years; Athletic – Christopher McDonald, 4 years, Jason Sidel, 4 years, and vacant Area A, 3 years; Boys’ State – William Wiechert, 4 years; Children & Youth – Donald Nelsen, 4 years; Constitution & Bylaws – Kenneth Stenka, 2 years; Convention – Rodney Rose, 4 years and Don Patras, 1 year; Finance – Ronald Corbett, 4 years; Membership – Dave Bruckner, 4 years and vacant Area A, 1 year; Publications/PR – all Areas vacant; Scholarship – Bruce Husted, 4 years; Rehabilitation and Employment – vacant Area D, 4 years and vacant Area C, 2 years; Veterans Home

Board – William Crosier, 2 years; and Assistant Sgt-at-Arms Ann Guy. Motion to approve the appointments by Tom Crisman. Second by Burdette Chappell and carried.
Commander Percy stated that Judge Advocate William Harris would read the convention rules and go over the District Convention Resolutions on Friday as he was excused from the meeting.

Assistant Adjutant Martin updated DEC 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.

Assistant Adjutant Martin stated the National Membership Workshop will be July 26 – 27, 2024, in Indianapolis. The Department Commander, Membership Chairman, and three District Commanders plan to attend.

Commander Percy presented the proposed 2025 District Convention schedule. Changes were made. Motion to accept the following schedule by Ron Wiest. Second by Tom Crisman and carried.

District	Date	Time	Location
District 1	Saturday, March 22, 2025	9:00 a.m. MST	Crawford Post 138
District 2	Sunday, March 16, 2025	1:00 p.m.	Creighton Community Center
District 3	Saturday, March 15, 2025	8:30 a.m.	Hartington VFW
District 4	Saturday, March 23, 2025	10:00 a.m. MST	Morrill Post 10
District 5	Saturday, March 22, 2025	10:00 a.m.	Lincoln County Fairgrounds
District 6	Saturday, March 8, 2025	9:00 a.m.	Grand Island United Vets Club
District 7	Saturday, March 15, 2025	10:00 a.m.	Columbus Post 84
District 8	Saturday, February 15, 2025	10:00 a.m.	Herman Post 274
District 9	Saturday, March 15, 2025	9:00 a.m.	Red Willow County Fairgrounds
District 10	Saturday, February 8, 2025	10:00 a.m.	Campbell Post 169
District 11	Saturday, March 22, 2025	10:00 a.m.	Fairbury Post 24
District 12	Saturday, March 15, 2025	8:00 a.m.	Lincoln Post 1919
District 13	Saturday, February 15, 2025	9:30 a.m.	Tecumseh Post 2
District 15	Tuesday, February 11, 2025	6:30 p.m.	Lincoln Elks Club

Assistant Adjutant Martin provided an update on Nebraska’s revenue enhancement program participation. The label campaign as of June 13 has brought in just over \$7,511 was collected from the Spring Label program that started on May 10. The lottery mailing donations totaled \$32,996. The gross profits from the lottery minus expenses were \$17,875.00. USAA revenue incentive of \$10,050 was received in September 2023. The Legionnaire Insurance Trust held their annual board meeting and the department received three checks for a total of \$51,052. The check for Nebraska’s member donations that were sent to National has not been received yet. Motion to accept the report by Don Nelson. Second by Adam Schweitzer and carried.

National Executive Committeeman Fred Craigie was introduced for remarks on activities at the National level. He extended greetings from National Commander Daniel Seehafer and the National Headquarters staff. He stated that the number one issue facing veterans is suicide and the Be The One initiative is the top mission for The American Legion. The American Legion priority legislation information can be found on the website. Craigie spoke about the Veterans and Children’s Foundation and the programs that it assists with. He also shared that National Adjutant Daniel Wheeler retired. Motion to accept the report by Bruce Gubser. Second by Burdette Chappell and carried.

Commander Percy gave a brief synopsis of the 2024 membership goals and how close some Posts were to reaching 100% goal.

