

145th Annual Encampments
Pennsylvania Department
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
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Meeting Called to Order 1:00 PM

Three Raps

Chaplain opens the Bible

Commander Fischer: Please remember that attendance at events hosted by the Sons of Union, Veterans of the Civil War, by virtue of their attendance, agree to the usage of their likeness in the banner, the battle cry of freedom, any camp newsletter, or any SUVCW website, and or any SUVCW social media outlet, promotional brochures, or any other SUVCW material. Likewise, no one shall post to any social media outlet or website, or by any other means of communication, any live or video recordings or selected video clips from any business sessions of this encampment. This requirement is in accordance with General Order Number 7, Series 2021-2022, as issued by then Commander-in-Chief Michael Paquette.

Also, please ensure that you silence all of your electronic devices. The officers and members of the 145th Annual Encampment of the Pennsylvania Department, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, will now come to order.

We will have the presentation and posting of the colors. **(Three Raps)**

Guide, determine if all present are entitled to remain. Color bearer, please assist the guide as needed. Please get out your membership cards.

If you don't have your membership card, if there's somebody that can vouch for you, please do. May I have one of the color guard take position as color bearer. Are all entitled to remain.

Guide: Commander. All are entitled to remain.

Commander Fischer: Thank you.

The secretary will call the role of officers of the encampment.

(Secretary Calls Roll. Council 1 Ivan Franz, PDC absent /excused. Council 3 Dane DiFebo, PDC absent /excused)

Commander Fischer: The following brothers are appointed to fill vacancies during the encampment.

Council member, Past Department Commander Doug McMillan,

Brother Blattner. I was going to have assistant guides. If you need assistance, please feel free to call on the guard to assist. Thank you.

And we will also need to ensure that we have escorts when the sisters visit. Yeah, when we find out when they want to come.

Commander Fischer: Brothers, upon which principles is our order founded and what duties do we inculcate?

Members in Unison: Fraternity, charity, and loyalty.

Commander Fischer: Brothers, we meet again as Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in annual session to review the work of the past and plan for the future. May our conduct and our deliberations be marked by mutual tolerance and fraternal courtesy, ever keeping in mind our duty to our country, to our order, and to ourselves.

The department chaplain will invoke the divine blessing.

Chaplain: Our Heavenly Father, the high and mighty ruler of the universe, Who looks down upon the government of men, we earnestly ask Your favor to bless our native land and preserve in purity and integrity its free institutions for all coming time. Bless our Order. Grant that it may long exist, and that it may continue to be an instrument of great good to all. Give us willing hands and ready hearts to carry out properly its principles and objectives. Keep green in our minds the memory of those who sacrificed so much that the life of the nation might be preserved, and deal with them in all things with Your special mercy. Give us Your aid in conducting the business for which we are assembled, and so bless us that Charity and Justice, and Peace and Harmony shall remain and flow from us. Amen.

Members in Unison: Amen

Commander Fischer: Brothers, we will now give the Pledge of Allegiance. Color bearer, if you would just hold the staff of the colors. We don't need to pull it out, just have the color bearer hold the staff. Trying to prevent accidents.

Brothers,

Members in Unison: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Commander Fischer: The patriotic instructor will lead us in singing the battle hymn of the Republic. I know that we already, please remain standing. I know that we already sang it for the memorial service, but now we're singing it for our own encampment.

Members in Unison: *(Singing of the Battle Hymn of the Republic)*

Commander Fischer: By virtue of the authority vested in me, I hereby declare the 145th annual encampment of the Pennsylvania Department's Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, duly open for the transaction of such business as may legally and properly come before it. The guard will admit all brothers qualified to enter. Guide, please retire and escort past Commander-in-Chief Michael Paquette as the representative of Commander-in-Chief Kevin L. Martin to the altar.

As many of you know, Brother Paquette is a dual member of Crowther Camp 89 in Tyrone. Past Commander-in-Chief, we welcome you. Brothers, welcome.

Let's try that one more time. Brothers, welcome. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: If you will please join me and Guide, please retire. Thank you. And my apologies, I should have had you all standing for that.

Brother Paquette, would you care to address the encampment at this time?

PCinC Mike Paquette: I can bring a few words of welcome.

Commander Fischer: I'll have you speak later also.

PCinC Mike Paquette: So, brothers, I had planned to be here at the encampment regardless.

