

**The American Legion
Department of Nebraska
Department Executive Committee
Minutes
January 17, 2025
Norfolk Lodge and Suites – Norfolk, Nebraska**

The Department Executive Committee meeting of the Nebraska American Legion was called to order by Department Commander Boyd Yochum at 10:00 a.m. Following a salute to Colors, prayer was offered by Department Chaplain Steve Witmer. 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 Adjutant David Salak. Present were Commander Boyd 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 4 Commander Kent Holmes, District 5 Commander Geoffery Florom, District 6 Commander Burdette Chappell, District 7 Commander Adam Schweitzer, District 9 Commander Amie Moores, District 10 Commander Charles Tuttle, District 12 Commander Martin Neal, and District 15 Commander Ronnie Hindmand. National representatives in attendance were NEC Jim Costello and Alternate NEC John-Henry Percy.

Motion to seat District 3 Vice Commander Gary Davis by Crisman. Second by Bell and carried. Motion to seat District 8 Vice Commander James Carmona by Sheridan. Second by Crisman and carried. Motion to seat District 11 Vice Commander Dave Bruns by Bell. Second by Crisman and carried. Motion to seat District 13 member Larry Borchert by Crisman. Second by Bell and carried.

Department Adjutant Salak declared a quorum and the meeting was declared regularly convened.

Commander Yochum 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 Yochum asked for a motion to approve the DEC minutes from June 2024 and the special meeting September 30, 2024. Motion to approve the minutes by Arias. Second by Chappell and carried.

Commander Yochum distributed the District Dues checks and expressed that they are to be deposited into the District bank accounts – not personal accounts. The next District Dues checks will be distributed in July.

Commander Yochum noted Consolidated Post Reports are due June 1, 2025. He thanked Past Department Commander Percy for his work on them last year. District Commanders and Department officers were asked to lead the way to another 100% performance. He asked the District Commanders to encourage Posts to track their activities and to fill them out with the correct information. He also encouraged the District Commanders to make sure that the Squadrons in their District are turning in their CSRs.

Commander Yochum presented the proposed 2025 District Time and Place. Three changes were made. Motion to accept the revised schedule by Chappell. Second by Bell 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.	Nebraska City Veterans Building
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

Commander Yochum gave the DEC a brief on the National Preliminary Investigation into Department that was held on November 7, 2024. He stated that no correspondence had been received from National since.

Commander Yochum stated the 2025 Department Convention will be held June 26 – 29, 2025, in Columbus. All sessions for the Legion, Auxiliary, and Sons will be conducted at the Quality Inn.

Adjutant Salak shared the Washington Conference would be held February 22 – 26, 2025, at the Washington Hilton.

National Executive Committeeman James Costello was introduced for remarks on activities at the National level. He introduced National Vice Commander James Kellogg of Minnesota. He spoke about the “Be The One” mission, resolutions that had been passed during Fall Meetings, recognized all Nebraska members on National Committees and Commissions, presented Don Suchy with a certificate for his years on the Children and Youth National Committee, and presented Rollie Otte with a resolution appointing him as an honorary member of the Americanism Commission.

Adjutant Salak briefed the 2025 National Convention being held in Tampa, FL, August 22 – 28, 2025.

Adjutant Salak stated all Department officers have been certified to National Headquarters with official documents verifying eligibility in the American Legion.

Adjutant Salak noted that there were no applications for the 2024 National American Legion College. Applications for the 2025 session are due to Department Headquarters by May 15, 2025.

Adjutant Salak provided updates to the new HQs building. The museum is almost completed and is ready for viewing. The seven flag poles in front of the building have been installed. This was financed off the donations from Posts, Units, Squadrons, and individuals. Possibility of an open house for the two-year grand opening in May 2025.