Commander Percy shared there are 12 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 Brunswick Post 357 had expressed wanting to close. Brunswick and their District Commander had submitted the proper paperwork to be closed. Motion by Robert Neel to accept the cancellation of Brunswick Post 357's charter. Second by Tom Crisman and carried.

Commander Percy stated each District Commander is to turn into 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.

Commander Percy shared that the 2024 American Legion College November 17 – 22, 2024 in Indianapolis. There had been no applications received to date.

Commander Percy stated 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.

Adjutant Salak presented plans for the 2024 National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 23 – 29, 2024. Housing will be at the Hilton Garden Inn, with a room rate of \$173.38. First night deposit is payable with reservation and due July 5. Information was shared regarding dress code, required registration, delegate fee, committee and commission meetings, Nebraska Caucus, 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.

For the good of The American Legion:

Commander Percy had the candidates seeking Department offices address the DEC the opportunity to do so: Boyd Yochum for Commander; Judy Walters for Senior Vice Commander; Michael Sheridan for Area A Vice Commander; John Arias for Area B Vice Commander; Tom Crisman for Area C Vice Commander, John-Henry Percy, Mike Reimers, and Gary Wooten for Alternate NECman, and Jim Costello for NECman.

Commander Percy asked Adjutant Salak to read the convention rules and procedures. Motion to accept the rules by Kelly Hanvey. Second by Adam Schweitzer and carried.

Commander Percy asked Adjutant Salak to go over the District Convention Resolutions. Four resolutions were forwarded to members of the Executive Committee for action to be taken.

Following announcements by Adjutant Salak, the meeting recessed at 4:25 p.m. with a salute to the Colors.

The DEC reconvened at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, June 21, at the Holiday Inn Convention Center. Opening ceremonies included a salute to the Colors and a prayer by Chaplain Alex Borzych.

Commander Percy asked for the following appointment to be approved following conclusion of the convention. Rehab and Employment – Bruce Gubser, 2 years. Motion to approve the appointment by Brendan Moore. Second by Gary Wooten and carried.

Committee reports were given as follows:

Convention Committee Report was given by Chairman Ken Schmid. All members of the committee were present. The committee reviewed upcoming dates for Mid-Year and Convention. The 2025 Mid-Year Conference will be held January 17 – 19, 2025, at the Norfolk Lodge and Suites in Norfolk. The 2025 Department Convention will be held June 26 – 29, 2025, at the Quality Inn in Columbus. The 2026 Mid-Year Conference will be held January 16 – 18, 2026, and the location will be determined at the 2025 Mid-Year Conference. The 2026 Department Convention will be June 24 – 27, 2026, at the Quality Inn in Columbus. Registration fee for all conferences and conventions will be \$10.00. Motion to accept the report by Tom Crisman. Second by Dan Benes and carried.

DEC roll call was taken by Department Adjutant Dave Salak. Present were Commander Percy, Senior Vice Commander Boyd Yochum, Area A Vice Commander Robert Neel, Area B Vice Commander Don Patras, Area C Vice Commander Brendan Moore, Area D Vice Commander Judy Walters, Past Department Commander Gary Wooten, Past Department Commander Dan Benes, Past Department Commander Don Suchy, District 1 Commander Gary Sones, District 2 Vice Commander Kelly Hanvey, District 3 Vice Commander Nick Tramp, District 4 Commander Steve Stanec, District 5 member Richard Colson, District 6 Commander Burdette Burkhart, District 7 Commander Adam Schweitzer, District 8 Commander Richard Klinger, District 9 Commander Ron Wiest, District 10 Commander Don Nelson, District 11 Commander Tom Crisman, and District 15 Commander Bruce Gubser. National representatives in attendance were NEC Fred Craigie and Alternate NEC Jim Costello. Motion to seat District 13 Vice Commander Michael Coffey by Don Suchy. Second by Martin Neal and carried.

