THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA, INC.

******

SECOND DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (DEC) MEETING

MUSTANG TOWN CENTER, 1201 NORTH MUSTANG ROAD

MUSTANG, OKLAHOMA 73064

OCTOBER 11, 2025

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(Meeting called to order at 10:00 hours.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: The meeting will come to order. Please rise for the Colors.

I would like to remind everyone to please address the Chair to be recognized to speak and to state your name, post, and position for the recorder, please. Please silence your cell phones for the meeting. Thank you.

With the Colors of our nation in place, Sergeant-at-Arms.

INTERIM SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Hand Salute. Two.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All members and guests in attendance shall remain standing with their cap removed and placed over their heart for the Pledge of Allegiance, Opening Prayer, and throughout the POW/MIA Ceremony.

Please join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

(WHEREUPON, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Chaplain?

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Please bow.

Heavenly Father, we ask that you bless us as we gather today to discuss important business. We ask that you give us wisdom to make correct decisions that help veterans across the state and honor your name.

We ask also that you watch over those in the military who are deployed oversees in harm's way and bring them home safely to their families.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

COLLECTIVE GROUP: Amen.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: The POW/MIA empty chair and cover did not make their way to the meeting, but Resolution 288, adopted at the Legion's 67th National Convention, calls for a designation of an empty chair at all official American Legion meetings as a continual symbol of the thousands of POWs and MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America; and the cause for which we stand, namely the reparation of remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty or a full accounting of those still missing. Accordingly, at this time, the POW/MIA flag that is not present will be as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity.

Let us pause and observe a moment of silence as we rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor.

(WHEREUPON, a moment of silence was observed by all.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please re-cover.

Join me in reciting the Preamble to the Constitution

of the American Legion.

(WHEREUPON, the Preamble of the American Legion Constitution was recited by all.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please be seated.

I now declare the second regularly scheduled meeting of the Department Executive Committee for the '25-'26 administrative year convened for whatever business that comes before us.

At this time, do I have any newly elected officers that were not sworn in as part of the DEC in DEC 1?

Seeing none, we will go to the role call. Adjutant will now call the roll.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Senior Vice Commander Shirley May.

DEPARTMENT SENIOR VC MAY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Vice Commander East Karen Cruice.

DEPARTMENT VC EAST CRUICE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Vice Commander West Lance Larson.

DEPARTMENT VC WEST LARSON: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Department Judge Advocate Dale Haynes.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Department

Treasurer Sam McPherson.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Department Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Lager. Ed Lager. Ed lager.

Department NECman Charles O'Leary.

DEPARTMENT NEC O'LEARY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 1A District Commander Karen Ritter.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 1B District Commander Andrew Fisher.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 1A DEC Rep Debbie Gordon.

DEC REP GORDON: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 1B DEC Rep Ron Bunch.

DEC REP BUNCH: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 2A District Commander Kayla Rector.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RECTOR: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 2A DEC Rep Jim Quinn. Jim Quinn. Jim Quinn.

2B District Commander I show is vacant.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That is correct.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 2B DEC Rep Curtis Deer.

DEC REP DEER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 3A District Commander Gary Pierson.

DISTRICT COMMANDER PIERSON: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 3A DEC Rep David Seyler.

DEC REP SEYLER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 3B District Commander Jack Sikes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 3B DEC Rep James Akin.

DEC REP AKIN: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 4 District Commander Thomas Snodgrass.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SNODGRASS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 4 DEC Rep John Bloxom is excused.

5A District Commander Mike Harris.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 5A DEC Rep Melvin Hopkins.

DEC REP HOPKINS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 5B District Commander Eric Grubbs.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 5B DEC Rep Danny Thomas.

DEC REP THOMAS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 6A District Commander Grant Brower.

DISTRICT COMMANDER BROWER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 6A DEC Rep Don Kuntze.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 6B District Commander James Rees is excused. In his place is John...

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: First Vice Commander John McNeal. Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I know John's last name.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 6B DEC Rep Larry Watson. Larry Watson. Larry Watson.

District 7 Commander Elmo May.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 7 DEC Rep Doug Hale.

DEC REP HALE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 8A District Commander Joseph Kingery.

DISTRICT COMMANDER KINGERY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 8A DEC Rep Tina Kilmer.

DEC REP KILMER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 8B District Commander Wayne Flowers. Wayne Flowers. Wayne Flowers.

8B DEC Rep Jack Day. Jack Day.

Commander, after having called the role, I find there are 28 voting members of the DEC panel. A minimum of 20 members is needed for a quorum.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I now declare a quorum present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: The following personnel are non-voting members of the DEC who still have the right to voice.

Detachment Commander SAL Chris Sherbourne.

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Director of the American Legion Riders of Oklahoma Brett Martin.

DIRECTOR OF ALR MARTIN: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Department Adjutant Rick Redden, present.

Department Historian Wayne Flowers.

Department Chaplain Bobby Stewart is excused.

Alternate NECman Michael Taylor.

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Department Surgeon John Loose.

DEPARTMENT SURGEON LOOSE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Are there any past department commanders? Please announce yourself.

PDC O'LEARY: Charlie O'Leary, Post 142, Hominy.

PDC KUNTZE: Don Kuntze, Post 353, Mustang.

PDC WOODS: Hayden Woods, Post 39, Durant, Oklahoma.

PDC TAYLOR: Michael Taylor, Post 12.

PDC MARTIN: Brett Martin, Post 12.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: That completes the calling of the roll, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

Go briefly out of order, as our honor chair cover has arrived. If everybody will please rise and uncover.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please place the chair cover.

(WHEREUPON, the POW/MIA chair cover was placed.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please re-cover and be seated.

All right. So the adjutant will now read the

transcript of the last DEC meeting, which was actually administrative years '24-'25 DEC 5's minutes, unless there is a motion to accept and approve the minutes without the requiring of a reading.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Commander? John McNeal, 6B First Vice. I move that the minutes be accepted as presented to the membership.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

DEC REP GORDON: I have a correction, but we could do that after. Debbie Gordon, DEC 1A.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: During discussion.

DEC REP GORDON: After we vote to approve them?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: No. After I have a first and a second.

I have a first.

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 2B DEC. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I have a first from John McNeal, a second from Curtis Deer.

Any discussion?

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, DEC 1A.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please stand.

DEC REP GORDON: I brought this up at the special session we had and brought it to Rick's attention. But there's a major error by missing one word, or whatever -- I think it was page 86. I gave Rick

a copy of it at the special DEC -- where Judge Haynes was talking about the NEC, once he became a national commander of NEC, he did not lose his rights to be an Oklahoma Legionnaire. And the word "not" was left out. Something was left out or put in. I don't remember which way it went, but it changed the complete meaning of the word -- of the sentence.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Adjutant Rick Redden.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: The word "not" was absent. Instead of saying "does not," it simply says "does." I have corrected the written copy of that transcript of that meeting. And it was signed by me and by the commander.

DEC REP GORDON: Thank you.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yes, sir?

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: The motion will be minutes as corrected, sir. So noted.

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer. I accept the second, as corrected.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any further discussion?

Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

All right. The adjutant will now read the transcript to DEC '25-'26 DEC 1, unless there is a motion to accept and approve the minutes without the requirement of the reading.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo May, District 7 Commander. I make a motion we approve the minutes as presented.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a motion on the floor.

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, DEC. Second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion from Elmo. Second from Mr. Deer.

Any discussion?

Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

The adjutant will now read the minutes from '25-'26 Special DEC transcript to the last DEC, unless there is a

motion to accept and approve the minutes without the requirement of the reading.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Commander, Mike Harris, District 5A Commander. When these minutes were sent out, there was a two-page document for that special DEC meeting on August 16th.

How are we going to know what the minutes of what was discussed if there's no minutes?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Those are the minutes to that meeting. That was a very short meeting, one subject only.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That was a special DEC. There was no --

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Transcript.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: -- transcript, court reporter. So that was basically the minutes to reflect what was discussed in that special DEC.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Well, I do have a concern that a subject came up with the building fund, and the building fund --

DEPARTMENT PARLIAMENTARIAN RECTOR: Point of order, Commander. To have discussion about a subject -- sorry. Tyler Rector, Department Parliamentarian. To have discussion about a subject, there first must be a motion and a second to go into discussing a subject.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I will entertain a motion to approve.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: I will make the motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a motion on the floor to approve the minutes as written -- or, as presented.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: Andrew Fisher, District 1B. Second the motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I have a motion from Mr. Harris, a second from Mr. Fisher.

Any discussion?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Yes.

Mike Harris, District 5A Commander. Since I wasn't here, and I got some information that the discussion of the building fund was brought up, and the building fund dollars was, I was told, was reduced from the $135,000 that was supposed to go to a building fund, and it was brought up by somebody in the Northeast -- I think it was DEC Jim Quinn -- and I was told that that money was approved to be taken away from that $135,000, and that, in my opinion, is totally incorrect, and that 100 percent dollar amount should stay in the building fund.

Because what happens if Post 135, even though it's not going to be Post 135, decides to open another post in

Tahlequah and they want that money back and it's not there?

We need to make sure that building fund stays at the dollar amount that was, I hope, put into a savings account to start drawing interest for this department.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Adjutant Redden.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Point of order. This motion is to approve the minutes to the special DEC, and the discussion should be limited to that.

Mike's point is well taken. It should be brought up at a different time, potentially, but not during the approval of the minutes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: The minutes are not correct if it's not in there.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Again, the DEC Special was a single subject. Conversations about other topics were not necessarily germane to that single subject of approval of the budget. I'm not saying it's not important, but just not an issue for this particular subject, the approval of minutes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yes, Ms. Gordon?

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, DEC 1A.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please stand up.

DEC REP GORDON: "Not" is going to be the word of the day today. On page three of the minutes, it says

Commander Thomas announced, under Unfinished Business, "We will not turn to the sole topic of this special meeting."

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: That's a typo. It's "now."

DEC REP GORDON: And it's supposed to be "now."

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Yeah. I will fix it. Thank you.

DEC REP GORDON: Okay.

Aren't y'all glad I didn't read the minutes for the...

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I don't know which one of you stood up first.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: I think it was a tie.

Mike Harris, District Commander 5A. I withdraw my motion for my subject for discussion until a later time.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

Does that address yours?

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. I was just going to say I was in that meeting, and we did not approve taking that money out of that, Mike. So I don't know who told you that, but that did not happen.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. Any

further discussion?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Can you restate your motion with the correction, the grammatical correction, please?

DEC REP CURTIS: I did the second one.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I'm sorry. Who did the --

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Mike.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I'm sorry. Can you amend your motion to account for the grammatical error or correction.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District 5A Commander, I amend my motion to include the grammatical error that was corrected to the minutes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: I did the second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Sorry.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: District Commander, District 1B Commander. I second the change.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Hearing no further discussion, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

We will now receive reports from the department officers, and I will take the privilege of going last.

So, Senior Vice May.

DEPARTMENT SENIOR VC MAY: All right. I just want to take a minute to congratulate you all on such a good job that you're doing for membership. We are at 59.89 for our 60 percent goal for Oklahoma. Now, we have surpassed the national goal of 60 percent and we're working towards 65 right now. So good job. Keep it up.

Renewals look great. That is the one thing that I think we can still work on just a little bit is maybe get some more of our renewals in there.

But y'all are doing a fantastic job. So I'm proud of you. Keep it up.

That's all I have.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Vice East Karen Cruice.

DEPARTMENT VC EAST CRUICE: Thank you.

So, for the east side, what we've been concentrating on is our pillars, just looking forward.

Know that National offers handouts that we can give to our elementary schools on Halloween safety, which is on our CPR.

And then, start making plans with your posts and

encourage them to have plans for Veterans Day. There will be e-mails coming out.

And then, I also want to say that we were invited to a Be the One walk on the west side this last weekend. It was amazing. If you're not doing one, you should talk to your posts. It was two hours. It was well run. The community was very receptive to it. It was a wonderful idea.

Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Vice West, Mr. Larson.

DEPARTMENT VC WEST LARSON: Okay. I'd like to tell all my district commanders in the west congratulations. Y'all are doing a great job.

Joe Kingery, congratulations. You hit 60 percent.

Where's Elmo May?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: (Raised hand.)

DEPARTMENT VC WEST LARSON: There you are. Stand up.

This guy here is already over 70 percent.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT VC WEST LARSON: We've got five out of the seven districts over 60 percent, and the other two districts, one of them's within two and a half percent; the other one's within four percent.

I just want to say thank you, guys. You make a -- you make a vice west commander look good. I appreciate it.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: NEC O'Leary.

DEPARTMENT NEC O'LEARY: Greetings, everyone. I bring you greetings from our new National Commander Dan Wiley. And his motto for the upcoming year is "Better together," that we all work together.

He has some priorities. The first one is betheone.org. You can get information there at the post and the individual level. Participate in the Columbia Protocol training, and eliminate the stigma.

He relayed a personal event that happened to him when he was fresh out of law school and involved in a difficult case, and his senior partners got ill, and he had to take the case himself. It was very difficult, and he found himself taking antidepressants. So he shared that personal information to avoid the stigma. It's okay to not be okay. Just take the second step to seek help.

"Better together," the American Legion family, with posts, units, squadrons, and chapters working together, in our model, among all of us, should be "We've got your back. We've got your six."

A big event right now with the government shutdown is the legislative agenda. Go to legion.org/action and encourage our congress people to get back to work. Now, actually, he wasn't talking to the Oklahoma delegation because they already are, but mainly to the Legionnaires from California and New York and other places that haven't been doing that.

He has the three C's:

Communication: What methods you use;

Community: What is your post known for? If I go to Sayre, America, I can say, "What does the Legion do here?" They'll say, "Oh, yeah." They always have a Veterans Day ceremony. They have barbecues. They have bingo, and they have other things;

Camaraderie: Buddy checks, especially during the week of Veterans Day and the week of the Legion's birthday on March 15th.

The Veteran & Children Foundation, very important.

Accredited VSO training: We've come up. We clarified a bunch of issues at the fall meetings here. We'll go over those later.

Temporary financial assistance with storms and Mother Nature disasters.

And the new program for this year is America 250, legion.org/usa250-challenge [sic]. Try and do 250 hours

of community service, 250 steps, walk or jog 250 miles, 250 of some event during this year to commemorate our 250th anniversary.