Adjutant Salak provided an update on Nebraska's revenue enhancement program participation as of December 18. The label campaign has brought in just over \$8,496 from the Fall Label program that started on August 1. The lottery mailing donations totaled \$28,520. The final lottery total will be reported at Convention. The 2025 calendar mailing donations totaled \$7,936 and after expenses we netted \$5,262. USAA revenue incentive of \$6,031 was received in August 2024. The Legionnaire Insurance Trust held their annual board meeting, and the department received three checks for a total of \$51,052.

Adjutant Salak stated the 2025 Nebraska Legislative Day would be held January 31 at the State Capitol.

Commander Yochum asked if there were any Post or Squadron cancellations. Adjutant Salak noted there were two this year. Crab Orchard Post 336 had submitted the correct paperwork to have their charter cancelled. Motion to accept the closing of Crab Orchard Post 336 by Tuttle. Second by Chappell and carried. Maxwell Post 181 had submitted the correct paperwork to have their charter cancelled. Motion to accept the closing of Maxwell Post 181 by Florom. Second by Bell and carried. Salak also shared that Havelock Post 342 in District 12, Macy Post 139 in District 3, Scottsbluff Post 5 in District 4, and Lincoln Post 1919 are also in discussion. Commander Yochum asked Neal to brief the Havelock Post 342 discussion. Neal stated that there were four members of Havelock Post 342 that decided to disband the Post and contacted Lincoln Post 1919 about merging with them. The Havelock Post 342 Adjutant and Commander sent letters in September to all Post members in notifying them that they had decided to close the Post and merge with Lincoln Post 1919. Included in the letter was a prefilled data form that members were to sign and send back to the Post for transfer. District 12 officers contacted all members of the Post to work on revitalization instead of disbanding and met with members in multiple monthly meetings. District 12 officers and Department officers met with the Havelock Post 342 members on January 8, 2025, to talk about revitalizing the Post and electing new officers. Members from Post 1919 and Post 3 arrived at the meeting and were told they had no voice or vote at the meeting. The current Adjutant agreed to remain in office and conduct business until the scheduled election in May. Neal stated that the concern with leaving the current officers in place was that they had already disbursed some of the Post funds without approval of the membership and there was concern it could continue to happen. Neal asked that the DEC allow the process of revitalizing and not cancel the Post. Motion to continue to revitalizing Havelock Post 342 by Crisman. Second by Arias and motion was carried unanimously. Neal stated that he would bring an update to the DEC at the Convention, and he appreciated the support and help from Department. Neal stated that the concern of the District is that the current leadership of Post 342 has been influenced by Post 1919 leadership, so the hope is that the Post can revitalize correctly and not be influenced by outside forces. The current Adjutant has also sent in correspondence to Department stating that he no longer wants mail sent to his personal address and that he wants to be the only one to send out letters to the Post membership. He also shared that the DEC does not have the authority to just pull a charter, there has to be an allegation and an investigation prior to any decision. Motion by Florom to censor Sgt-at-Arms Bill Montz, Adjutant Dell Spier, and Finance Officer Thomas Drapak. Second by Tuttle. Discussion was held. It was suggested by Percy and Costello that Neal be added to the Post checking account as a signer to the Post 342 checking account to keep a watchful eye on the spending. Moores recommended that it would be a good thing to elect new officers sooner with how the current officers have been treating members, spending funds, and not following the proper procedures. Neal stated that he believed there was a way to do that, but he needed the final say from the Judge Advocate. PNC Helm stated that he didn't think that censoring was the legal way to keep a member from doing something. He thought that suspension of a member or an officer of the Post would be the better option. Sheridan shared that the same type of event had happened in District 8 previously, but the Department stated it would not get involved and it was a Post matter. He asked the DEC if this is something that they should be getting involved in. Adjutant Salak brought up Article 11 Discipline in the Department Constitution and Bylaws, which states