Committee reports were given as follows:

Boys' State Committee Report was given by Chairman Doug Boldt. Boldt reported there were 257 boys who graduated from the 2024 Boys' State session. He expressed how much the morning flag raising ceremony meant to everyone in attendance and how important it is for the youth. He stated there were no joint sessions this year due to construction at Kimball Hall. Dr. Jo was the hit of the week yet again. He shared the Samsung winner was Ryder Potts this year. The new Boys' State Governor is Grant Ruma from Fort Calhoun. The 2025 session is scheduled for June 1 – 7, 2025, on the UNL campus. There is currently a working group of counselors who is looking to try and recruit more delegates for Boys' State, get more access to the schools across the state, and reach out to the Posts in the state. The Boys' State Committee has authorized them to start this working group. There will be four counselors attending the Boys' State Conference in Indianapolis in September. Motion to accept the report by Tom Crisman. Second by Adam Schweitzer and carried.

Finance Committee Report was given by Chairman Dan Stramel. Chairman Stramel reviewed the minutes of the May meeting. Items discussed included the investment portfolio, USAA, Legionnaire Insurance Trust, revenue enhancement programs, budget expenditures, charitable donations, the sinking fund, and the comparison between the new and old building. He stated the financial statement has been trending in a good direction this year and the Department is right on track. This was attributed to the building move, but with decreasing membership this will be the continuing trend. Stramel went over the District resolutions and how the Finance Committee voted on them. He gave a presentation on the impact of the dues increase and the downward trend of membership since the last increase. The

committee created a budget to present to the DEC. Motion to accept the report by Tom Crisman. Second by Robert Neel and carried.

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. He shared the Department is yet again doing well but will need to take a disbursement from the investment fund before the end of the year. He presented the proposed budgets for the 2024 - 25 Fiscal Year. Motion to accept the report without approving the budget by Don Nelson. Second by Martin Neal and carried. Motion to approve the budget by Bruce Gubser. Second by Tom Crisman. Discussion was held. Motion by D12 Commander to add a caveat that the budget be adjusted at the Post-DEC meeting depending on what resolutions were approved. Second by Don Patras. The amendment failed. The motion regarding approving the original budget was carried.

Sons of The American Legion Liaison Report was given by Liaison Mike Reimers. He stated the Detachment currently had 165 Squadrons in the Detachment and there were about 6,800 members. He stated there are six Squadrons that have turned in zero members. Reimers read the resolved clauses of the four resolutions that they will be voting on during the Detachment convention. Motion to accept the report by Bruce Gubser. Second by Brendan Moore and carried.

POW/MIA Liaison Report was given by Liaison Boyd Yochum. He shared his articles for the newspaper are centered around the facts about the POW/MIAs from the different war eras. Motion to accept the report by Adam Schweitzer. Second by Tom Crisman and carried.

Homeless Veterans Liaison Report was given by Liaison Bruce Husted. Husted reported the annual stand down was held at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and over 100 homeless veterans were able to participate and receive items and services. Veterans Moving Forward in Sarpy County are assisting homeless veterans with temporary housing and with food and other items. Development Omaha is working to make a Veterans Village to help with homeless veterans housing in Omaha. Motion to accept the report by Burdette Burkhart. Second by Richard Klinger and carried.

Americanism Committee Report was given by Chairman Michael Hatfield. Hatfield reported Dean Chase, Teresa Johnston, Katie Lovelace, and Gabe Skalka were absent. 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. 13 counties held a County Government Program. He discussed the resolutions that were forwarded to their committee. Motion to accept the report by Judy Walters. Second by Dan Benes and carried.

Children & Youth Committee Report was given by Charman Donald Nelsen. Nelsen reported he was the only member present. Nelsen highlighted those Posts who received a certificate in each District for most outstanding report and the ones who received Department awards. Motion to accept the report by Robert Neel. Second by Don Suchy and carried.