I always enjoy spending this particular weekend with all of you here in June. Let me pass on condolences from Commander-in-Chief Martin, who can't be here. Two nights ago, his mother was taken to the ER, and she remains in the hospital.

She's responsive but not very well, so he's not comfortable leaving home right now. Family matters obviously take precedence here. So he asked me to go ahead and stand in for him, and I'm very happy to do so.

So thank you for the welcome. I've had some good conversations with a number of you already, and I look forward to additional conversations throughout the weekend. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Brother Rob, can you give a preliminary credential update? Thank you.

Secretary reads off mic: (inaudible)

Commander Fischer: In accordance with Pennsylvania Department Bylaws Article 2, Section 1, a quorum is present.

Appointment of Encampment Committees.

I appoint the following brothers to the Encampment Bylaws Committee. Chairman, Past Department Commander McNulty. Member, Past Department Commander Essenwein. Member, Past Camp Commander Kreider. This committee shall review any proposed

amendments to the bylaws which arise at the encampment. If necessary, they will meet and later present their recommendations to the encampment.

I appoint the following brothers to the Encampment Resolutions and Officers Reports Committee. Chairman, Past Department Commander McMillan. Member, Past Department Commander Carty. Member, Past Camp Commander and Senior Vice Department Commander Peter. This committee shall review any recommendations from officers and committee reports which arise at this encampment. If necessary, they will meet and later present their recommendations to the encampment.

I appoint the following brothers to the Constitution and Regulations Committee. Chairman, Past Camp Commander and Junior Vice Department Commander Zeman. And with his concurrence, Member, Past Commander-in-Chief Paquette. Member, Past Camp Commander Lafey. This committee shall review any Constitution and Regulations issues which arise at this encampment. If necessary, they will meet and later present their findings to the encampment.

I appoint the following brother as the Encampment Fraternal Relations Officer. Past Department Commander McNulty. Brother McNulty will apprise me and the Encampment Site Committee of any issues arising with our Allied Order Sisters meeting here in convention.

Some housekeeping rules. We will be operating under Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised 12th edition, as the governing factor for parliamentary procedures. The officers, committee chairman, and camp commanders, per Pennsylvania Department tradition, shall not read their reports.

For discussion on motions, please move to the microphone and wait until you are recognized by the chair. State your name, position, and camp. Limit individual discussions to no more than three minutes per time and no more than twice per motion.

This will ensure we are able to move through the items of business in a timely manner. The chair reserves the right to further limit discussion if need be. As previously stated, any reports which contain recommendations to amend the department bylaws or any motions to amend the bylaws will be referred to the Encampment Bylaws Committee.

As previously stated, any reports that contain recommendations other than amending the bylaws will be referred to the Encampment Resolutions and Officers Reports Committee.

As previously stated, any issues arising concerning the Constitution and Regulations will be referred to the Constitution and Regulations Committee.

If there is no discussion on a report, the report shall be considered accepted by the Encampment with the drop of the gavel.

At the sound of the gavel prior to the election of officers, no one outside the room will be allowed to enter until the session is completed. When called upon to vote, please raise your hand so it can be seen, not like this.

As per Robert's Rules of Order, please remember that we deal with only one motion at a time, and sometimes that gets to be a challenge.

If you have any issues with your room or hotel facilities, please attempt to resolve them first with the hotel desk staff. If resolution is not possible, then please speak with the Site Committee Chairman, Bob Wrigley.

Finally, please conduct all business of this department in the spirit of fraternity, charity, and loyalty.

That should not be in question. Sometimes it gets a little heated, but let's keep that in mind.

Before we proceed further, I wish to acknowledge special department milestones.

Members of George W. Mears Camp 505, do we have any present? The camp is celebrating its first year of chartering, so we congratulate them. It was my honor to present the charter and install the officers last fall.

Members of Captain George A. Cribbs Camp 276, please rise.

The camp is celebrating its first year of rechartering. Congratulations. Those camp brothers have done the work to help grow our department.

Unfortunately, the Commander-in-Chief, upon recommendation by me as department commander with concurrence of the department-elected officers, revoked the charter for Captain Theodore H. Howell Camp 48, a long-existing camp, after being under suspension for more than two years and after having a routine history of suspension for untimely report filings.

Are there any other Pennsylvania Department Camp special anniversaries that should be recognized?

Reports of officers. The reports of the officers, committees, and camps are published in the booklet you received when you registered.