that the Post members can make a complaint against a member or members of the Post and that the Executive Committee of the Post will then make judgment on the members. Neal stated that he would bring this up to the current membership and that they would take action. A vote on the motion to censor was taken. The motion was rejected. Commander Yochum asked Adjutant Salak to brief the DEC about Macy Post 139. Salak stated that members of Macy Post 139 were upset that veterans with less than honorable discharges were not eligible for The American Legion. Davis stated that he would contact the Post members and talk to them about this issue. Commander Yochum asked Adjutant Salak to brief the DEC about Scottsbluff Post 5. Salak stated that he had received a box of paperwork from the Post Adjutant dated November 27, 2024. Inside was a letter dated March 2023 where the Post members decided to disband the Post. Holmes stated that he would contact the Post members and get their say in the matter and bring his findings to the DEC in June. Commander Yochum asked Neal to brief the DEC about Lincoln Post 1919. Neal provided paperwork from the District 12 DEC that is asking for the investigation of Lincoln Post 1919's charter. Neal provided the sections of the national and department constitution and bylaws that the Post and its officers were not following and he also provided minutes from their DEC meeting on January 15. Neal stated that the process of suspending their charter would require an investigation into Lincoln Post 1919 and the allegations that were submitted and then a decision by the DEC about their status following the investigation. Adjutant Salak reminded the DEC that they have to make their decision if an investigation was warranted based off of the charges that were brought forth by the District. Bruns moved to start an investigation into Lincoln Post 1919 based off of the District 12 allegations. Second by Bell and carried unanimously. Commander Yochum stated that the investigation into Lincoln Post 1919 would begin shortly.

Commander Yochum asked Costello to give a report on the College World Series and the Legion's involvement. He shared that starting in 2025 that the Nebraska American Legion would be the sole sponsor of a team. He suggested that the Commander appoint two liaisons for the program and then they would be in charge of planning and getting involvement. Motion to approve the liaison appointments that the Commander appoints each year by Arias. Second by Tuttle and carried.

Commander Yochum briefed the DEC on NEC Resolution 5-21. Discussion was held regarding how the Nebraska ALR is set up as a Post program, not a Department program, which is why we have a Liaison and not a State Director and the potential changes that could be made. Motion to table the discussion by Arias. Second by Crisman and carried.

Commander Yochum asked for the following appointments to be approved. Athletic – Gary Cullison, 3 years and Robert Neel, 3 years. Motion to approve the appointments by Crisman. Second by Arias and carried. Commander Yochum asked for the following appointment to be approved. Boys' State – Brandon Kreikemeier, 3 years. Motion to approve the appointments by Bell. Second by Florom and carried. Commander Yochum asked for the following appointment to be approved. Department PR Officer Megan Kallina – indefinitely. Motion to approve the appointment by Neal. Second by Arias and carried. Kallina was presented with her Department cover. Commander Yochum stated that the Publications/PR Committee remains vacant.

Recess for lunch.

Commander Yochum asked the Adhoc Adjutant Search Committee Chair Ron Corbett to give his report. Corbett shared that the committee had met in September to create a job description and set the salary and deadlines for applications. They had received five applications, but only one interviewed for the position. After the second interview, the committee decided not to offer him the job due to leadership and managerial skills. He then shared that after the Finance Meeting that Assistant Adjutant Martin

expressed an interest in the position. The committee interviewed him prior to Mid-Year and had extended him an offer of employment conditional on DEC approval. Motion to approve Martin as the Adjutant hire by Crisman. Second by Arias and carried unanimously. Motion to disband the Adhoc Adjutant Search Committee by Chappell. Second by Florom and carried.

Commander Yochum discussed that now there would need to be an Adhoc Assistant Adjutant Search Committee. He asked that the same members be appointed to this committee. Motion to approve Chair Ron Corbett, Jim Costello, Fred Craigie, Don Suchy, as members with Boyd Yochum, Dave Salak, and Eric Martin voice only, by Benes. Second by Arias and carried.