Membership Committee Report was given by Chairman Steve Bartos. Chairman Bartos shared that Dave Bruckner and himself were present. They discussed the 2024-25 membership awards. The Early Bird award for 2025 will be five \$200 awards. The hope is to encourage more turn in, in the early months. He stated the Post 500 reports are located on MyLegion.org and that Posts should use this to find members. Bartos addressed the dues increase at the national and department level. He also shared that the three-year renewal was still available through legion.org. Commander Percy

recognized District 1 Commander Gary Sones and its members for reaching 102% membership. They presented Sones with a red blazer to recognize that accomplishment. Motion to accept the report by Bruce Gubser. Second by Tom Crisman and carried.

Publications and Public Relations Committee The committee is currently vacant and there was no report given.

Rehabilitation & Employment Committee Report was given by member Ed Lautrop. He stated that Michael Simmonds and himself were both present at the meeting. They are both County Veteran Service Officers and look forward to doing both with the program. The committee discussed the CPRs that they were given and chose the best in Department in each category. Like other committees, there were not a lot of information in the VA&R section of the CPR. Motion to accept the committee report was made by Burdette Chappell. Second by Brendan Moore and carried.

American Legion Riders Liaison Report was given by Liaison John Arias. He reported Nebraska currently has 57 Chapters with over 1,500 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 State Romp would be held June 28th through 30th in Chadron and the 2024 Nebraska Legacy Run will be July 12th through 14th. Motion to accept the report by Brendan Moore. Second by Burdette Chappell and carried.

Junior Shooting Sports Liaison Report was given by Liaison Doug Frahm. He stated the 33rd Annual American Legion JSSP competition will be held July 20 – 22 in Michigan at Hillsdale College. Nebraska had four clubs that registered for the 2023-24 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. Ashley Carr of the Guns r us 4H sponsored by Alliance Post 7 received the highest score in the Sporter discipline and is the state champion. Sara Thomsen of the Pierce County Shooting Sports 4H sponsored by Pierce Post 72 received the highest score in the Precision discipline and is the state champion. The Pierce County Shooting Sports 4H received the highest score in the team competition and is the state champion. Ashley Carr has been invited to participate at the National Competition. Motion to accept the report by Kelly Hanvey. Second by Richard Klinger and carried.

Scholarship Committee Report was given by Chairman Carroll Mohlman. He stated the scholarship judging took place in April. There were a total of 64 applications for the Maynard Jensen and Boschult scholarships. There were ten \$500.00 Maynard Jensen scholarships and four \$500.00 Boschult scholarships for the 2024 year. He shared that the committee chose Braxton Wentworth of Yutan for the Hurlbert Scholarship. Motion to accept report by Don Patras. Second by Adam Schweitzer and carried.

Department Historian Report was given by Historian Jennifer Laux. She stated that she was working on the 2023 – 2024 Yearbook and it included events from the past year. This year the competition will be submitted electronically. Laux shared that she had been asked to serve as the National Historian for The American Legion. Motion to accept the report by Richard Klinger. Second by Don Suchy and carried.

Department Service Officer Service Officer Levi Bennett was absent.

Commander Percy asked Judge Advocate Harris to review the District Constitution and Bylaw resolutions from the Constitution and Bylaws meeting in April. Motion to accept the report by Martin Neal. Second by Tom Crisman and carried.

Announcements for the Good of the American Legion were made. Adjutant Salak announced that he would be retiring effective June 30, 2025.

Adjutant Salak stated that he had been approached by a hotel to see if the Legion would do a multi-year contract instead of year to year. This was tabled for more study.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m. with a prayer and a salute to the flag.