And the final word: We had one of our resolutions make it all the way to National for the Americanism Committee from Post 111, with the Scouts, that there be a gender-specific, because Scouts are now boys and girls, in the room whenever you have any dealings with a Scout. That was approved at Department level as part of your protocols but rejected at National because they already have it. The problem is we haven't found it yet. I got back at seven o'clock last night. So we will contact National and get the location of where that is and get that to you.

Thank you very much.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, NECman.

Alternate NEC Michael Taylor.

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: Good morning.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Good morning.

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: At Fall Conference, one of the groups that gets together is the Convention Committee, and they narrowed that down to the 2032 visit that Oklahoma City will be bidding for, Spokane, Washington, and Reno, Nevada. So, in May, we'll

have a contingency from the Oklahoma Convention Bureau go up and present.

Between now and May, some of the Convention Committee will be visiting the Oklahoma City area, checking the hotels, convention halls, and there will be a small group that the Commander decides who will tag along with him all day.

The last trip, it was pretty hard and heavy because they go to every hotel, and they walk the convention halls. So have your walking shoes on if you're on that committee.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Rent a scooter.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: Over this fall training, there was mention of regional trainings, which are one-day trainings in similar locations here. Indianapolis will have a one-day training in January.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: January 31st.

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: Thirty-first.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: And then Atlanta in May?

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: Oh, you're going, too?

Atlanta, Georgia, is February 7th.

And then some regional areas for the Auxiliary include Albany, New York; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Las Vegas, Nevada. So, if any Auxiliary folks want to go to those locations for training, it's a one-day event, easy to fly into.

And at this time, that is my report, unless anybody has any questions.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Yes, sir.

Jack Sikes, 3B. Can we get that schedule posted on the website?

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: Sure. It's on the National website. We'll get some stuff forwarded to Rick so he can add that to the --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Michael Kerr just nodded it will be on there.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Thank you.

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: I'll go chat with him.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Veterans Commissioner Brett Martin.

DEPARTMENT REP TO OVC MARTIN: Good morning, everyone.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Good morning.

DEPARTMENT REP TO OVA MARTIN: I want to share with you where we stand in Oklahoma on the State of Oklahoma Veterans Foundation. This foundation is an effort that will transform how we support our veterans and their families.

The big milestones as of today are:

Back in April, SB530 was signed by Governor Stitt, putting it into law.

May 29th of this past year, IRS issued us our EIN number. The State of Oklahoma issued both of our certificates of registration and certificates of incorporation as a nonprofit.

This past August 13th, IRS granted our official nonprofit status.

We are now finalizing the by-laws as well as the constitution, and at the November 7th meeting in Lawton, we will vote on those. If you want to come to one of the Commission meetings, be in Lawton on the 7th of November. The meeting starts at ten o'clock.

The mission envisioned, the mission of this foundation, is to strengthen the lives of Oklahoma veterans and their families by supplementing and expanding programs of ODVA and our veteran-serving nonprofits, going beyond the limits of state funding. Because let's be brutally honest. State funding doesn't

get us there. At times, it doesn't get us even close. And this will be the bridge or the pathway to fill that gap.

The vision of the future: Where every Oklahoma veteran and their family thrives with dignity, opportunity, and unwavering support; a future where no veteran in Oklahoma is left behind and sacrifices are honored in ways that last and make a meaningful impact on that family.

The core values are service - meeting needs with passion and integrity; collaboration - partnering to amplify the impact; stewardship - transparent, responsible, and resources used wisely; innovation - adapting to evolving needs; equity - ensuring equal access for all veterans.

As we look forward, the momentum is strong. I've had four or five donors come up to me and ask, "When can we write you a check?" And if their words are good, the minute we start accepting checks, we'll have five million in our bank account overnight.

So why is this important? You finally have a veterans commission that looks on Photo Opp. This is huge. No other state is doing this. Since we've put ours into play, there are three other states trying to get their nonprofits started.

At the end of the day when this is up and running, we envision, based on some conversations that we've had with people who do this, that there will be a revolving fund of 20-plus million dollars in that. Think of the good that can do, not only for our veterans' homes, but for veterans in times of crisis.

So get the word out on this. Post this on your site. This is a big deal. It really is a big deal.

And the Commission is leaning forward and hard.

Now, you might have heard one other thing, and then I'll get off the stage. We've made lots of cuts. We've fired a lot of people. That's not a bad thing. If you're not doing the job, and you're getting the paycheck, why are you there? We had people in homes who, on an eight-hour shift, might have worked an hour. There was a little bit of an Attila the Hun attitude for a while there, but the ship is righted. The ship is back on course, and the ship is picking up speed because of the visionary leadership of Bynum, the new director, and the Commission.

Commander, that's my report, subject to any questions.

Jackie?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Jack Sikes, 3B.

Are you prepared to talk about the 501(c)(3) ODVA

has generated for the indigent veterans?

DEPARTMENT REP TO OVC MARTIN: Not at this point, Jackie. I will at the next meeting. Because there's just too many unknowns right now to put anything out.

But I will share this: We are working very hard right now, ODVA, based on an initiative -- I and Lisa Acevedo, who is the director of services -- where we do a joint opportunity with the American Legion veteran service officers. And this could be game changing how we do business.

And I am going to let this out of the bag, Jackie: We are in the process of writing our own software to do claims and stuff. Now, how will this affect the Oklahoma American Legion? If we get grandfathered in, we will get the same software, and the price will be nothing. So more to follow on that.

No other questions?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT REP TO OVC MARTIN: Commander, I'll get off the stage.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir. Stay close.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Judge Advocate

Dale Haynes.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: You'll notice on page ten of that packet I do have a recommendation on the confidentiality statement. It's my understanding we do not make motions during reports. So, therefore, we'll table that (indiscernible).

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Can't hear you, Dale.

DEC REP KUNTZE: A little bit louder, please, Dale.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I'm sorry?

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: We can't hear you.

DEC REP KUNTZE: She can't hear you.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. If you'll notice on page ten of your packet there, there is a recommendation that I'm making on our confidentiality statement. Since we do not do motions during reports, we'll table that until we get to the Good of the Legion.

I've also got another issue for Good of the Legion, and something for the executive session.

Other than that, I have no other reports.

Are there any questions?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: I do have some cards on the back table. If you don't know how to get ahold of

me, pick up a card.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Finance Officer, Mr. Sam McPherson.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Thank you, Commander.

First of all, I don't know if I'm stepping on the adjutant or not, but I want to sing some of his praises. Because of past auditors and trying to do our taxes has not gone through how they were supposed to, some of our taxes got filed late, and we were assessed a pretty large penalty. He wrote a letter explaining the situation, and we just received a refund for that penalty that we paid. So, it was, like I said, if I remember right, $6,000 or $7,000. So he got that done for us.

(Applause.)

Also, we had not received a payment from Mr. Kellerman for a period of time. We went back and traced it. The only thing we can figure out is when we did our change of address that may not be something that the courts take from the post office. So he spent long hours on the telephone trying to get to the right person and finally contacted the right person.

And if remember right, we got a check between $4,000 and $5,000 from the courts because they've been collecting it from Mr. Kellerman all this time. And we

have also received regular payments since then of, I believe, about $150. So it should be about $150 a month. But we receive a check for the amount that they had collected and not distributed, between $4,000 to $5,000.

So, thank you, Mr. Adjutant, for taking that on.

I know sometimes I'm preaching to the choir. Membership is always a big issue because that drives our funding and everything else, but we also have to look at alternate funding. Nothing should necessarily be off the table. All ideas should come forward. We do have a fundraising committee. So any fundraising ideas you have, please send those forward.

The 501(c)(3), we're going to get a report on that later. I said when we started I wish we would have started two years sooner. I didn't realize it was going to take us almost three years to get it up and running.

So hopefully those fundraising ideas and the 501(c)(3), hopefully, that will help us alleviate our funding issues, because our funding has been going down every year, which means we have to --

We've already changed, fundamentally, how we do business from National on down. Everything's electronic. Even though we still use a lot of paper, we don't use near as much paper. We don't do near as many mailings as we used to. So that's already changed. We don't have

Department vehicles now, which, you know, if we get the funding, we would like to have that in the future, but as funding goes down, we have to make cuts, and that's just the brutal reality of it. And so, hopefully, with fundraising and the 501(c)(3), we can solve our funding problems.

I'm sorry we did not have our quarterly reports ready. The senior leadership has been gone for the last week, and some of our reports coming in didn't quite get to us in the time we thought they would, and we just didn't have time to put that document together before this meeting.

In our regular operational account, we have $28,000. We also have $138,000 in the building fund. And as far as I know -- I can't remember the discussions or, possibly, the sidebars that were happening, but this body would have to have a motion, a second, and a discussion to spend any of that money of that $138,000.

That is also not all Post 135 money. That came from the old 135 post and the Spavinaw Post. I'm not sure of the exact split. I can look that up if we need it, but that was from two different posts, not just from Post 135.

And I believe that's all I have, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you very

much.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Yes, sir?

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. Do I understand we're going to get financial reports in the near future? Is that fair?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Yes. As soon as we can get them assembled, we'll have the first quarterly report.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: And you'll send them all out to the DEC; right?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Send them all out to the DEC, yes.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Thank you.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Yes, sir?

DEC REP WATSON: Larry Watson, 6B.

Sam, you mentioned the building fund. Have we made any progress on converting those funds to money market or CDs?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: We're still in the process of that. We have basically done everything but sign the final paperwork on it. Because certain ideas were brought forth, and we explored those. We went to ROGER's. They say they really don't do that. We could have gone with Citizens Bank in Edmond, but that amount was considerably less than what people had said.

And so, the high-yield savings is not as much as a CD, so it would be better for us to go to, like, 90-day CDs. That way we wouldn't tie it up for that long, and we'd still get a decent return.

So we just need to -- basically, we have to take all the top, the adjutant, Commander, Senior Vice, and the treasurer, all over to sign. Even though it's all in the same bank, they have to have everybody to come and sign for a CD. I don't know why it takes all that paperwork, but we just have to execute that.

DEC REP WATSON: Do you have a projection on that?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Soon.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Soon. The next time all four people are in the office, which might be next Wednesday. I don't know. But, yes, very soon. Before the end of the month, definitely, if not the next week.

DEC REP WATSON: Thanks.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: No problem.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: John McNeal, 6B First Vice. I'm a little confused, but I'm getting better because of what you said. That $138,000 has caused some confusion in some minds. Some folks are saying that we don't have a building fund. Some folks say that there

were funds, in the building, that were moved into an account. So there was some terminology differences.

So can I leave here today from this DEC knowing that we have $138,000 in a reservation kind of status called "the building fund"?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Yes. It's not -- until we get the CD, it's not --

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Forget about the interest, just that --

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Yes.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: That's a true statement?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Yes, it is.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: I am so happy. Thank you, sir.

And Jim Rees will be ectatic.

(Laughter.)

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Thank you, John.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Yes, sir.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Thank you very much.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

Detachment Commander Chris Sherbourne.

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: Good morning, family. How is everybody doing this morning?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Good morning.

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: Thank you for allowing me to be here today.

Real quick, I'll hit our membership. Currently, as of the 15th, it's 25 percent. We're at 29.81. We're approximately 107 members ahead of where we were last year. And guess what? We ended up number one last year. So expect us to be number one this year as well, but that's only done by you, by our members.

(Applause.)

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: That has nothing to do with me or anybody else sitting up here. That has to do with our members. So go back and let your members know thank you for their hard work in helping us reach that milestone in the Detachment of Oklahoma.

On March 13th and 14th, we will be going to Omaha, Nebraska, for our first regional training. The Midwest region is going to be the first one to do this. We're going to do a regional training and bring members in from all over the region for a regional training at a National level. That will be in Omaha, hosted by the Benson post there.

Neal Warnken, Past National Commander, Sons of the American Legion, has been named director of Junior Shooting Sports for the American Legion. So, for the

first time, a past national commander of the Sons of the American Legion is director of a Legion national program. So that's great for us. That just shows how the family's growing, how everything's fitting together, working together in the family.

So, just for transparency, currently in the bank account for the Sons there's $28,396.65. Currently, we have not put any funds in there from this year's, 2026, membership investment. So it does show on our balance sheet that we are negative at the moment, but that's just because that money has not been transferred over to the account. That would be included. We sent all of our stuff to Sam to include in his report when he sends it out so it will all be there, and there will be a line plus a profit-loss report.

So let's get away from all that stuff. Let's get to something I really like to do. So, this morning when I walked in here --

Scott, you'll need to come up here, too, because you didn't sign this, sir.

Commander, I'll need you as well.

So, this morning, I was handed a new squadron charter to charter a new squadron out of Clayton, Oklahoma, District 3. It will be squadron number 68. We have the endorsement sheets, the

application, and the ten names.

Scott, you will need to sign and date this.

And, Mr. Commander, you will need to sign and date this.

And then Mr. Adjutant will get this off to National for us.

I'll buy you lunch.

(Laughter.)

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: We'll get it off to National for us. This will be our first one. We have seven in the works. This will be the first one signed this year.

(Applause.)

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: So, if we get to five squadrons again, we meet our 100 percent by May 15th and we get our 95 percent retention, guess what? We get our triple nickle award again. We got our first one last year. These are the first steps to that. That's not because of me. That's because of you.

Okay. Sir, if you will, date and sign right there.

(Complied.)

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: Mr. Commander, if you will, date and sign right there, sir.

(Complied.)

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: And I will hand this to you. I e-mailed you the list of the charter members.

Scott, thank you for your hard work on this. I appreciate it.

One last thing. Went to NEC last week, to National. Had a great time when we were up there. There's good things coming down the pipe that we'll be putting out soon.

The last thing I want to hit on is the detachment fundraiser for this year. I've got a little snafu that the adjutant's going to help me with, but the Detachment of Oklahoma --

How many of you have been to National Convention? Let me ask you that first.

(Hands raised.)

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: It's expensive; right? How would you like to have some help with that?

(Hands raised.)

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: So the detachment, we're going to have $20 tickets. If you win, you get a four-night stay at the hotel that the national headquarters puts Oklahoma in as well as $1,000 cash. There is a bunch of disclosures on the bottom of that,

that we're not responsible for any incidents, accidents, or your travel there. You can either take the four nights and the $1,000, or you can take $1,300 cash in lieu of the four nights and the $1,000.