Committee reports were given as follows:

Convention Committee Report given by Chairman Rod Rose. All members of the committee were present. The committee reviewed upcoming dates for Mid-Year and Convention. The 2026 Mid-Year Conference was awarded to Norfolk Lodge and will be held January 16 – 18, 2026. 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. A reminder that the 2025 Department Convention will be held June 25 – 29, 2025, but due to excessive hotel room costs in the bids, the committee asked to rebid the convention. Motion to approve the Norfolk Lodge for 2026 Mid-Year by Sheridan. Second by Arias and carried. Motion to rebid the 2027 Convention by Bell. Second by Crisman and carried. Motion to accept the report by Chappell. Second by Tuttle and carried.

Americanism Committee Report given by Chairman Michael Hatfield. Hatfield reported Dean Chase, Teresa Johnston, Katie Lovelace, and Gabe Skalka were absent. Programs reported on included Oratorical Scholarship Program and the increased scholarships this year, Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Shane Maloley of Steinauer, Firefighter/EMS of the Year Brent Bergstrom of Bellevue, Junior Shooting Sports, and County Government Day had only eleven counties report. Motion to accept the report by Crisman. Second by Schweitzer and carried.

Junior Shooting Sports Liaison Report given by Liaison Doug Frahm. He stated the 34th Annual American Legion JSSP competition will be held July 22 – 27 in Michigan at Hillsdale College. Nebraska had five clubs that registered for the 2024-25 postal match to compete at the National Competition. The 2025 State champions will be determined in the first round of the postal and the second round determined the top scores nationally. The top Nebraska shooter in the Sporter class and the top team will receive trophies provided by the Detachment of Nebraska. Frahm stated that he is now the National Chief Range Officer for the JSSP Program. Motion to accept the report by Tuttle. Second by Chappell and carried.

Boys' State Committee Doug Boldt shared the minutes from the November Boys' State Committee and Boys' State Corporation meetings. He stated that Fred Tisdale had resigned from the committee, and he recognized him for his years of service. He introduced the new committee member Brandon Kreikemeier. He stated that the dates for the 2025 session are June 1 - 7, 2025, and the sponsorship cost will be \$425.00 and then the delegate will need to bring a \$25 registration fee to Boys' State. Boldt asked Kreikemeier to share what the counselors had been doing. He reported that the committee and corporation will be working with Flood Media on a media campaign for Boys' State and getting more interest in the program. He also shared that the counselors had been contacting schools and making connections. Motion to accept the Boys' State Committee report by Bell. Second by Chappell and carried. Motion to accept the Boy's State Corporation report by Chappell. Second by Tuttle and carried.

Children & Youth Committee Report given by Charman Donald Nelsen. Nelsen reported that Greg Smolik and himself were present, and Julie Schnitzler was excused. He shared that the members talked about the yearly citations and how the judging going forward should be stricter. He asked the District Commanders to ensure their Posts are filing out the Children & Youth part of the CPRs. Motion to accept the report by Homes. Second by Suchy and carried.

Membership Committee Report was given by Chairman Steve Bartos. Chairman Bartos shared that Dave Bruckner, Richard Baxter, and himself were present. He also stated that two members from Louisville and NVC Kellogg were at the meeting as well. They discussed the 2025-26 membership awards. The committee discussed the January 15th membership report and discussion on how to reach out to Posts under 75% and those with less than 10 members. The five Early Bird awards for 2025 and the PUFL/DLM award for 2025 will be drawn on Saturday. Motion to accept the report by Florom. Second by Tuttle and carried.

Finance Committee Report was given by Chairman Dan Stramel. He reported that the committee met at Headquarters in December 2024, and Stramel reviewed the highlights of the minutes of their meeting. Stramel also spoke on revenue enhancement, the investment portfolio, and the condensed monthly financial statements. Other topics discussed by the Finance Committee included the building and grounds report, the baseball budget, the Adhoc Department Adjutant Search Committee, a resolution mandating all Posts to have the minimum per capita for their dues, and how frugal the Department Staff have been. Motion to accept the report by Tuttle. Second by Suchy and carried.