Per tradition, I shall read my department commander's report. Before I do, I pass the gavel to Senior Vice Department Commander Peter.

All right, my commander's report.

Thank you, brothers, for your confidence in electing me as Pennsylvania Department Commander for 2024-2025. I have endeavored to fulfill expectations and further the mission of our department and order. I sincerely thank the elected and appointed department officers for sharing in the joys and burdens of department leadership.

I also humbly thank our camp officers and brothers who do the work at the local level, along with our allied order sisters, as we together seek to honor and remember the boys in blue who saved the United States between 1861 and 1865. We have the largest department in the order, and while our influence within the order has waned over recent memory, the

legacy and traditions of the Pennsylvania Department has set the standard of excellence for our order. We must continue to demonstrate to the public that it was the sacrifices made during those dark days of a war for national survival and individual liberty that enabled the United States to become the savior of the free world during the 20th century and to continue to positively influence world affairs today.

Indeed, the boys in blue and their spouses on the home front set the example. They are the grandparents of the greatest generation, and the public needs to know that. My one stated goal during my short tenure as commander was to improve communications across the department.

I believe I have begun that process, first by hitting the road to attend camp meetings and events, and second by holding Zoom meetings with department elected officers and camp commanders and secretaries on alternating months. Virtual meeting turnout has been very good, with up to 30 camp commanders and secretaries attending those meetings. Many in attendance have stated to me that putting faces to brothers across the department whom they only knew by name and by sharing ideas and activities has built fraternity for the Pennsylvania Department.

I urge my successor to continue to build on that momentum. Being retired and having a very understanding life has afforded me the ability to crisscross the Pennsylvania Department to support camp activities, resulting in approximately 12,707 miles driven to attend all PA department camps, except for Anna M. Ross Camp 1, which never let me know when camp meetings or officer installation were to occur. Action since taking command, in addition to my routine camp-aid activities, follow, and please bear with me.

There's a lot in 12,000-plus miles. July 5th, I worked with Brother Doug McMillan to move SUVCW materials formerly housed in the GAR Museum, Philadelphia, from a 10-by-10 climate-controlled storage unit to a 5-by-5, actually 5-by-4 as we found out, storage unit at U-Haul in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. July 7th, attended virtual Gilder Lehrman Institute book break presentation by Professor Alan Taylor on his book American Civil Wars, A Continental History, 1850-1873.

July 13th, attended Eaton Camp's last veteran of Mercer County ceremony for Private William Bailey in Oak Hill Cemetery, Sandy Lake, Pennsylvania. August 1st through 4th, attended the SUVCW National Encampment, Lexington, Kentucky. August 17th, visited gravesite of Corporal John Conner, United States Colored Troops, in Clay Street Cemetery, Fairbanks, Alaska, who was recognized as the last Civil War veteran in Alaska.

September 7th, along with Department Secretary Rob Koenigsberg, presented the charter to Captain George A. Cribbs, Camp 276, at St. John's, Harold, UCC, Hemfield Township, Westmoreland County, PA. Also participated in the grave rededication ceremony for Captain Cribbs in the adjoining cemetery. September 14th, attended the last veteran of Bucks County, and being the same, the last veteran of Pennsylvania, ceremony for Sergeant Charles Duckworth in Newtown, PA.

He died in 1946. Thanks to Baker Fisher 101 for hosting that. September 28th, attended the last veteran of Perry County ceremony for Private Abraham Ellenberger in Marysville, Pennsylvania.

Thanks to Heart Ramp 15 for hosting that. October 19th, conducted special encampment to restore PCC honors for three department brothers, then held mid-year meeting, Mechanicsburg, PA. October 26th, attended Tri-Camp Social, hosted by Campbell Camp 14, Crowther Camp 89, and Mount Union Church Camp 502 in Evansburg, PA.

October 27th, submitted Pennsylvania Department report to the National Chief of Staff for the Council of Administration meeting in Gettysburg. And I'll say as an aside, it's really an embarrassment if a department commander does not submit a report. There's no reason for that.

November 2nd, attended the Colonel Cummins Civil War Gala, co-hosted by Mount Union Church Camp 502 in Somerset, PA. November 3rd, conducted Brindle Camp 50 Officer Installation, Carlisle, PA. November 11th, attended the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars Remembrance Ceremony in Troop, PA, suburb of Scranton.