We will have that out, hopefully, by the end of the week next week. We will be selling these nationally. It won't just be in Oklahoma, because it will all be done through a QR code and all digitally.

So that is my report, Mr. Commander. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, Commander.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: ALR Director Brett Martin.

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Let's talk Riders for a minute. Very much like the Sons, the Riders are picking up. As we stand here today, we've got 84 members. We've had two Zoom call meetings. We are fully staffed on the officer positions for the first time. We have three posts who are considering charters: Clinton, Enid, and Bartlesville. Things are good. As of today, we've raised over $4,800 already for the Veterans & Children Welfare Foundation. That's pretty good; right?

(Applause.)

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Yeah, I think so. If you've seen some of the posts, the Riders have been very, very active.

We've got a thing with a World War I veteran, C.L. Daniel, in Tulsa that just keeps dragging on because a lot of reasons, but hopefully it will come to some fruition later this coming week.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Yeah, I know we are, Commander.

And then we can escort him back to Georgia.

But here's where I'm asking for help from everyone here and the Sons and the Auxiliary unit as well:

Right now Post 308's Dave Stadler is the new road captain and chairman of the In-State Legacy Run. Oklahoma needs to do an In-State Legacy Run like states like Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri do, where at the end of the run they put $10,000 to $15,000 in the bank.

Our goal for this year is $15,000, and we've got another raffle going on right now for another shotgun up at Post 308. We're almost at $5,000, and we're not even at the end of October. With the Legion's help, the posts' help, the Auxiliary, and the Sons, we can make 15,000 easily, but we can't do it alone.

And the overall people joining the Riders is just

fantastic. And why is that? Transparency and communication.

Together we'll get there.

Are there any questions?

Commander, that's my report.

John?

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: John McNeal, 6B First Vice. Those posts that are wishing to help by way of donation --

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: The three posts that I talked about, they've got the paperwork to start their own charters.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: He's asking for posts that don't have, how they would --

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Yes. You would donate it, John. Absolutely.

And as soon as we figure out the route for the In-State Legacy Run this year, we will get it out.

But, yes, any post can donate. And I'll put something out and have it put on the department's website.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Last question: Is it possible for a member of a post to be an associate member of a post that has Riders?

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Yes.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: You buying a bike, John?

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: No, sir. You will never see that.

(Laughter.)

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Mike Harris?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District 5A Commander.

John, restate your question.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: A member of, for example, Post 306 that doesn't have a Riders group, may they be an associate member of a post that does have one?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Are you saying --

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Associate Rider.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: -- can they be a Rider?

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Yes, sir.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MCNEAL: They need to join a chapter that is associated with a post.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That's what he was asking.

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Yes.

John, so, yes, you can be on --

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Let me clarify that, because the man standing right up there is a prime example. He is a member of Post 12, but he is also a member of chapter 1340 because Post 12 does not have a Riders chapter.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: That answers my question. Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: You cannot be a member of two different posts.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: I understand.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: But you can be a member of a post and you can join a chapter --

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Of Riders.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: -- that has a Riders.

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: And, John, I'll put some information out about that.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Thank you, sir. I appreciate it. Thank you for your time.

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: I appreciate the question.

Any other questions?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Can I make a statement?

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Yes,

sir.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: I challenge every white hat and every blue and white hat in this room to go back to your posts and have every one of your posts in your district raise $100 and donate it to the Riders for the Veterans & Children Foundation.

We have, currently, 167 posts. If every post donates $100 to the Riders, we just met that $15,000 goal that Director Martin's talking about. Actually, we will surpass that. If you do the math real fast, 167 times 100 is $16,000 [sic]. So I challenge every one of y'all to go back to your posts and have every one of your posts donate $100. We'll meet that goal.

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Curtis?

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, Post 153. You said you've got this soon to be solved. What is holding it up? Is there anything we can do to help?

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: You mean the C.L. Daniel stuff?

DEC REP DEER: To get the veteran home.

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: No. There's two bodies in the coffin. There's two bodies in the coffin, and they haven't identified the second body. That's the hold up.

Yeah, it's not a simple paperwork --

DEC REP DEER: Did they get the DD-214 thing solved?

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Well, to a point, yes. We know it's C.L. Daniel. We just don't know who the other body is.

Yeah, because this has got national implication, too, because the Riders from Arkansas and other states are standing by, too. I get asked constantly, "What's the update?"

DEC REP DEER: And the patrols are all -- state patrols also.

VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Yeah. So more to follow.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Auxiliary president is not here, so I will turn it over to our Vice East.

AUXILIARY REP/DEPARTMENT VC EAST CRUICE: I send greetings from Kim McInnis, our state Auxiliary president. She has her DEC today, and she's done a lot of work getting ready for it.

Her mission this year is to be family. Everything is done as a family: Sons, Auxiliary, and posts, Riders also. That's her theme. The state of Oklahoma is number

eight for membership in Auxiliary right now, which is incredible.

(Applause.)

AUXILIARY REP/DEPARTMENT VC EAST CRUICE: They're working really hard. They've got some really creative ideas.

I am the chairman for the Auxiliary for the Legion Child Wellbeing Foundation. You'll be getting news coming out, but to get your ribbon on your flag, it is so easy. It's $1 per member as of June 1st last year, so I've been collecting those numbers. I have them for Sons. I have them for Legion. Brett and I are getting together so I can get them for Riders. And once I have that, it will go out to every post. It's so easy to get those ribbons. We all want to know, "How do we get more ribbons on our flags?" So support this cause, and we'll have a huge amount next year at conference.

So she thanks you all for your attention.

And if you want to start any posts, she has ten different units that are looking at starting right now. So she would be glad, just like Chris, to help you make those creations. Thank you.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: This guy doesn't look like Cory, but Boys State.

BOYS STATE COO HARRIS: Thank you, Commander. Jared Harrison, Chief Operating Officer for Boys State. Sorry I am not nearly as handsome as Director Brooks, but you're stuck with me for a little bit. He's -- I don't know about more, either. I don't have the right color of shoes on.

(Laughter.)

BOYS STATE COO HARRISON: But, of course, Director Brooks is keeping our country safe. You know the status of things at NORTHCOM that he serves. He's had his hands full. So he sends his regards but sent me to talk to you a little bit about Boys State and where we stand. I will try my best not to bore you, because those of you who have been to district meetings will have heard a lot of this, and those of you who haven't yet, will get to hear it at your district meetings.

But so far this year, we're actually on a really good pace. As of this morning, we actually got another registration in, so we're at 19. It sounds like a small number, but that's still way ahead of where we've been in the past, and we've got about ten others that are kind of waiting in the wings. We've got several of those that are going to need some help with sponsorships. So here in the next few weeks, we'll start reaching out to posts surrounding those kids to let you know that you've got

somebody that would like to attend that might need some help to be able to make it to Boys State this year.

I want to emphasize our college credit. We've talked about that a lot, but we did have one new addition to that this year. Of course, we know that Rogers State has kind of picked up the ball for us. That has helped to make that where it is free of charge for all of our kids. Last year at the very last second, they made one other change for us, to change the name of the class, and what that does is for any of the state high schools that would like to -- it's a high school choice -- but they can actually count that as dual credit for their high schools. So all of these kids who have to have a U.S. government half credit to graduate high school can use their Boys State credit for that as well, so yet another reason for them to come to Boys State generally free of charge.

(Applause.)

BOYS STATE COO HARRISON: So, with all of those kinds of things, that makes us think that registration's going to continue to pick up. So we can't emphasize enough: Get out there and start recruiting now. We know it's kind of been a trend in the past to wait until the spring semester, just because the plans start to be solidified a little more.

But, of course, we've got all of those things going on, numbers, and kids are getting registered earlier, but shortly after the beginning of the year, we're going to send a letter out to probably 2,000, 2,500 young men across the state, telling them that we want them at Boys State. If past practice and, you know, metrics tell us anything, we could likely see between an eight and ten conversion rate on that. If you do that math really quick, you know, that could be up to a couple of hundred young men, which that fills us.

So we want you all to hurry and get out there now and be finding the young men from your area that you've targeted that you would like to have be there because we do have a cap on our campus. We can only fit so many students in our auditorium. If we fill it up for a couple of years, we'll find a way to accommodate and make things work, but, again, it's very important that you all get out and start recruiting now.

We've had a couple of things -- I'm going to piggyback on all of the other reports that have been given. We talked about the fancy semiquincentennial or the fancy name for the 250th anniversary of our great country. We're going to of course recognize that and try to do a few other things. We're going to start doing some extra fundraising, to do some little things like

maybe fireworks, just things like that, but also, hopefully, be able to bring in some better speakers and do a few extra things to make it an even more valuable experience for the delegates that come.

Part of that push is we're working right now to stand up the Oklahoma Boys State Alumni Association. We haven't done a great job of staying connected with all of the delegates that have come through the program in the past, and we want to do a better job of that because they are all over the world, in amazing places. So we want to keep that connection alive, help make that connection between our current delegates and past delegates.

Several of us were fortunate enough to see that in action on the Boys Nation level this year. The 2015 delegates came to Boys Nation, and it was one of the coolest events to see those young men who are out in the world, have been through medical school, law school, or intelligence officers in the military, come and talk to those senators at Boys Nation this year. And the excitement that the senators left with after meeting them and seeing what their future could hold if they just pushed and worked hard was pretty incredible. So we hope to replicate that at the state level.

And then the last thing I'm going to mention is a little bit off-script, so bear with me if I stumble

through it just a little bit. But the last month in our country has been pretty crazy. You know, we all know the state of the world and how programs like Boys State, how organizations like the American Legion are going to be part of this revival that is coming in our country. You know, there's some cool movement going on in the world, and what we have preached at Boys State about Americanism, what the Department of Oklahoma, what the American Legion at the nation level preaches about, a 100 percent Americanism, it's our time. We've got this captive audience out there that we've got to go grab and make sure that they understand how fortunate we are to have the country that we live in. Despite our politics and religious beliefs and all of that, we're here in the greatest country in the world. And we're going to really try to expand on that even more this year to make sure we keep that, you know, in the forefront of everybody's mind and not let that spirit die. Because it's been nice to see some of that these last few weeks, and hopefully it can continue, and with all of our help in this room, it will.

So, with that, if there aren't any questions, that is my report.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: You have a question, sir.

SAL BOYS STATE COO HARRISON: Yes, Commander.

POST FINANCE OFFICER MARTIN: Brett Martin, Post 12 Finance Officer. We started our campaign early, and we said in October we would kick it off in earnest. This week, in the mail, we got two checks, and we paid for two boys and two girls.

(Applause.)

POST FINANCE OFFICER MARTIN: Our goal is 30,000 this year.

(Applause.)

POST FINANCE OFFICER MARTIN: And we blanketed everybody. And then, we're already in the schools now talking to them.

BOYS STATE COO HARRISON: Great.

And on that point, work together as posts. Clearly, Commander Martin has figured out where to go, what to do. There are several posts in here. I see some 111's in the back. I know my home post in Kingfisher, Post 5, always does good. I know Elmo and his post get out there and recruit hard. Try to reach out to your posts around you and see what they're doing.

We've got some letters, and things like that, that we can help you with, but personalize them and make them your own, that way they're more impactful. Work with your schools, your school counselors. The kids trust

those people already, and that's a valuable resource. If you get the school counselor convinced how important programs like Boys State are, that will help you get those young men into the program even easier.

Thank you.

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: Chris Sherbourne, Detachment Commander.

Jared, so a question that came up earlier, and that way everybody understands, if a post is -- let's say they're limited on funds. Can they make payments to help pay for -- let's say they want to send two. Is there a way they can make payments to Boys State to allow them to do that?

BOYS STATE COO HARRISON: You know, honestly, it's not something we've talked about, but I am sure we will work with people, because what we want are young men there that we can impact. So, if that means we have to draw that out over some time, we want to do that. You know, things like fundraising we're hoping to try to get started will help make it to where we can do that even easier. But we want young men at the program that will listen, will take it to heart, and will take it back to their communities and impact even more people. So I think whatever we can do, I can probably say pretty safely, we'll be happy to try to work with that.

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: Okay.

BOYS STATE COO HARRISON: Yes, Commander?

DEPARTMENT SENIOR VC MAY: Shirley May, Senior Vice. So everybody knows that we have two prison posts right now, and we have a third one that's wanting to start up, so that was where that question came from. Of the two posts that are out there right now, they're going to send anywhere from three to five. They want to sponsor that many young men. They're also looking at sponsoring a couple of young ladies for Girls State. So that was where that question came from.

BOYS STATE COO HARRISON: And I'll piggyback on that as well. Of course, we talked about that a little bit, at Mid-Winter, and the post in Lexington that did that this year and sent a young man. Just by happenstance, it ended up being one of our longtime staff member's co-worker's son that got sponsored with that. So it was a neat tie that just kind of happened. We didn't plan it that way.

But, you know, the men who sponsored those young men, looking at the list, it was $2 here, $5 there, $7 there. But they were taking that out of the small amount of money that they have in prison in their commissary accounts to make sure somebody else could see a few things, could learn a few things that hopefully would

make sure that they don't end up in the same position.

So, again, I mean, it doesn't take $1 million to make it happen. Obviously, we've got to have money to be able to pay for the shirts and all of that stuff, but it doesn't take a lot to make it happen.

You know, we've talked about wanting to raise some extra money. And I was talking to Dr. Loose about this today: It would be nice to kind of start a nest egg to be able to draw some interest off of for a program like ours and raise $250,000 for Riders, raise $250,000 for the Sons, for the Legion. That's 250 people giving $1,000. You can't tell me that there's not 250 people out there that are fortunate enough to have that kind of money to donate to every single one of those groups. We've just got to get out there and talk about it. And the programs that we do, the Boys State program, and the mission of the department, it speaks for itself if you get out there and talk about what you're doing.

So I think it's stuff that we can do to help support all of those things, to make them all better.

So, Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I do not see anybody from -- Baseball? Okay.

Adjutant Redden.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Hello. My name is Rick Redden. I'm the department adjutant. The very last page of that group of stuff we handed out is my written report. I am not going to read it. I am going to point out a few things.

One of the most significant things that happened this last quarter is we had to lay off our two paid veteran service officers. As you might imagine, that has caused us to figure out what's next, and that's going to come up in a few minutes. And I just want to tell you it's been an interesting time working through that.