Finance Officer Report given by Finance Officer Mark Novak. As of the December 31, 2024, the Department is ahead of the estimated expenses by \$70,193 because of the watchful eyes of Department Headquarters staff. The markets were down this year and the balances as of December 31, 2024, were as follows: PIF \$930,854, Scholarship \$108,980, Hurlbert \$83,957, Past National Commander \$153,358 and Stoldorf \$95,597. Investment funds are expected to generate \$41,000 worth of dividends and interest in the next 12 months. Novak briefed the DEC on the audit that was completed by BMG CPAs. A copy of the audit was provided to all members of the DEC. Motion to accept the report and audit report by Tuttle. Second by Moores and carried.

Scholarship Committee Report given by Chairman Carroll Mohlman. He stated the scholarship judging took place in April 2024. There were ten \$500.00 Maynard Jensen scholarships and five \$500.00 Boschult scholarships for the year 2024. He shared that the committee chose Andrew Brosius of North Platte for the Hurlbert Scholarship. Motion to accept report by Bruns. Second by Florom and carried.

POW/MIA Liaison Report 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 and mainly Nebraska. Motion to accept the report by Sheridan. Second by Florom and carried.

Sons of The American Legion Liaison Report given by Liaison Robert Neel. He shared the Detachment currently had 162 Squadrons in the Detachment, there are about 6,800 members, and there are 25 Squadrons at 100% or higher membership. He stated that the Detachment is having quarterly calls. He asked all District Commanders to contact those Squadrons that are at 0 paid members. He stated that all groups needed to remember to follow their governing documents for discipline. The Sons members will be holding a fundraiser Saturday evening. Motion to accept the report by Sheridan. Second by Moores and carried.

Athletic Committee Report given by Chairman Jody Moeller. He shared that 272 teams were registered in 2024, which is ranked number two nationwide, and that there were 49 tournaments held for the different classes. He stated that Legion Baseball continues to lose players to travel ball and other leagues and that it is up to the coaches and teams to show the value of Legion Baseball to all players. He shared that the Athletic Committee had voted unanimously to not extend an invitation to Lincoln Post 1919 for their Legion Baseball team because of the attacks on the NALB program and teams and coaches in Lincoln. He also shared that there is a Facebook page that is continually attacking coaches, parents, sponsors, and programs in the Lincoln area and is poaching players from Legion Baseball programs. Motion to accept the report by Neal. Second by Florom and carried. Moeller then read the letter from the Athletic Committee to Lincoln Post 1919 which would not invite them to host teams this year. Motion to approve the letter drafted by the Athletic Committee and send it to Post 1919 by Crisman. Second by Neal and carried.

Department Historian Report given by Historian Jennifer Laux. She stated that she had turned in the 2023 – 24 Yearbook and it placed third overall. She shared that she had attended the National Convention in New Orleans and was installed as the National Historian. She reported that the last Post History Contest was held at Fall Meetings and that she would be sharing more information at her training. Laux shared that she would be turning the website over to Headquarters in the next few months and would be stepping down as the Department Historian. Motion to accept the report by Suchy. Second by Moores and carried.

American Legion Riders Liaison Report given by Liaison Michael Reimers. He reported that there are 40 Chapters in Nebraska and the Riders had been busy with fundraisers, escorts, poker runs, and other events. The dates for the State Romp will be decided at the Saturday ALR meeting. Motion to accept the report by Sheridan. Second by Schweitzer and carried.

Rehabilitation & Employment Committee Chairman Lautrup was excused, Service Officer Levi Bennett was excused, Homeless Veterans Liaison Bruce Husted was absent.

Publications and Public Relations Committee remains vacant.

For the good of The American Legion:

Alternate NEC Percy brought to the attention of the DEC the Dole Act.

Commander Yochum had the candidates seeking Department offices address the DEC: Judy Walters for Commander; Doug Frahm for Senior Vice Commander; and Martin Neal for Area C Vice Commander.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m. with a prayer and a salute to the flag.

David Salak
Department Adjutant