David Salak
Department Adjutant

APPROVED

**The American Legion
Department of Nebraska
Post-Convention
Department Executive Committee Meeting
Holiday Inn Convention Center – Kearney, Nebraska
June 23, 2024**

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

Following opening ceremonies, DEC roll call was taken by Department Adjutant Dave Salak. Present were Commander Yochum, Senior Vice Commander Judy Walters, Area A Vice Commander Michael Sheridan, Area B Vice Commander John Arias, Area C Vice Commander Tom Crisman, Area D Vice Commander Scott Bell, Past Department Commander Dan Benes, Past Department Commander Don Suchy, Past Department Commander John-Henry Percy, District 1 Commander Gary Sones, District 2 Commander Gerald Bouska, District 3 Commander Nick Tramp, District 4 Commander Kent Holmes, District 5 Commander Geoffery Florum, District 6 Commander Burdette Chappell, District 7 Commander Adam Schweitzer, District 8 Commander Rich Klinger, District 9 Commander Amie Moores, District 10 Commander Chuck Tuttle, District 11 Commander Robert Eyer, District 12 Commander Martin Neal, District 13 Commander Michael Coffey, and District 15 Commander Bruce Gubser. National representatives in attendance were NEC Fred Craigie and Alternate NEC Jim Costello.

A quorum was called by the Department Judge Advocate.

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

Commander Yochum requested approval of the following appointments: Chaplain – vacant; Historian – Jennifer Laux; Judge Advocate – William Harris; Sergeant-at-Arms – Kenneth Schmid; Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms – Gene von Forell; Public Relations Officer – vacant; Finance Officer – Mark Novak; Service Officer – Levi Bennett. Motion to approve by John-Henry Percy. Second by Michael Sheridan and carried.

Commander Yochum noted the Department Adjutant and Assistant Adjutant serve with tenure.

Commander Yochum requested approval of the following committee chairs: Americanism – Michael Hatfield; Athletic – Jody Moeller; Law & Order – Gabe Skalka; Boys' State – Doug Boldt; Children & Youth – Donald Nelsen; Constitution & Bylaws – William Harris; Convention – Rodney Rose; Finance – Daniel Stramel; Membership – Steve Bartos; Oratorical – Michael Landkamer; Publications & PR – vacant; Rehabilitation & Employment – Ed Lautrop; Scholarship – Carroll Mohlman. Motion to approve by Robert Neel. Second by Nick Tramp and carried.

Commander Yochum asked to approve the appointment of Mike Simmonds as the Area D Rehabilitation Committee. Motion to approve the appointment by Tom Crisman. Second by Scott Bell and carried.

Commander Yochum asked for approval of Liaison officers as follows: S.A.L. – Robert Neel; POW/MIA – Boyd Yochum; Junior Shooting Sports – Doug Frahm; Homeless Veterans Task Force – Bruce Husted; County Government Day – Dean Chase; Scouting – Roxanne Sones; and American Legion Riders – Michael Reimers. Motion to approve these appointments by Martin Neel. Second by John Arias and carried.

Commander Yochum shared that the seniority ranking is Area C Commander Tom Crisman, Area D Commander Scott Bell, Area A Commander Michael Sheridan, and Area B Commander John Arias.

Commander Yochum asked SAL Liaison Robert Neel to give a synopsis of the resolutions that were passed so the DEC could ratify them. Resolution #1 Chris Casey as National Vice Commander Candidate – motion to approve the resolution by John-Henry Percy. Second by Martin Neel and carried. Resolution #2 – Change the eligibility dates – motion to approve the resolution by Michael Sheridan. Second by Nick Tramp and carried. Resolution #3 – Change to what committees a DEC member can be on – motion to approve the resolution by Geoffery Florom. Second by Robert Eyer and carried. Resolution #4 – Change of Constitution and Bylaws – motion to adopt by Richard Klinger. Second by Chuck Tuttle and carried. Resolution #5 – Change of Constitution and Bylaws – motion to adopt by Geoffery Florom. Second by Tom Crisman and carried.

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

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

Commander Yochum announced the Department Leadership School and Homecoming would be held August 10th in Ashland. More information will be sent out in the upcoming newsletter and newspaper.

District 12 Commander Martin Neal asked for a point of personal privilege to discuss an organization called the Farmer Veteran Coalition.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. with a prayer and salute to the colors.

David Salak
Department Adjutant