I want to comment on the recovery of the restitution from Mr. Kellerman. Two things I want to mention:

I have heard some very large numbers that Mr. Kellerman had absconded with. The court required restitution as $56,000. I don't know what he took, but that's all he has to pay back, and he's about one-third of the way into it. So, just interesting.

This recovery of the restitution was a personal failure. I was trying to figure out how to keep it because I wanted to honor Mr. Kellerman by absconding with that four grand. I couldn't figure out how to do that.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER EAST CRUICE: She's recording this.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm glad that y'all appreciate my humor a little bit.

As a non-voting member of the DEC, I always attribute that, that I also don't have a right to make a motion. I have become aware that some departments utilize the members incarcerated in prisons to make poppies for distribution. I know my post currently buys those poppies from the Auxiliary in Kansas. I suddenly thought that was a great idea that our two prison posts potentially get into the poppy business. It wouldn't bother me if later in this meeting if someone made a motion to allow me to start that process. Just thought I'd mention that.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I started, last month, a monthly Zoom call with post adjutants. Anybody's welcome to join. The call was supposed to be two days ago, but because I was on my way back from National, it is this coming Wednesday, and I'll send out a reminder. It's a Zoom call. I'll make sure everybody I have an e-mail for will get the invitation. Please encourage your post adjutants to participate in that.

You know, I heard all of last year about how communication was lacking. Well, this is part of my attempt to fix that, to get information to the adjutants that they can actually use. So tell them about it. And, again, I'll get the reminder out on Monday.

This past Monday evening, we had a department adjutants secret society meeting. It's called E-teivos (phonetic). It's the word "soviet" spelled backwards. I didn't start it; they did. But in the course of that banquet and dinner, we raised $8,000 for the NEL. And they do that by fining people for doing silly things. For instance, I fined the commander --

How much?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Fifty bucks.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Fifty bucks for being younger than my children.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That wasn't my only fine. I ended up with $150 at that one.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: We had ten folks there at our table from Oklahoma, and there was over $200 raised from our table alone.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Over 300.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Oh, good. Over 300. I was really proud of our table participating

in that.

Mid-Winter coming up. I sent out an e-mail two weeks ago with some potential training topics and asked for feedback. I didn't get much back from y'all. Please take a look. I want it to be useful. As you probably know, we've cut back a day. It's Friday, Saturday, and Sunday now, with Sunday afternoon really being the DEC meeting. So I want it to be useful to as many people as possible.

This subject of Mid-Winter is going to come up later, but just to give you a preview, the facility doesn't cost us anything. We're not going to book hotel rooms. I have gotten a little better rates than normal, but we're not blocking any rooms.

So there's two subjects I want y'all to consider later today. One is should we even charge the registration if the facility doesn't cost us anything, and then, two, should we bother with a banquet or not. Okay? And we'll talk about that later.

Then, do any of you have the report in front of you? Remember, it's the very last page. I want you to look at the very last item of my report.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: "Ongoing process."

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Have a great day.

That's my report, Mr. Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Yes, sir?

DEC REP WATSON: Larry Watson, 6B. Can you give us some word on where we're at with the 50/50 raffle?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm going to let the Fundraising Committee address that. They're addressing that, the Gun Raffle, some other things. So, if you will, I'm just going to turn it over to them. All right, Larry?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yeah, when the king of the E-teivos (phonetic) program called out, "Commander of Department of Oklahoma," I knew something was coming. But, yeah, they were -- you know, those of you that have been in the Southern block, I'm thinking $5, $10 fines. No, sir. We were having $50, $75 fines. It was quite the entertaining evening.

Thanks, Rick.

All right. So I'm going to keep mine short here. So, number one, we've heard a couple of things about the 501(c)(3) and different things. So, in years past, we've heard that we lost out on big donations because we did not have the accessibility of the 501(c)(3) yet, and we've got all this money out there floating right now, but we're just waiting for the finalization on that.

We're not the only department that ran into that problem.

National has actually -- we were at National Headquarters last week, and they actually have created the form where we can actually take what's called -- under the IRS code, it's called a pass-through account. We can now have any donation donated to National, and on the form it says to carry forward to Department, post number whatever. So we can actually take those donations through the National 501(c)(3) currently until ours is set up.

So we no longer need any delays. If you have somebody ready to write a check, go on National's website, find the pass-through account donation form or call Adjutant Redden, and he'll find it for you, and we can get those funds rolling in right now while we're still in pending status with our own. So that should not hinder us in any way, shape, or form currently.

Secondly, for any of you that have been up at National, there is a competition that they do called the Big 12. It kind of goes along with the NC double A type deal. So the Big 12, they have it broke down by -- all the departments by six categories based on size, 5,000 and under, 5,000 to 10,000, 10,000 to 20,000, and so on. So, the category that we happen to be fall in, being category four, or as they put on the form, "Category IV."

So the way they works is they basically go through the list of the departments that fit within that category and ask for bids, and it starts at a minimum 90 percent; and for each category within -- or each department within that category, the minimum is 90 percent, and any department that basically bids the 90 percent, they go through, get each one (indiscernible) --

(Cough.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: -- and then they open it up, competition-wise.

And so, in our category, having Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia, went back and forth for about ten minutes until, basically, the highest bid and nobody was willing to risk any higher. What this means is it came down where I was communicating with my membership chairs here from the meeting, "How high do you want me to bid?" So we ended the second highest bid. But what this means is if Kentucky, by March 11th, if Kentucky does not surpass their high bid of 94.0 percent, but yet we hit our high bid of 93.11 by said date, National will reward the department with two grand. So, small stipend-type deal, but obviously, every little bit helps.

So the only thing we can really do for ourself is hit our goal and hope Kentucky only makes, like, 93 and a half percent. Because even if they're that close, they've got to hit the 94.0. If they don't, we're the second in line at 93.11. If we hit ours, then it's ours. So I know that's a big ask, but that's what we're going to push for.

As of right now, to get to the 93.11 percent by March 11th, it's only 3,717 members, 3,000 members, three and a half, almost 4,000.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yeah. Whatever.

So, anyway, that was a little bit of the fun that we had there.

And then, obviously, you know, we had a group of eight or ten of us up there and had a couple of different dinner events, and it was good hospitality, good camaraderie. So it was a great week. It was busy. Pretty much, meetings from seven o'clock to four o'clock every day, darn near. But it was a good time with that.

Everybody else is already keyed in on all the other things that are going on. We've got a couple of other items that are going to come up later, to expound upon a few of those.

But that's what I've got as far as my report goes.

And so, before we go into commissions and committees, we are going to take a ten-minute recess.

So, please rise.

With the Colors of our nation in place, Sergeant-at-Arms.

INTERIM SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Hand salute. Two.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Be back in ten minutes, please.

(WHEREUPON, a recess was held from 11:22 to 11:34. Thereafter, the following transpired:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please rise.

With the Colors of our nation in place, Sergeant-at-Arms.

INTERIM SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Hand salute. Two.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please be seated. Until my slide show officer gets back to her seat, I will take a point of privilege.

Past Department Commander Martin.

PDC/VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Mike Harris made a challenge out to all the posts of $100. And then, if you've got Facebook, we've already got the departments, and we've shared that along to the SAL and all units. But we've got $100 from Gary Pierson. He walked over -- well, he didn't walk over; he rolled over.

(Laughter.)

PDC/VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: He's that impressive. He rolled over and handed me $100. That's pretty impressive. So, hopefully more posts will be like him.

Lance?

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT VC WEST LARSON: We give $100 from Post 129, Stillwater.

PDC/VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Fine.

(Applause.)

DEC REP HOPKINS: Post 157 will give you $100 today.

PDC/VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: All right. Love it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Post 146 will give you $100 today.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Post 178, $100 to you.

PDC/VETERANS COMM REP/ALR DIRECTOR MARTIN: Love it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Keep it going, guys.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is somebody taking notes?

THE STENOGRAPHER: (Raised hand.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: The stenographer said she's taking notes.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. And second point of privilege, Senior Vice.

DEPARTMENT SENIOR VC MAY: So I forgot to mention earlier that I had the honor and privilege of honoring a World War II veteran on his 100th birthday recently. He turned 100 on October 3rd, and the family put together a little celebration for him on the 4th.

So we walked in, and the VA was giving him an award of some sort. And so, the family asked us if we would sit down and mingle with everybody, and they were going to call us back up in just a little bit, to let him have a little time to adjust to all the people that were coming in. So we did, and we ended up talking to a Warrior Honor Flight representative and got to visiting about that. So they invited us back up. He made his presentation, and then we made ours.

So what we did is we presented him with a certificate of service, recognition of his service, from the department, and then Post 146 made him a Legionnaire member, and they will pay that for the rest of his life.

He was sitting there in tears the whole time. And

so, when I present the award to him and I see the tears, then I'm sort of like doing this little number, trying not to cry. So it was just very moving, emotional to see that and to let him know that it's thanks to his service that I've been able to do what I do. He's the one that paved the way for all of us.

So it's an honor to recognize those veterans. And I have been made aware of another veteran who is 102, and we're going to go see about doing something for him also.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Adjutant Redden.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Our new post in the Oklahoma State Reformatory in Granite, we're doing caps for them, uniform caps. There are 13 founding members. The total came to a little over $800. Sand Springs' post already donated 700, and the Mustang Post and the person of Paul Ray has donated $50. So we're around one hundred bucks to fully fund those caps.

The department will eat the --

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Caps are paid for. Let me know how much the rest is.

(Applause.)

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: That's my post.

DEC REP GORDON: 146.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Daddy always said, "When they give you the money, shut up and sit down."

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Chris Sherbourne.

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: Thank you, Mr. Commander. I forgot a couple of things a second ago, so I'll do this quick.

First off, I will be putting this out, but the Indiana War Memorial that sits at the Legion Mall in Indianapolis is selling bricks that you can put your loved one or your name on, and they're going to hold a ceremony. We'll either go in NEC spring or the NEC fall. I'll make sure. We haven't figured out which one yet. But they'll have a brick laying ceremony for everybody who wants to attend that. So that's at the Legion Mall at the Indiana War Memorial. I will be putting out more information about that.

Secondly, I would like to thank the adjutant. We've had some issues with getting numbers and the stuff out. We finally figured out the problem. The adjutant is helping me with that. So we will, very soon, be able to get your percentages out for your squadrons.

So, Rick, thank you for your help with that, sir.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any other kudos

before we get into business?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I will now accept commission and committee reports. Again, individual reports and collective reports from any commission or committee will have a no-longer-than ten-minute time limit. Our parliamentarian has his time.

And, next slide, please.

We will start with Ken Wyatt.

Do you want to go over your report, sir?

IA COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WYATT: Well, let me get it out.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. We can come back to you if you would like.

IA COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WYATT: Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Next slide.

Andrew Fisher.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN FISHER: Andrew Fisher, District 1B, Resolutions Committee. It's going to be real easy. We have no new resolutions turned in, so I have nothing to report.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Are you ready, Ken?

IA COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WYATT: Yeah, pretty much.

You want me to come all the way up there?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: You can talk loud.

IA COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WYATT: I'll try.

Okay. Internal Affairs; Karen Ritter, Jack Sikes, (indiscernible), John Bishop, Doug Hale, Wayne Flowers -- that's our group.

DEC REP KUNTZ: Ken?

IA COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WYATT: Yes?

DEC REP KUNTZE: Not working. The stenographer can't hear you.

IA COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WYATT: Sorry about that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: If you can, make your way up and stand closer to her proximity, please.

IA COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WYATT: Okay.

I'm chairman. Post 111.

Karen Ritter, Jack Sikes, Lane (phonetic) Cooper, John Bishop, Doug Hale, Wayne Flowers -- that's our group.

The commission, primarily, we're looking at supervise all committees dealing in their appropriate work. The following commissions shall develop and recommended policies and programs to the Department Executive Committee and shall strive for continuity and progressive improvement. Here are the committees: Americanism, Children & Youth, Finance,

Internal Affairs, Sons of the American Legion, National Security Commission.

And this is referenced in Article X, Section 7.

The Internal Affairs Commission has the supervision and coordination responsibilities of the Resolution Committee.

And so, we looked at one incident this year that was what we considered inappropriate, but since there were no members from that particular post willing to complain, the motion dropped. That's basically what we're looking at. We're trying to correct that for next year.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

IA COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WYATT: And if anybody wants to be inappropriate, I will talk to them personally on the side.

You want to do Scouting?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: If you have a report for it.

SCOUTING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WYATT: I'm chairman of the Scouting Committee; Colonel Harold Yocum, M.D., U.S. Army, retired; Lieutenant Colonel Paul McGraw, U.S. Army, retired, United States Military Academy.

The purpose is to improve Scouting and encourage cooperation among the scouting legions.

The number of Eagle Scouts applying for scholarships

has been extremely low. The '24-'25 year, we had three applicants for Eagle Scout. Two of these applicants did not have the qualifications. Two percent of the Scouts make Eagle, and two percent of those have their God and Country. So we're looking at an extremely small range.

We did have the one candidate last year, Morgan Johnson from Wagoner, Oklahoma. He was runner-up. He's going to be in the White House one of these days. He is something else. He is something else.

For the last five years, I've been trying to get a program coordinated with the Boy Scouts to develop post-scouting relationships. And this year, it finally happened. The membership committee chairman for the Last Frontier Council, which is Greater Oklahoma Central and West, has agreed to communicate.

So we started looking at where scouting units are versus where posts are. And he called me up last Friday and said, "Can we have a post up in Crescent? Can we have a post-sponsored Scout troop in Crescent?" So I contacted Crescent and said "Sure." So Crescent is agreeable. All they've got to do is work out the details.

So that was the first one, and it took us a day to put it together. So there's 17 new Scouts right there.

That's it.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: And I will now take open committee or commission reports.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCNEAL: John McNeal, 6B First Vice, serving you as your National Cemetery Committee chairman, sir.

Commander, I would like to say that there's not a written report, and that's due to, pretty much, the fluid situation we're in, but I can give you an update.

Our secretary for Department of Veterans Affairs has many undersecretaries, one of them being what we call a "Usama," the undersecretary for Memorial Affairs, who takes care of all of the 156 national cemeteries that we have in the country.

