

# DEC 1 Minutes, July 12, 2026

## Transcript

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## Overview

The meeting began with honors to the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, the invocation, and POW/MIA honors given. Roll call confirmed a quorum . Reports included updates on the Blood Donor program, raffle ticket distribution, and a review of the Oklahoma American Legion College. The Finance Officer proposed a \$280,000 budget for 2026-2027, which was tabled. The DEC approved separate conventions for the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion. The Constitution and Bylaws Commission proposal was debated but failed. The meeting concluded with the approval of fall district meeting dates and a reminder to update contact information.

## Action Items

- Coordinate with national leadership to introduce additional legislation in the next congressional cycle to expand tinnitus and sleep apnea benefits for Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, and current Middle East conflicts.
- Send Nashville/VANR call-in registration information to all accredited VSOs with an OGC number who contact you after this report.
- Prepare and distribute updated blood donor program packets to all posts and ensure each district commander communicates the packet information to their posts. (John Bishop)
- Once the additional 5,000 raffle tickets arrive, personally deliver them to each post home using the existing waiting-list sign-out sheet, meeting halfway with any post commander who cannot come to the department office. (Chris Sherborn)
- Finalize the list of committee chairs and co-chairs by contacting remaining potential members, then send the proposed committee structure to DEC members. (Commander May)
- Continue gathering best-practice information on membership recruitment and retention, including identifying why members leave and how to engage younger veterans, and record findings to guide future membership strategy. (Vice Commander Cruice)
- Develop and implement a statewide membership competition between East and West, along with a handbook for district commanders and separate handbooks for key committees, to improve member engagement and retention.
- Implement a plan to provide direct support to veterans needing disability assistance, such as arranging needed handicap equipment and helping them enroll in mental health support programs.
- Work with Sons of the American Legion leadership to schedule and hold a separate detachment convention during the department convention weekend so dual/tri-member detachments can participate fully. (Chris Cook)

- Publish the October issue of the 1889 newsletter, incorporating all submitted stories, photos, obituaries, and planned activities received before the deadline. (Tina Kilmer)
- Reactivate the Constitution and Bylaws Committee under its existing structure and begin reviewing and updating the Department Constitution and Bylaws document toward completion.
- After DEC approval, convert the Constitution and Bylaws Committee into a rotating commission by defining four-year terms for members and establishing a formal appointment and rotation process consistent with Article X, Section 7 of the Bylaws.
- Distribute the approved continuing resolution authorizing payment of bills until October 10 to the appropriate finance and accounting staff so department obligations can be funded pending adoption of the final budget. (Sam McPherson)
- Complete the selection of chair appointments, finalize the list of appointees, and send it to DEC members. (Commander May)
- Post the finalized fall district convention dates and locations for all districts on the department website and social media channels once confirmed. (Mike Kerr)
- Establish a new 'Leadership' tab on the department website and use it to post schedules and details for both district meetings and senior leadership meetings as information becomes available. (Mike Kerr)
- Ensure district commanders forward the finalized dates and addresses for their district meetings to the Adjutant, who will then provide them to the media officer for posting. (District commanders)
- Design and implement a two-step email process for DEC votes: first a discussion message explaining the item and criteria, followed by a separate voting message with clear voting instructions and deadlines.
- Schedule and hold a monthly senior leadership meeting starting in August, with the exact date and time to be determined within the next week and communicated to all senior leaders. (Commander May)
- In early July or August, determine and announce the department's delegate and alternate selections for the upcoming National Convention, using the authorization numbers from National Headquarters. (Dept. Adjutant)

## Outline

### **Meeting Commencement, Honors to the Flag, Pledge of Allegiance, invocation, MIA/POW remembrance, Preamble to the Constitution.**

- Commander May calls the meeting to order and requests everyone to rise for the colors. Sgt. at Arms leads the pledge to the U.S. flag.
- The Pledge of Allegiance is recited, followed by the invocation by the department chaplain.
- Resolution is read, designating an empty chair in honor of POWs and MIAs as the Sgt at Arms covers the chair with MIA/POW honors.
- The Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion is recited.

## **Roll Call and Officer Reports**

- Adjutant Davis conducted the roll call, listing all officers and their presence.
- The quorum is confirmed with 29 voting members present.
- Jack Sikes, reports on the VANR committee and the upcoming national meeting in KY.
- John Bishop discussed the Blood Donor program and the need for better communication from district commanders.

## **Fundraising and Membership Activities**

- Chris Shelborn reported on the raffle tickets and the need for more tickets due to high demand.
- Chris Shelborn discussed the distribution of tickets and the possibility of electronic distribution.
- Hayden Woods, reported on the American Legion College in Spiro.
- John Bloxam reported on the convention site selection committee and the recommendation to return to the current location, which is approved.

## **Officer Reports and Membership Activities**

- Commander May discusses the formation of committees and the need for a vote on committee members.
- Senior Vice Commander Patricia Kerr, reports on membership activities and competition to engage members.
- Vice Commander East Karen Cruice, discusses responsibilities of district commanders and department committees.
- Vice Commander Cruice, discusses plans to help veterans with handicap equipment and the other programs.

## **Department Adjutant, Finance Officer and NEC Reports**

- Adjutant Stark Davis, reports on the Take Care of America's Veterans Act and the need for support from members of Congress.
- Finance Officer Sam McPherson, discusses the proposed budget for 2026-2027 and passes a continuing resolution to keep bills paid until DEC 2.
- Alternate National Executive Committeeman Mike Taylor, requests a moment of silence for the family of a DEC member.
- NEC Charlie Oleary gives a report on national policies and positions and the upcoming national convention opportunities for OK Legionnaires.

## **Constitution and Bylaws Commission Proposal**

- Debbie Gordon, proposes the creation of a Constitution and Bylaws Commission with four-year terms.
- Steve Thomas, points out the conflict of interest for the staff judge advocate to chair the commission.

- Commander May, discusses the need for a permanent committee and the possibility of converting the current committee to a commission.
- John Bloxam, emphasizes the importance of having a functioning committee that meets regularly.

### **Approval of National Convention Delegates**

- Rick Redden, suggests approving the delegates in early August based on the final number from national.
- Commander May, proposes letting the senior leadership make the decision on the number of delegates.
- Rich Conn, makes a motion to let the senior leadership decide the delegate representation, which is seconded by Sp Debbie Gordon.
- The motion passes, and the senior leadership will determine the number of delegates.

### **Selection of Fall District Convention Dates**

- Potential dates determined for the fall district conventions, with some dates already claimed by other events.
- Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 select their dates, with some dates still to be determined.
- Commander May emphasizes the importance of finalizing the dates before the holiday season.
- The selected dates are confirmed, with some districts having combined meetings.

### **Approval of Sons of the American Legion Convention**

- Scott Hilgenberg makes a motion to allow the Sons of the American Legion to hold their convention separately to assist with the department convention.
- Bobby Marshall, seconds the motion.
- The motion passes, and the Sons of the American Legion will hold their convention separately.

### **Good of the Legion and Final Remarks**

- Don Kunsy, asks about the continuation of senior leadership meetings and communication.
- Don Kunzy confirms the plan to hold senior leadership meetings monthly and encourages participation from past department commanders and district commanders.
- Mike Kerr, Media Communications, reminds everyone to update their contact information and check the website for meeting details.
- Commander May concludes the meeting, thanking everyone for their participation and reminding them of their obligations to the community, state, and nation. Flag Salute led by Sgt at Arms.