I think I've given you that status. That number still remains the same. Of those, we have 45 that are designated as closed, but please know this: Don't tell folks that national cemeteries are closed because perpetual care goes on forever. And even those that are closed are closed to first internments. There are seconds going in with spouses, veterans going in with spouses or spouses going in with veterans.

Now then, Elgin, the Fort Sill National Cemetery, we just completed putting 2,800 vaults in the ground. If any of you were there when this started, there was a

great big hole. And that's what VA does now, they dig a great big hole. We're basically digging every grave all at one time. Then 2,800 vaults are set in the ground that are capable of bearing two deep. That's still going on.

I had a pretty distressing phone call last Thursday when I was at work. It was a troubled sibling who lost her brother the Wednesday before, and she heard a report on TV that the Fort Sill National Cemetery was not taking any burials, that they were closed. We knew that not to be true, and she did call somebody at the VA and, perish the thought, they are not closed.

Right now we have funds to fund paying employees and some contractor costs for contractors that are working at our national cemeteries for mowing, trimming, cutting, thing like that, until the 16th of October. I'm hoping this shutdown doesn't last that long. Should it last that long, then of course, we still can't stop burying, and then those employees would have to look at a furlough situation, more than a termination or a lay-off because we need those folks to continue to operate there.

So, please, if you get calls like that -- and Fort Gibson -- we have a complex here in Oklahoma. We have the Fort Gibson-Fort Sill National Cemetery Complex operating under the same word that we've got from our

undersecretary for Memorial Affairs.

Because it's fluid, I will continue to let --

And Danny Gross, by the way, is a member of this committee as well. I believe our NEC is on this committee, and of course, the commander is ad hoc to all of these committees, so we're going to pull him on that committee and others that he may have assigned, but I'm hoping that if any of those have any additional information that that would come to us by way of a notification. And, of course, I would send that to our buddy Rick so he could get that out to the membership.

But right now, that's where we stand.

If there's any information that you have down in your communities, down in your posts, please dispel the fact [sic] that national cemeteries are not burying because that's just not a true statement.

So let's all pray for our country. Let's get this thing settled so we can continue to do business and honor our veterans and families. Because we think that is sacred ground, where our America's heros and families rest at, and we'll continue to take care of that.

Commander, subject to your questions or any others.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Yes, sir. Jack Sikes, 3B.

John, do you have anything to assist the states in

the state cemeteries with all the indigent ashes the crematoriums are holding hostage before they will release them and bury them? Is there any help from the federal side on that?

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCNEAL: The trigger in that process, as far as NCA, the National Cemetery Administration, goes, is a funeral home. When a funeral home comes in with a request that we have an indigent or an unclaimed veteran, then that's when the wheels up in St. Louis, where NCA is held, that's when they go -- they stricken [sic] the motion.

I understand that there's some state funds that supplement that process. As much as what they cover, I do not know. I know VA will cover some transportation costs if that veteran needs to be moved from -- their remains moved from one place, one location, to a burial location, up to $2,000. There are other benefits along with those that are standing as far as a headstone, monument to be provided, even if it's in a private cemetery, but as far as a targeted tribal or territorial cemetery that has remains that need to come into the NCA system, I am not aware of it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: They can get a headstone once they're buried?

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCNEAL:

Correct.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: The problem is the ashes are being held hostage by the crematoriums because they want paid for their services before we can get the ashes and get them in the ground. We did seven last week in Ardmore.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCNEAL: Well, let me ask you this, Jackie: Are those ashes and remains of veterans?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCNEAL: Then that needs to get into the National Cemetery Administration.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Yes, sir. Thank you.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCNEAL: I'll do what I can as far as contacting the folks that I have contact with there. Because American Legion speaks big influence to the NCA.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: I think right now we still have 300 unclaimed that the crematoriums are holding hostage.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCNEAL: And in conjunction with Jackie's question, there are, in addition to national cemeteries, there are territorial, tribal, and state cemeteries that receive some VA

support. As you know, VA will build some of those. They did state cemeteries. But the maintenance of that falls to the state, but VA does assist.

Sir?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCNEAL: Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Thank you, John.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Media. Michael Kerr.

This is your media report; right?

MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: Sure.

Mike Kerr, Media & Communications. If you have access to our website, there is a tab called "committees," and under that tab there is another tab called "committee reports." So all the committee reports will be under that tab. If you submit them to Rick, he will give them to me, or you can submit them to me directly. I have seven on there at the moment.

So, highlights: The reason you don't have it in your hand is because it's on the computer.

I would like to first thank Chris Sherbourne. I would like to thank Karen and Kim McInnis. They have

done a great job of adding Facebook pages for the districts. So every district should have its own Facebook page now. If you don't know what it is, "District 4, Oklahoma," and you'll find it. It's pretty simple. Put your stuff on there. Send it to the admin so we can make that happen. That is a way to reach out and reach your communities. They've done a great job.

Commander Wiley, one of his tenets is family. They're jealous of Oklahoma because any time we post something on Facebook, on the web, they see it. I got confirmation they're monitoring our website, they're monitoring our Facebook feeds, they're making sure we're being good, but they're also jealous because we crosspost the entire family.

So keep sending me your stuff so we can get that stuff out there.

Legiontown.org. Legiontown.org. Post 1 received a Media & Communications award from National. They submitted to legiontown.org. So, if you have something going on in your community, send it to legiontown.org/share. That goes directly to National. From that, they review everything that's posted on there, all the content. And if you see something on the National Facebook page, Instagram, YouTube, reels, the magazine, the newsletter, they draw from

legiontown.org/share, and they will contact you or your post directly to make that a National story. That is good for Oklahoma. That is good for our membership, and that is good for our veterans.

The 1889 newsletter, any time it's pushed out, it goes on Facebook, and it goes on the website. It can't happen unless your districts and your posts send stuff to the 1889. So get that to her.

We've been asked by National to assist them on their website. They're going to revamp their website and their membership portal by spring. So we're going to assist them with that. I'm reaching out to them next week. So another way Oklahoma is moving forward.

We are researching an Instagram account. Because, if we're going to reach anybody under 30, it's got to be under Instagram, reels, and TikTok or YouTube. So we're looking at that. Hopefully we'll have that implemented by Mid-Winter.

And the next steps: We need from the districts on the committee, so Media & Communications Committee.

Katie McInnis, she's ALA, but she is awesome on IT stuff. So if you have somebody that's awesome on IT stuff or you want to have representing your district, let us know.

There is also Media & Communications toolkits. The

link is on the committee report, "Media toolkit." So, if you don't know how to do it, there's a media toolkit.

And that's all for Media & Communications.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: Do you want me to do the other?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Sure.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: Okay. This will be IT, Information and Technology.

So we've updated the website. We continue to update the website daily.

How many people have been to the website and seen the map, the Google Earth map?

(Hand raise.)

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: If you want to know where a post is, a Sons unit is, or an ALA, or the Riders, look on our website. It will give you a Google Earth map directly to it. If you click on the icon for that city, it will give you contact information. If that contact information is not correct, that's because your post and your district did not give it to that man. Garbage in, garbage out. If it's wrong, let us know. We'll be happy to change it. I do it in 24 hours.

But if you want to know where all the posts are in Oklahoma, it's already on there in a Google Earth map.

It's a pretty cool app, actually. It didn't take me long to build it. We're going to add the VSOs on there. I'm working with a couple of individuals. We're going to add the VSOs. So, if you want to know who the VSOs are, we're going to have that on there as well.

In addition, I told you National is changing their information.

We're implementing Microsoft Office throughout. Rick has chosen that over Google. You'll see some changes before the next Mid-Winter. So the meetings will be on Zoom.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Or Teams.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: Or Teams. Once we switch, it's going to be on Teams, Microsoft Teams.

We're also working with National on their database because, as we all know, there's three different types of memberships. There's the post membership, what the state gets, and what National gets, and they don't normally match. So it's a national problem. We're working on that.

Once the Four Pillars go in, we're already working to add some software to do online membership. We used to have that, if you remember. I remember we had that where people could click on a button on our website. We're going to do that.

And Rick is going to do an e-mail by department position. So once we go with Microsoft Office completely, it's going to create e-mails by Department position. We want to be like the Sons. It doesn't say "ChrisSherbourne@gmail.com," it says, "Commander@SAL." Okay? This is going to be the same so we can get that standardized so no matter who's in the position, it's the same e-mail. So we're hoping to have that one by -- Mid-Winter?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: As soon as we have the 501(c)(3).

And just so you know, Microsoft will give it to us free if we're a 501(c)(3). I'm not going to pay for it until we get the official word.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: We're also working with local news organizations -- newspaper, radio, and TV -- to further the American Legion efforts. So, if you have that as well, let me know.

Anything on the IT? Anybody have any questions on that?

DEC REP GORDON: I have a question, Michael.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: Yes?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Identify yourself, please.

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, 1A DEC.

If we have downloaded where I can go on and just click on an icon or whatever and pull up the American Legion for Oklahoma, is that the same as going to the website, or is that just different?

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KEER: Different.

DEC REP GORDON: Because I don't remember seeing that map is why.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: It's different.

DEC REP GORDON: Okay. So I have to actually go into the --

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: Go into the homepage.

DEC REP GORDON: All right.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: It's on the front page about three down. So you'll see newsflashes and --

DEC REP GORDON: I just haven't gone into the website lately.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: Yeah. Go to the website. And you can see it on your phone. You can pull it up. If it's too cluttered, there's a little box on the upper left where you turn on and turn off the different entities. So, if you don't want the Riders, if you don't want the Sons, turn them off, and you'll just have the Legion posts, vice versa. So it's very interactive at that point. So it's a rough draft, but

we're working on that.

Okay. Any questions on the IT?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Yeah. Jack Sikes, 3B. Did you find out why the American Legion is not listed on OGC's website as a veteran service organization?

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: They have not got back with me on that yet.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Thank you.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: I just got home late Thursday, so I'll call them next week, and I will work on that.

Yes, sir?

DEC REP HALE: Question. Doug Hale, DEC, District 7, Post 091 in Weatherford. There's this new magazine that's coming out called the Oklahoma Veterans.

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: Yes.

DEC REP HALE: Is everybody getting that? It comes to --

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: (Indiscernible) --

DEC REP HALE: -- the posts.

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: -- magazine. Yes.

DEC REP HALE: Where is it -- they did an

article, this last one, that was on my father-in-law. It was a lead article. He was a World War II veteran.

Who's publishing that? What is it for in the veterans...

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: I defer to --

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: Brett Martin, Post 12. It's a gentleman by the name of Steve Sibley. I'm working with him on across a lot of fronts. He not only does the Veterans Magazine, but he does Homes for elderlies in homes.

Post 12 has put some subscriptions in there as well as ODVA. The magazine goes out to 15,000 people.

DEC REP HALE: It's a great magazine.

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: It's a great magazine.

DEC REP HALE: Great articles in them.

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: If you have something you want to submit, let me know. Send it to me, and I'll send it in. The article is a great article.

DEC REP HALE: This gentleman that did the article on my father-in-law was going to do one on him a couple of years ago before he passed away. It was going to be the Route 66.

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: Right.

DEC REP HALE: And it never happened. I'm not

sure why, but...

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: It's Steve Sibley. And the guys and gals who run that magazine, they will bend over backwards for us.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. Thank you.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: My only request is if you send something to that magazine, you better be sending it to 1889.

VETERANS COMMISSION REP MARTIN: Yes.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: Any other questions?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Adjutant?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: In one of our cost-saving efforts, we did away with the service that allows us to broadcast e-mails. And so, we're doing them straight out of Outlook from my computer. Because of that, I chose not to attach the full 1889. Instead, you get a link to the website where you can view it and download it. It saves us money. So that's a change that I didn't really broadcast. So, rather than send you the newsletter, you just get a link to where to find the newsletter.

IT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KERR: It's also on Facebook. There's a link that goes right to the website

as well.

Any more questions?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Last one.

MARKETING/PR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Last one, and I swear I did not want to be on all of these committees: Marketing & Public Relations Committee.

The meeting at National, they have a few things that they like what we do. They like how we do the family. They have requested, however, that we limit public negative in-house discourse. It's fine to argue in the family. Don't let it go outside the family. That does not help anyone, especially the American Legion and the veterans that we're trying to support. So please keep that in-house.

The 250 initiative, they've already talked about. It's on our website if you want more information.

Be the One training is also available. They do that almost monthly now, so Be the One training.

Media outreach:

Legion town we talked about;

Promote family unity. Again, the Oratorical is coming up; Boys and Girls State -- look at that;

We need to support posts with material and media venues to highlight accomplishments and local events.

Again, we have a PR toolkit that's also on our website if you want to know how to do more PR in your community.

The best and PR item that everyone should have is what?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Facebook.

MARKETING/PR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KERR: No.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Word of mouth.

MARKETING/PR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KERR: Your cover, your hat. I guarantee if you wear this hat at Walmart, somebody's going to ask you what it's about. If you wear it in the neighborhood, they're going to ask you what it's about. Wear your shirts. Wear your hats. Be a good example. And that is the best marketing tool we have. Okay? So I would encourage everybody to do that.

And then, have you elevator speech available. Does everybody know what an elevator speech is?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yes.

MARKETING/PR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KERR: Two to three minutes on why the American Legion is the best thing since sliced bread and cheese. So please do that.

We talked about Post 1 doing a great job for getting advertising. Guthrie, Warr Acres, Post 20, Post 50 -- they're all doing great jobs on getting advertising, which we are going to hit hard and heavy once we have the availability to do so.

Oklahoma Boys State is nationally recognized, as we have put out there, which is another great thing for Oklahoma. So play off that. Play it up.

If you have a post that needs help setting up media communications, sending out outreach, how to do a parade, how to do a fundraiser, let us know at State so we can come to that post and help you. We'll be happy to go anywhere and help them. Well, anywhere in Oklahoma.

And that's all I have. Any questions?

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, 1A DEC. Do we still have computers available for the posts that need them? Who would I ask that question to?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Same source. Brandy is the person to call. I can resend out her number if you like.

DEC REP GORDON: Okay.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: But I don't know the answer to the question.

DEC REP GORDON: Okay.

MARKETING/PR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KERR: Any other questions?

(No response.)

MARKETING/PR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KERR: Okay. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

Yes, Mr. Wyatt?

(Applause.)

SCOUTING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WYATT: I forgot the commercial on the Scouting. Ken Wyatt, Scouting Chairman.

We're getting old.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Can't hear you.

SCOUTING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WYATT: We're getting old. I see a lot of grey hair in this room, me included. Of course, some don't have any, but that's all right.

(Laughter.)

SCOUTING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WYATT: The problem is we need younger people, and the best way to get those is to get a Scouting unit because those kids bring their parents into that Scout troop or that pack. So, for example, that new pack that we're trying to organize is 17 kids. That means 17 dads; 17 moms. Surely, there's a veteran in that group, at least one, probably more. We need to get them involved. So that's a gimme for membership. I mean, Crescent is a pretty small group, anyway, but I'm looking at 17 new members maybe. That would double their enrollment, just about.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Fantastic.

Fundraising Committee.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE CHAIR RECTOR: Kayla Rector, 2A Commander, Department Fundraising Chair.

Real quick, the Department Fundraising Committee report. So, myself, I'm the Chair. Chris Sherbourne is our co-chair. Our members are Chris Plummer from Squadron 1; Chris Cook, Squadron 337; Kerrie Moore, Post 185; Kim Vincent, Post 58; Esther Coker, Post 450; Andrew Fisher, Post 17; Brian Degraeve; Squadron 5; Elmo May, Post 146; Tyler Rector, Post 50.

So, obviously, the purpose of the Fundraising Committee is to fundraise for the Department and fundraise like crazy.

So, so far, we've had two meetings, and we've discussed major fundraising events that we want to tackle and then also smaller, more -- I guess you could call them passive streams of income that can be continuous.

So the biggest things that we've talked about so far and that are at focus right now are going to be -- we've brought up the idea of a Department golf scramble. We're looking at possibly June of '26, and we're looking at four different locations between Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

So we're going to gather more information on that and see what would be the best location pricing-wise, what the location offers, different things like that.

So heading that up on our committee is Tyler Rector

and Andrew Fisher. They're the golf people on this. So, if you have more questions or ideas for that, get it to me, and we'll take it to the committee.

Next thing is the 50/50 drawing. That would be monthly. We've got in contact with Rick about that. The website for that is up and ready to go live, but we're working on how we want to market that.

And so, if you know, the Department of Florida, they do really phenomenal with theirs, but they have different state laws, regulations that they have to abide by. So we're looking more into what Oklahoma requires, and then we'll be pushing that out. We're going to stay in constant contact with Rick.

Also, the next thing will be the 10-Gun drawing. So the Fundraising Committee has been tasked with overseeing that. So what we're kind of looking at is maybe different designs for the tickets, how we can cut our costs for that. So with that, Chris Plummer, Chris Sherbourne, they kind of brought up the idea of maybe we can get sponsors for the weapons. We could reach out to weapon stores that would like to even donate the weapons to us. So we're looking at different avenues for that, and Chris and Chris are heading that up, and so they're making contact. We'll have more information at our next meeting in two weeks.

Commander Thomas kind of touched on the 501(c)(3) Four Pillars of Hope. So, he was at our meeting this past Thursday and let us know about the pass-through, through National. So that will be a big thing. And that was kind of where we were. We weren't sure of what we could -- companies we could really grasp to get bigger donors and have bigger projects for this. So we'll still work on that, and we're very excited to have that opportunity. So, if someone comes up and says, "Hey, we've got $50,000 we want to donate," we can accept that, and we can use that in the Department.

So, our next steps: Obviously, like I said, we're going to be compiling some more information on these different projects. If you have any ideas or things that work in your posts that you think that we could scale, or any ideas that you want to forward to us, forward to us. Because we are open to anything and everything. And we will just go from there and kind of see what works after the committee meets.

At this time, we don't have anything that the DEC will really need to take action on, but if we do have anything, we will immediately alert Adjutant Redden and Commander Thomas, and we will get that to all of you guys.

So, does anybody have any questions?

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, DEC, 1A. How do we go about doing it through the National 501(c)(3)?

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE CHAIR RECTOR: I will defer to Commander Thomas.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: There is a form on the National website. It is the IRS pass-through form. And I will work with Michael this week, or Rick, and see if we can't get the copy of it added to the files on our department website. Because, obviously, once we get ours done, we won't want to use that, but in the meantime, it's better than saying, "Sorry, we can't take your donation."

DEC REP WATSON: Larry Watson, 6B. On the 50/50, has a decision been made what's going to be done with those funds, how they're going to be distributed or credited?

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE CHAIR RECTOR: We have not discussed that in its entirety.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: So, quick question, Past Department Commander Martin, that was established during your tenure as the department commander?

PDC MARTIN: Yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Was that put into a guideline set by the DEC of how that would be

distributed?

PDC MARTIN: The funds just went into the general fund.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE CHAIR RECTOR: All right. So, if there's no more questions, Commander, that is my report.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

Ms. Ritter.

(Applause.)

CONSTITUTION/BY-LAWS CHAIR RITTER: Karen Ritter, 1A District Commander, and I'm the Constitution and By-laws Chair.

So a couple of years ago at the National Convention in New Orleans, we were asked to rewrite our constitution and by-laws. For some odd reason, it got dropped and didn't go through so we could vote on it at our summer convention. Well, that has been rewritten. And while we were at Tampa, I got pulled into a meeting with the National Judge Advocate Seavey and his aide, Ken George. They have offered to help us rewrite it so that it's good go to and ready for approval.

So right now they are sitting with a copy that I rewrote last year to submit, and they are helping me; but Ken George has been out for the last month and a half for some family issues that he had to take care of, so he

only just got back to me the other day, and he's looking at it now, and we're going through it back and forth, making those changes. So, pretty soon, it will be going out to the committee so that hopefully by DEC we will have something for the DEC.

And that concludes that report.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any questions?

(No response.)

WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE REP RITTER: All right. My other committee is Women Veterans Committee. So, in the past, it's not really been a committee. Yes, it's a committee as a whole, but it's not a committee. We've just been having meetings twice a year.

So, me and Tina have been getting together and getting all the females in the Department to sign up on a sheet so we know who the females are because that's something we can't differentiate in the My Legion stuff. So, as soon as we have a list of names, we will build the committee like a committee's supposed to be and then be holding committee meetings, instead of just the meeting in mid-winter and the meeting in summer.

And that concludes that report.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: I have a question on that one. Jack Sikes, 3B.

Are you stating that it's only open to the female veterans?

WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE REP RITTER: No, it is not.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Thank you.

WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE REP RITTER: All veterans, all family -- it doesn't matter who -- are welcome to come to our meetings. It is just another place for the females to get together to discuss issues that are ongoing. Whether it's VA stuff, Legion stuff, anything, it's just a place where we can meet together, but everybody is open to come to the meetings.

Like, at Summer Convention, we had somebody come in and speak about discrimination within the American Legion, and it wasn't just focused on female discrimination. It was, overall, everyone, in any type of situation.

So it's going to keep building on things like that. That way, we're getting information out, but we're also there to talk.

Anything else?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

(Applause.)

AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RAY: Paul Ray,

Awards Committee Chair. I have two things to say. Take back to your posts -- take back to your districts, take back to your posts, when submitting awards, they need to know two things.

They need to know that it has to be at Department by 30 April. It has to be at Department. If it gets there 1 May, we won't take it because we are on a tight timeline. The Awards Committee is on a tight timeline between 1 May and mid-July.

Two, if you have someone to nominate, whether it be a LEO or a firefighter or a VA nurse, all the posts need to do is write a letter telling the Awards Committee why they should vote for that individual. If they're not qualified as far as the National nomination form goes, we at the department level don't really care. If a post nominates someone for a position -- for an award, we will consider it.

All you need to know is write a letter that says why the Awards Committee members should vote for this person, and 30 April.

Questions?

Sir?

DEC REP KUNTZE: Don Kuntze, Post 353.

Does that letter have to come from our post or can it be from their supervisor? That's a loaded question.

AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RAY: It is a loaded question. The letter has to come from a post. One of the qualifications of several of the awards is that the supervisor or chief of that individual endorse the nomination.

We will not recognize an individual -- we will not recognize a LEO officer that the chief doesn't want. We will not recognize a VA nurse that the chief nurse doesn't want, but that's what we will take care of at the Awards Committee. If that individual is selected as a recipient for the department award, we will contact that individual's supervisor. You have to provide that. We will contact that individual's supervisor to get an endorsement.

Yes, ma'am?

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, 1A DEC.

Can you make your letter with an attachment that has the, like, chief of police?

AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RAY: Absolutely. That makes it easy. I don't have to go dig it out.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, 1A DEC, Credentials Committee. And for those of you who don't know what Credentials Committee

is, it just means that we certify the voting for the convention.

And this is a one-time-a-year report, thank goodness. And I will get it in writing. But the main thing that we did this year -- in past years, it's been kind of a lax thing where you send in your two people from Jay to go to convention, but they have three votes, but we've gotten three votes to vote on floor.

This year, we decided, since the conference was bare, that we were going to actually follow the constitution and by-laws, that we've not done for years. In Article V, Section 6, it says that at the same time you pay the registration fee that's been decided by the DEC or whoever, that for each and every delegate they are entitled to. Okay. That means if you pay -- if you have 17 votes, you pay 17 people. You may only send ten, but you've got to pay those 17, and you have to put a name next to all 17 even if they don't come to convention.

Does that make sense? Have I lost anybody yet?

Okay. So I had to put in a dummy person for my third person and pay $30 extra dollars. If you get it in after that 20 days prior to convention, you pay $40. Well, this year, it was 30 and 40. Okay? So, if we got it in before the 20 days, we paid $30 for the two or three votes for my Jay post. If I did it after the fact,

then I had to pay the -- the one that I did after the 20 days was $40. And thank goodness, everybody did what, you know, we were hoping they would do.

I went to certify but discovered they had only sent so many people in, or whatever, they had so many votes. I would call the commander and say, "You do realize that," you know, "this year we're going to do this," or whatever, "and you have to pay this much more money." And we didn't get a lot of feedback, negative. I was really surprised. And they all understood that our coffers were in the negative, or whatever, and we were deleting stuff left and right out of the budget, or whatever, and they all came up with the extra money. So I appreciate that. I appreciate the cooperation.

And I don't know how much -- I don't have a figure on how much we made, but we did add a little bit to the coffers by doing it that way, and we did charge the $40 to the ones that came in late. So it made a little bit more money for us. Maybe we can cut one less thing out of the budget.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Commander, may I?

John McNeal, 6B First Vice. I've got to leave the room, but something concrete that I understand about that: Does that mean every vote that a post has, they will pay the registration for them regardless of their

attendance to the convention?

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: That's correct. And it's been that way since at least 2022, but we just haven't done it.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: All right.

A tag-along: If you have ten votes, and you have paid for eight, will those eight be allowed to vote?

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: Yes.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Everyone that's paid for will be allowed --

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: But not the two --

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: -- to vote?

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: -- that you didn't pay for.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: I understand.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: I think we need to go back and look at the constitution on that.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Yeah, that's a touchy one.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: I think the constitution says all.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Yes, it does.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: Wait a minute.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: All right.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: I'm not understanding the question.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Hold on. John had the floor. He asked a question.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: I'm not understanding the question, I guess.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: We're levying a fee against the posts that they have to pay for all of their delegates?

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: Correct.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: If they don't, then those that they have not paid their fee for, they will not be able to cast a vote for that person?

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: Correct.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: And I think we may have an issue.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: That's what we did this year.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: I understand what --

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: And then I checked it out --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Hold on.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REP GORDON: I checked it out with the Constitution and By-laws -- I mean, the

judge advocate, and he said --

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Thank you, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: We will clarify that before, obviously, next convention to make sure that we are compliant with our own constitution and by-laws.

Any other questions?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

All right. Any last ones? Hearing none, the Chair will entertain a motion that all reports be accepted except those calling for action.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo May, District 7. I make that motion.

DISTRICT COMMANDER KINGERY: Joe Kingery, District 8A. Second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I have a motion from Elmo May, a second from Joe Kingery.

Any discussion?

CHAIRMAN BISHOP: John Bishop, (indiscernible) Chairman for the Department of Oklahoma. I just wanted to say I did not make a oral report, but I did put out a copy of the 1889'er. I hope everybody read it. And I also brought in a standing on what we did for last year on what the program -- contact me if you have any question, but I'll be contacting you on why we are not

doing more. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I will say we did have several reports that were not made orally, but they will be -- Mike either has already or will have them available for your reading pleasure on the website.

Jack?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Jack Sikes, 3B. That was my point, Commander. How many of these committees have we not received reports on and why?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: And I hit on that right out of the gate when the body first elected me, that I was tired of hearing no reports. So we're seeing progress. We probably have another eight or nine that were submitted electronically that may or may not be members of this DEC and weren't going to, obviously, drive three and a half hours to give a five-minute report and drive back. So they did submit them electronically, and they will be available for that purpose.

Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

All right. Are there any resolutions that need to come before the body? Any resolutions? Any resolutions?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. We will move forward.

So, as part of the last DEC, when we met at DEC 1, we had discussed the opportunity of trying to obviously fix some of our budgetary items, and part of that discussion involved personnel that was in positions that were going to be able to be replaced on a volunteer basis. We met at Department Headquarters with a large contingency. We went over the plans of how we would set up a VSO Committee. We ironed out a lot of the setup of it, and then I tasked, temporarily, Jack Sikes to really dig in.

DEPARTMENT VC WEST LARSON: Commander Thomas, since we are speaking of personnel, shouldn't we take that --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: We are not speaking of personnel, sir. I did not say any names.

DEPARTMENT VC WEST LARSON: Yet.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: And that motion was already passed, and those two employees are a done deal, so that is not an issue.

So we met at Department Headquarters. We set up a

temporary position to kind of get all of the ins and outs figured out in the direction that we needed to go. With the cooperation of some of the past people on the VSO side that have the knowledge and know-how of that, had a strong recommendation from several of the VSOs.

And so, with the approval of this body, I will be appointing Jack Sikes as our VSO Committee Chairman and Danny Thomas as our VSO Committee Vice Chairman.

And so, at this time, I will entertain a motion to approve those two appointments.

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, 1A DEC. So moved.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Eric Grubbs, 5B Commander. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a motion on the floor and a second. Any discussion? Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

Mr. Sikes, I will now take your VSO Committee report, please, sir. And because, obviously, this is a new committee with a lot of things that you've been

working on behind the scenes, I'll give you as much time as you need, sir.

VSO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SIKES: Start that egg timer, and let's do less than ten.

Everybody knows the VSO's shut down right now, or Muskogee is shut down. Okay?

So, in the past -- and we're not here to throw stones. Understand that. In the past, Muskogee has been our focal point. Now that Muskogee is shut down, accredited VSOs are going to have to step to the plate.

There's a whole bunch of people in the state that have been discouraged about being a VSO because of past ways of doing business.

I spent Friday, two weeks ago, with the VA, asking for the external directives that affect the state of Oklahoma. It is TRIP training, period. TRIP training, period. So the day classes, the intermediate classes, and the master class, that's gone. TRIP training is a requirement from the VA for VSOs in Oklahoma American Legion.

In the past, you've been able to go to the website, download it, take the 16, 18 chapters with a test at the end of each one. That is no longer open to the public. It must be by name, submitted to the VA to get access to that. It costs you nothing. But that certificate back

to the adjutant is what gets your 21 sent to the Office of General Counsel, the lawyers for VA, in D.C. They do not send you an e-mail stating your OGC number is in. If you did not monitor that website, you will not know your OGC number has come in.

Right?

DEPARTMENT SENIOR VC MAY: Right.

VSO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SIKES: Once that OGC number comes in, that's saying that the lawyers for the VA have accepted your credentials to that point. That's not the end of the story. In the past, it has been the end of the story. It is not.

38 CFR -- and I'm glad to provide reference for any and everything that I'm putting out. 38 CFR says the OGC approves you. It's then referred back to your RO.

What is an RO? Regional office. That's where you must take -- they call it TMS at our VA, but it's HIPAA training. It's PII training. It's security of VA information training and behavior of a VSO. Once you have completed those requirements from the regional office, they will call you, do a background check, and issue you your PIV card.

Why is a PIV, private information verification card -- it's like your old CAC cards in the military -- why is that important? All the VSOs out here say, "I can

take a 21-22, a limited power of attorney, and I can turn your claim in." Well, that's a true statement, but if you don't have access to VACOLS (phonetic) or to Share (phonetic), which are two of the verification documents on the other side of the firewall, you can't go in there and see that Joe Schmuckatelli doesn't have a claim or an appeal with the VFW.

Our direction from National is we will not take a limited power of attorney from the veteran if they have any pending appeal, to include a higher-level review. I know I'm talking over some your heads. I don't mean to. But you've got to get this information out to your VSOs before they submit a claim.

Muskogee used to go into Share (phonetic) and verify that you didn't have a claim or a higher-level review or an appeal with any service organization. Now it's on the VSO, the accredited VSO, to go and check that.

You say, "Wait a minute, Jack. I've got OGC numbers here, but they don't have PIV cards." There is a mechanism in place by the VA for you to go call 1-800-827-1000, say "I'm Jack Sikes. My OGC number is this, and I'm fixing to take a claim on John." "Oh, no, Jack. John has a pending appeal with the VFW." "Thank you very much. Have a good day." Okay? That process has not been used because we've been relying on Muskogee.

Muskogee is no more for us. Okay?

Don't be sending faxes to Muskogee. There's nobody there to take stuff off the fax machine. Until October 31st, we have an individual who is willing to do that. The other volunteer individual that was doing it just had his knee replaced. He's home, convalescing, and his TMS has expired, and now it's a question whether or not he can keep his PIV card because the system is shut down today.

The computer that kicks you in and out of the PIV card is still functioning. It didn't require any money. Oh, my goodness. I've had VSOs quit because they're spending too much money mailing claims. Don't mail a cotton-picking thing. Okay? Mail is out the window. That's old hat. We don't do business that way. The VA went paperless. If you're not paperless, you need to talk to me. Okay?

Again, I've been doing a lot of digging.

Danny, I think I've sent you most of this stuff.

And it's kind of a new way of doing business, but I've got plenty of business cards. Call me.

We're not going to wait until next year for somebody to give a class so that we can get accredited. You give me a name today, when the VA comes back to work -- I have to put that stipulation on there for the Mays -- when

they come back to work, your name will be submitted, and it will go to OGC on the spot. When they come back, you'll be submitted to do your background check. You'll get your PIV card. It's that simple.

Questions?

(No response.)

VSO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SIKES: I've got plenty of business cards.

Thank you, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, Jack.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Vice Chair Danny Thomas, do you have anything to add?

VSO COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN THOMAS: No. I'm just excited that we're making this progress, and let's get to work. Let's get it done.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please, Danny.

VSO COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Oh.

Danny Thomas, District 5B. No, I'm ready to go to work, so let's (indiscernible).

DEC REP KUNTZE: Say that again, Danny.

(Crosstalk.)

VSO COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Let's go to work, and follow Jackie and me. Let's go. Thank you.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. We'll move on to Unfinished Business. There is a typo on the minutes. For your clarification, it is not Post 131; it is Post 313 out of Arnett, Oklahoma.

Adjutant Redden, would you like to address this, sir?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: This post went out of business. Their deed included a provision that the property would revert to the Ellis County Fair Association. Our judge advocate at the time, William Teel, sent them a letter and said we would execute a quitclaim deed. We never did.

I'm just seeking permission that, on behalf of the DEC, I can go ahead and execute a deed transferring the property back to the Ellis County Fair Association as our original agreement and deed said. So, that's it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. So, with that said, I will entertain a motion to allow our adjutant to successfully and completely execute the quitclaim deed.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo May, District 7. I make that motion.

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 153. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I have a motion on the floor and a second.

Any discussion?

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Yes, sir.

John McNeal, District 6 First Vice. This is an action in regard to a post that's closed?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That is correct, sir.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: The requirement from National to close a post is that all assets are disposed of prior to closing or cancelation.

So, how did we do that?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That post was closed long before about 90 percent of this body was in the room.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Yeah, I understand, but it doesn't mean it was correctly closed because National mandates all assets must be disposed of prior to charter cancelation and closure.

If that's incorrect, somebody --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: So, herein lies the problem: Nobody realized that was in the records, and so what happened is that property became property of the Department when it should have went back to Ellis County.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: So a bad thing happened in that regard. We didn't do anything?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Roger.
DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: All right.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: And --
DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Thank you, sir. Go ahead.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm not going to call upon the lawyer in the room because I don't want him to speak about this issues.
(Laughter.)
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: However, as I understand it, state law takes precedence over our Legion rules. And so, in this case, the state law governing that particular transaction included this notion of automatic referral back to them if the post ever ceased to exist.
DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: I understand.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: So I'm just trying to get it off our books.
DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: And what's the post number? I'm sorry.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: 313.
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: 313.
DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Thank you.
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yes, sir?
DEPARTMENT GENERAL COUNSEL HARRISON:

Jared Harrison, Department General Counsel. Rick doesn't want the attorney to talk, but he's going to, real quick, anyway.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT GENERAL COUNSEL HARRISON: This is all highly technical. To John's point, it's one of those that, I think, has technically come to the department, but we have to get it conveyed on as the adjutant said.

One thing I would, though, suggest is maybe to amend the motion to also authorize the adjutant to sign an affidavit noting that the post was closed, the assets became those of the Department. That way, when a title examiner comes to look at it, you see it was owned by the post, something happened, here is what happened, and now we understand why the Department is conveying it to the fair association.

So I would make that one recommendation, but otherwise, I think the adjutant nailed it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That was pro bono; right?

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT GENERAL COUNSEL HARRISON: Round up. Six minutes.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right.

DEC REP HALE: Doug Hale, DEC, District 7, Post 091, Weatherford. There's property all over this state that we own that we don't even know about yet.

When I was district commander of 7, I found out we owned a building in Erick, Oklahoma. It's a long story. I won't get into it. But when I found out about it, I went to Erick with the help of a gentleman that used to live there and that lives in Weatherford now. Anyway, we gave that property to the city of --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Dale, so I agree with you, but if you have the knowledge of those particular parcels, if you could, forward those, for time constraints.

DEC REP HALE: We've already taken care of that. That's taken care of. But we also own property in Leedey, Oklahoma.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay.

DEC REP HALE: We own two lots, and I couldn't get rid of it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. If you could, forward that information to Department so we can try to address that, but stay on topic for today because we still have a lot of things to go over today.

Regarding this particular issue, any other questions? Comments? Hearing none, all in favor, say

"aye."

Oh, I'm sorry.

Can you make an amendment to your motion, please, sir?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Yeah. I make an amendment to my motion to let Rick take care of the property, whatever.

(Laughter.)

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: I make an amendment to the motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Including the affidavit?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Including the affidavit, yes.

DEC REP DEER: I second to amend the motion for the affidavit.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

All in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

All right. Attorney?

DEPARTMENT GENERAL COUNSEL HARRISON: I would

suggest this be taken care of in executive session.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. I had asked that question and was told it was no longer necessary, at that point.

DEPARTMENT GENERAL COUNSEL HARRISON: Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: But you're our attorney, so if you feel that way, then we will table that until we get to...

DEPARTMENT GENERAL COUNSEL HARRISON: Let's do, since it's not a done deal at this point. I know there's been discussion. Let's wait and do that in executive, please.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. Will do.

All right. So we will move on to the --

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: I've got one thing here. Elmo May, District 7 Commander. I got approval in DEC 1 to close Post 176 in Vici. I transferred everybody from that post. There's nobody in the post.

Next week I'm going out there to get with the former commander. We're going to pull all of the assets out of the bank, close the account, and then we're going to move all of the money to Gage, which is the post that all the members went to. The three that were transferred, they went to Gage.

And then I'm going to go ahead and close everything

out, fill out the paperwork, give to Rick, and take care of Vici.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I have a question about that. Have you been following and have in hand the checklist of closing a post?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: I've got the checklist at home, and I started filling it out and everything. We have the checklist.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: So, for today, there's no action needed on that, then?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: No. No. I just want to give everybody an update because I did start it at DEC 1.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. Thank you.

All right. We will move into New Business.

First thing on the docket is going to be handled by District 1B Commander regarding Post 1776, or the potential of that.

Andrew?

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: Andrew Fisher, District 1B Commander. We have an application for temporary charter to start a new post in Tulsa, Post 1776. So it will be located on the west side of Tulsa.

We do have the 15 members. We have the forms.

Currently, there is not permission for a namesake. There is conversation with a namesake family. Just waiting on the final approval. Just waiting on one member of the family to approve it.

I've already sent this on to State -- or on to the department, but other than that, that's it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: No action is necessary at this point?

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: Roger.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: If he wants me to forward that to National, yes. This body has to agree to opening a new post.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Right. But until the forms are complete with the namesake, we --

(Crosstalk.)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: They can do that later.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: We have a TBD form already signed.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: To be determined?

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: Yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: Yes. And it's already signed. It's turned in.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right.

So, then, I will look for an action for the creation of Post 1776.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RECTOR: Kayla Rector, 2A Commander. I motion that we open Post 1776.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Approve.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RECTOR: Approve.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Karen Ritter, 1A District Commander. I'll second that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. I have a motion on the floor and a second.

Any questions or comments?

DEC REP GORDON: I have a question.

Is it going to be a Sands Springs Post 1776?

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: No. That was a typo. It is Tulsa.

DEC REP GORDON: Tulsa. Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That was my mistake. It doesn't happen very often.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: All right. Can I say one thing real quick?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Go for it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: All right.

So, as the new commander of Post 1776, we will donate $100 to the --

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. Any updates, sir, on the 501(c)(3) that you have beyond it's still pending?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Rick Redden, Department Adjutant.

So, August 1st was the date we sent the 501(c)(3) application to the IRS. I have not received our determination letter. Talking to a few other people, we're getting close, I think, just in terms of the time frames I've heard about.

I will remind the Fundraising Committee and the other people: The IRS, on their website, plainly states that we can, while we're in pending status, accept donations, and that the donating company can take them off of their income taxes, as normal. The caution being is if they disapprove use, we have to notify the donor that he can't take the tax deduction. We may or may not

return the money, apparently.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: But we have to tell them.

Though, as the conservative guy that I am, I would be reluctant to do that, especially since we have a conduit through American Legion charities to accept a donation.

So that's the status. I hope to hear soon. August 1 was the application date.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any questions?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. Mid-Winter Conference registration and banquet.

Mr. Redden.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm looking for advice and approval of the cost of any for registration for Mid-Winter and then a discussion and whether or not you want me to put together a banquet.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. So we will take those as separate items. So we'll start with registration for Mid-Winter. What say you?

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, 1A DEC. I move that we charge something for registration because even though there's going to be no cost for the facility,

we're still going to get costs. I mean, there's administrative cost. There's printing cost.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I would suggest --

DEC REP GORDON: There's things that we can't even --

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: -- suggest that you move a specific amount, though.

DEC REP GORDON: Do you have a suggestion for a specific amount?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I do not.

DEC REP GORDON: I move that anybody who registers before the date of the conference gives a $20 registration fee, no penalty. Twenty dollars straight up, even if they walk in the door and register.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. I have a motion on the floor to charge a $20 registration fee for Mid-Winter Conference.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Eric Grubbs, 5B Commander. I second that motion for $20.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I have a motion and a second on the floor.

Any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same

sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries. All right. We will move on to the second part of that: banquet.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I've only approached one hotel, the Embassy Suites. We're looking at a cost per person from anywhere from $45 to $65 based on menu.

(Crosstalk.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Keep the sidebars down, please.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Jack Sikes, 3B. I make the motion we don't have a banquet.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay.

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, 1A DEC. I second that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I have a motion on the floor and a second to go this Mid-Winter with no banquet and leave you all to feed yourselves. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

All right. So it's going to be a dark hour. So I was handed a resignation letter from our amazingly awesomest [sic] department adjutant, Rick Redden. Unfortunately and initially, he had submitted it for June 30, and I begged and pleaded and got him to go to at least July 31st to get us through the summer convention.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Any particular year?

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: He did not actually include that.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. So herein lies the problem: Obviously, we cannot extend his contract and, you know, keep him --

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Stop loss.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: -- stop loss him.

So, as those of you that have been around for any length of time, when we go into a situation where we do not have a --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Adjutant.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: -- a properly trained -- with all of the different things that go on behind the scenes, it put us in a little bit of chaos.

So, with that said, me and Rick had a lot of discussion while we were in Indianapolis last week. So what I would like to do, because we have obviously made a huge inroad in our budget, obviously, we're still not where we want to be, but the fact of the matter is we cannot go into the turmoil of trying to have an adjutant self-train.

So what we are looking at trying to do is 90 days prior to Mr. Redden retiring, giving him the authority to hire his replacement and spend 90 days with him in office, getting them up to speed. That will help, obviously, his workload with planning a department convention and so on and so forth.

So, Mr. Redden.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I do not want the authority to hire somebody. I can't anyway. However, what I can do is have one or more candidates ready for your approval at DEC 3 [sic], which will be sometime in March. I do not want to do this alone, so I would like y'all to consider a temporary search committee to work with me. Thank you.

DEC REP GORDON: Correction: DEC 4.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Thank you.

Four, in March.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. So, to

paraphrase, I am looking for an action to allow Adjutant Redden to identify a candidate to bring before us at a later DEC, to hire our replacement to carry on the mission at headquarters.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Jack Sikes, 3B. Commander, I make a motion that we establish a hiring committee for our future adjutant with Rick's oversight as chairman on it.

DEC REP HOPKINS: Melvin Hopkins, Post 157. I second that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I have a motion on the floor to create an oversight committee, headed by Mr. Redden, to start that process of trying to find our next adjutant.

Any discussion?

DEC REP WATSON: Larry Watson, 6B. Was that also to include 90 days of training?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: No. Two separate motions, sir.

Any further discussion?

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: John McNeal, 6B First Vice. Would we want to submit that committee's goal of identifying to the DEC, March DEC, that candidate? We need to put that in that motion. I think we do. Thank you, sir.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. So, amending the motion to have that oversight committee identify a candidate to be approved by the DEC by DEC 4.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: No later than.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: No later than. Okay.

DEC REP HOPKINS: I second that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. We have clarification on that.

Any further discussion?

DEC REP DEER: There's no reason we couldn't do this at Winter Conference, also.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Chances are we're probably not going to be -- you're going to be hard-pressed to find somebody to be identified in January that's not ready to start work for another six months or five months. So we'll push it up closer to the date, but thank you.

DEC REP DEER: So you're saying, when we identify this person, they're not getting paid for that training period?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: No. I don't want to identify somebody at Mid-Winter DEC and have it approved, where they're not going to start until May 1st. That's a four and a half month window. So we're going to

push back so that when they identify by DEC 4 in March, April, we will, obviously, be able to get them started right away at May 1st, if this body approves the next motion to move forward.

DEC REP DEER: I see your point.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay.

DEPARTMENT VC EAST CRUICE: But it also said "no later than"; right? Karen Cruice.

DEC REP GORDON: Yeah, it says by DEC 4.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. Hearing no further discussion, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

All right. Now to the second part of that line item.

Do you want that 90-day approval now, or do you want to push it off until we get closer? What say you?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I will make the comment that, depending on what salary we settle on and offer to the new adjutant, I am willing to reduce or eliminate my salary for that 90-day period of training so that we aren't paying dual. It may mean that I work

part-time depending on how well the training goes. I'm joking.

But let's make sure that we have somebody in place by May 1 at a salary that will attract somebody that's doable within our budget constraints. We can't over-offer money we don't have. So, May 1, stop paying me; start paying the new guy. That's the idea.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: TBD.

DEC REP DEER: Why? Why not take the money?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'll tell you why I won't: Because we're at limited funds in this department, and I want us to be extremely successful. I don't want anything to fall through the cracks with me leaving, and the only way I can guarantee that is in giving my time. And guess what? I get plenty of reward, so I'm fine.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. So the part of the motion that I am going to request -- or the action that I'm going to request is to hire a replacement adjutant employed 90 days prior, effective May 1st so he has a 90-day overlap to learn the proper roles and necessities of making sure that the department continues to move smoothly. I am not going to add in the part of Rick giving up his pay. We will address that later.

DISTRICT COMMANDER KINGERY: Joe Kingery,

District 8A Commander. So moved.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a motion on the floor.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Karen Ritter, 1A District Commander. Second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a second.

Any discussion? Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

All right. Now, circling back to a prior conversation that happened earlier in this meeting, Mr. Redden, can you please explain what you foresee as a program at the prison as far as the -- our members creating these poppies?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I foresee that we approach them about making the poppies.

How many posts besides 353 are buying their poppies somewhere else? Are all of you using the Kansas Auxiliary or something else?

PDC MARTIN: We are, Rick -- Brett Martin, Post 12 -- but Kansas has a problem right now: They

don't have the workers to produce them.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: In any case, though, to give us an alternative to Kansas, use our two prisons, possibly our third. Those men do everything from knitting to quilting to keep themselves busy. I think this might be appropriate to them.

I think we should buy the poppies from them. I don't think we can actually give them money. So what I'm going to suggest is that we open up a fund for what we would normally pay the third party for the poppies, use that fund to pay their dues, to buy their uniform caps, other expenses that they have that they have no way of coming up with the funds to afford. So that's the general idea. The specifics, we'll have to work out over time.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Sam McPherson, Department Treasurer. We might want to double-check on that. Unless the rules have changed, the only people you can compensate for that were disabled veterans. That used to be in the deal about poppies. I'm not sure if that's still in there or not, but we need to check.

DEC REP GORDON: How about the cost of the poppy, though? I mean, you're reimbursing --

(Crosstalk.)

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, DEC 1A. Can you not compensate for the cost of the actual poppy?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: I'm saying we check the rules.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. Well, we can't move into discussion yet.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. Kind of falling on what Sam said, we need to make sure we don't have any copyright rules or anything else because poppies -- you know, there may be a problem with that.

Also, in the prisons, I think you're going to find you've got prison industries. There are ways for these people to get the money, so we need to be checking on that, too. Because you do have prison industry because they sell all kinds of office furniture and all kinds of things.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. So, with that said, I will table this until we can do a little bit more research on these particular concerns.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm curious. Do we need a motion even to set me to start the process, or just go ahead and start the process and see where we go? Which way is the census here?

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes,

Judge Advocate. You ought to be able to go ahead and start the process as long as we're not doing anything except checking on it.

FIRST VC MCNEAL: Without a motion, yeah.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Commander, I just think we need to -- 3B. I just think we need that in the minutes for future reference. If he's killed tomorrow, we won't have any record of him being --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Don't do that to me.

(Laughter.)

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Let's be real about it. Let's get it in the minutes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Fair enough. Fair enough. All right.

So I will entertain a motion to allow Mr. Redden to create a committee to do the research, so it's not all falling on him, as far as what it would take and what legal ways we can go about it so they can give us a presentation to us at DEC 3.

DEPARTMENT VC EAST CRUICE: I make a motion, and I also would like to add on to that, that we include Kim McInnis, Department Auxiliary President --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: On that committee?

DEPARTMENT VC EAST CRUICE: -- on that committee, as it's a poppy program of the Auxiliary.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. So the motion has been made to --

As co-chairs? As chair and vice chair?

DEPARTMENT VC EAST CRUICE: She can -- co-chair is fine.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay.

Are you willing to head that up, sir?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay.

I have a motion on the floor.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER/FO MCPHERSON: Sam McPherson, Treasurer. I second that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. I have a motion on the floor and a second.

Any discussion?

Yes, sir?

DEC REP KUNTZE: Don Kuntze, Post 353.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please stand up, sir.

(Laughter.)

DEC REP KUNTZE: Don Kuntze, 6A. As an aside, we had a poppy making machine in Muskogee, a great big

flywheel, an amputation waiting to happen, but it could be modified if it's still around. I don't know what happened to it. When we shut down the poppy factory in Muskogee many years ago, this thing was excess, and I don't know what happened to it. It punched out all the poppy pieces.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Do you want to try to find it?

DEC REP KUNTZE: Sure.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yes, sir?

FORMER POPPY CHAIRMAN BISHOP: John Bishop, former Poppy Chair once upon a time, Post 353, Mustang. The machine that created the poppy board and whatnot was wanted by the national organization to put in their museum, and I believe that --

(Laughter.)

FORMER POPPY CHAIRMAN BISHOP: That is true. That is true. Jim Quinn had the information on that, so that would be the easiest way to check that out.

DEC REP KUNTZE: I have a correction to that. When I was at National, I asked them about -- in the museum?

FORMER POPPY CHAIRMAN BISHOP: Yeah.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Their reply was, "Hell no."

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. Any other

discussion? All right.

DEC REP GORDON: I have something to add.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Please identify yourself.

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, DEC 1A. If they make poppies -- we used to make a lot of money on poppy board. Now, I know a lot of you guys are too new in the Legion to even know what a poppy board is.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: She can't hear you.

DEC REP GORDON: It was a board that had, like, a poppy poster, that maybe -- the kids had a poster contest, and they had a -- we used that as a poppy board. We put ten poppies on it and took it out to the businesses. Sometimes the businesses would just have it through Memorial Day. Sometimes they would have it the next year when I went back to do the next year's poster, or whatever, poppy board. But we made a lot more money on those than we did on the individual poppy donations, like, from the --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Ms. Gordon, communicate that through to Mr. Redden or Ms. McInnis.

DEC REP GORDON: If we could get boards included, that would be wonderful.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries. All right.

DEPARTMENT PARLIAMENTARIAN RECTOR: Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yes?

DEPARTMENT PARLIAMENTARIAN RECTOR: Can I make a statement?

Tyler Rector, Department Parliamentarian. So we did very good the first time, but just a reminder of the Rules of the DEC: To talk, you must stand and state your name and be recognized by the chairperson. This last little session, people just started talking. Do not forget that you must be recognized by the Chair and state your name before you begin speaking. Okay? Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

Any other New Business?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Do you guys want to push through, or you do you guys want to take a lunch?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Push.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. I will entertain a motion to go into executive session.

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 153. I make the motion to go into executive session.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: Andrew Fisher, District 1B Commander. I second that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a motion on the floor and a second.

Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: All right. Everybody that's not a member of the DEC needs to leave the room, with the exception that when we come back, we're inviting Mr. Harrison to stay to make a presentation and answer questions.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: We will take a ten-minute recess before we reconvene for the executive session.

Sergeant-at-Arms, with the Colors of our nation in place...

INTERIM SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Hand salute. Two.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Be back in ten

minutes.

(Whereupon, a brief recess and then executive session was held from 1:10 to 2:20. Thereafter, the following transpired in regular session:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I will entertain a motion to approve the settlement agreement in the lawsuit with past member Wright.

DEC REP GORDON: Debbie Gordon, DEC 1A. So moved.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Did you get a motion to come back in?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yeah.

Okay. I have a motion on the floor. Do I have a second?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo May, District 7 Commander. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. I have a motion from Debra Gordon. I have a second from Elmo May.

Any discussion?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: We already discussed it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: You're right. I apologize.

Okay. So, all in favor to approve the lawsuit agreement, to put it to rest, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEC REP GORDON: Are they all voting members?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: It was overwhelming, yes. There was only three or four that were not voting members.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: If you're not supposed to vote, don't say anything.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. Item Number 2. I will entertain a motion to approve the reinstatement of expelled member Greg James.

DISTRICT COMMANDER FISHER: District 1B Commander Andrew Fisher. I make said motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a motion on the floor.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Don Kuntze. Second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a second by Mr. Kuntze.

This motion is to approve the reinstatement. All in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That's close. All right. All in favor, raise your hand. All in favor of reinstating, raise your hand.

(Hands raised.)

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER SHERBOURNE: Seven.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Put them down. All opposed, raise your hand.

(Hands raised.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion fails. All right. I will entertain a motion whether or not to take action against Mr. Ice. I will entertain a motion to put an investigation in place in the case of Rex Ice.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: We have to have a charge on that.

(Crosstalk.)

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: I make the motion we let it go to rest.

(Crosstalk.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: I have a motion on the floor by Judge Advocate Dale Haynes to let it rest.

DISTRICT COMMANDER PIERSON: Second. Gary Pierson, 3A District Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. All in

favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion carries. No action on Item 4A.

Item 4B: To create a resolution, supported by the DEC, to rescind the support of National Commander Candidate Tim Smith.

PDC O'LEARY: All previous national commanders.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: No. They're individuals. We cannot charge them under the same one.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: You couldn't do it collectively anyway.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: That's what I just said.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: Yeah.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Right.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Judge Advocate Dale Haynes. I make a motion we let that one rest, too.

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: John McNeal, 6B First Vice. I second that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Okay. I have a motion on the floor to take no action.

I'm sorry. Who seconded that?

DISTRICT FIRST VC MCNEAL: I did.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you, John. Sorry.

All in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Any opposed, same sign.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: All right. All in favor, raise your hand.

(Hands raised.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Hands down.

All opposed, raise your hand.

(Hands raised.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Motion fails. I'm sorry. Motion passes.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Motion passes to fail.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Yes.

All right. All rise. Uncover.

Chaplain, please give us a benediction.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Heavenly Father, we ask your blessing upon us as we prepare to depart. Grant us safety driving home to our families. And we ask that you watch over us in the coming year as we use your

wisdom to make decisions.

In Jesus' name, amen.

COLLECTIVE GROUP: Amen.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Sergeant-at-Arms, please retrieve the POW/MIA chair cover.

(WHEREUPON, the POW/MIA chair cover was retrieved.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Ladies and gentlemen, please re-cover.

Comrades, till we meet again, let us remember our obligation to our country can be fulfilled only by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state, and nation be ever a main objective of the American Legion and its members. Let us be ever watchful of the honor of our country, our organization, and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, and democracy.

With the Colors of our nation in place...

INTERIM SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Hand salute. Two.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER THOMAS: Meeting adjourned.

The next meeting will be January 18th, immediately following Mid-Winter, approximately 13:00 at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

(WHEREUPON, the 2nd DEC meeting, held October 11, 2025, was concluded at 14:28 hours.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF OKLAHOMA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF MUSKOGEE)

I, Jessyca Guerra, Certified Shorthand Reporter within and for the State of Oklahoma, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a full, true, correct and complete transcript of my stenographic notes of the American Legion, Department of Oklahoma, Second Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting held October 11, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., at Mustang Town Center, 1201 N. Mustang Road, Mustang, Oklahoma.

WITNESS MY HAND THIS 29th day of October, 2025.

/s/ Jessyca Guerra
_____
Jessyca Guerra, CSR #2027

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