I met the mayor, an immediate post-Korean War Air Force veteran who was in his upper 80s and serving as the mayor of this little burg. You know, his life has been service. It was great meeting him.

November 12th, attended Seven Shays Camp 7 meeting in Anvil, PA. November 13th, conducted the Garfield Camp 34 Officer Installation, Mount Carmel, PA. November 15th, visited with Executive Director Demme in Harrisburg, PA.

Then attended the Pennsylvania Allied Orders informal dinner at Thurmont, Maryland in advance of Remembrance Day. November 16th, attended the 150th Pennsylvania Volunteer Ceremony honoring the Bucktail Brigade. Attended the George Meade Society Ceremony.

Attended and placed the Pennsylvania Department wreath at the GAR Wilson Monument. Marched in the parade with the Pennsylvania Department Color Guard from Eaton Camp 504 all at Remembrance Day weekend in Gettysburg. November 20th, attended Pennsylvania Department Encampment Site Committee Zoom to listen in on committee issues.

December 5th, visited the National Air Force Museum of Canada, Trenton, Ontario. I spoke with a docent who was a veteran about the Halifax bomber on display. Interestingly, it was built in Canada and it's the only restored, cosmetically restored, World War II Halifax bomber variant in existence.

A little bit smaller than the Lancaster that the RAF flew. I again visited on the 12th of May to walk through the outdoor Memorial Air Park. And I made a few comments about that visit during the ceremony held last month by Brindle Camp.

December 7th, attended the joint Heart Ramp 15, Goban Camp 503 luncheon in Sunbury and installed both camps' officers. December 14th, presented Mears Camp 505 with their charter and installed camp officers, Muncie, Pennsylvania. Then drove to Wimber, Pennsylvania for Campbell Camp 14's holiday dinner and officer installation.

Had planned to drive to Somerset, Pennsylvania the next day, but I projected heavy freezing rain caused the meeting cancellation, which was a good thing. Thanks to Department Secretary Koenigsberg for conducting the Camp 502 installation the next week. December 18th, conducted Gore Camp 141 officer installation, Ulster, Pennsylvania.

December 28th, conducted Griffin Camp 8 officer installation via Zoom since they had not had a quorum when the camp met earlier in the month. And I was on the road. January 10th, conducted the Crowther Camp 89 officer installation, Bellwood, Pennsylvania.

January 11th, conducted the Thomas Camp 19 officer installation in Millersville, Pennsylvania. Thanks to Junior Vice Department Commander Zeman for conducting the same day Baker Fisher Camp 101 officer installation in Hatboro, Pennsylvania. January 12th, conducted Crawford Camp 43 officer installation via Zoom while I was sitting in a closed bank parking lot in Hershey.

I had been in York earlier that day to install the Rule Camp brothers, but I left before they arrived. I talked to Brother Ivan later in that day, and I thank him for conducting the installation that I missed. January 14th, conducted the Seven Shays Camp 7 officer installation, Anvil, Pennsylvania.

January 18th, conducted Davis Star Camp officer installation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. January 26th, conducted Eaton Camp 504 officer installation, Mercer, Pennsylvania. February 1st, conducted Cribs Camp 276 officer installation, Hemfield Township near Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

February 5th, met with past Commander-in-Chief Paquette in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to discuss matters of mutual concern. February 8th, attended the Lincoln Luncheon hosted by Goban Camp 503, Sunbury, Pennsylvania. February 25th, attended the Pennsylvania Department Encampment Site Committee Zoom to listen in on committee issues.

March 2nd, submitted the Pennsylvania Department report to Chief of Staff Horgan for the Council of Administration meeting in Springfield, Illinois. March 2nd, attended GAR Museum Zoom presentation, Black History in the Philadelphia Landscape, which included the legacy of Philly's black Civil War veterans. March 8th, attended Baker Fisher Camp 101 meeting, Hatboro, Pennsylvania.

March 11th, attended Washington Camp 120 meeting and had the pleasure of installing a new brother in Washington, Pennsylvania. March 15th, attended the Searfoss Camp 273 meeting in Stockertown, Pennsylvania. March 17th, Commander-in-Chief Martin issued General Order 15 revoking the Captain Theodore H. Howell Camp 48 Charter.

During my administration, I worked with department elected officers to compile information regarding the repeated failure of Camp 48 to submit forms in a timely manner over many years. And while remaining suspended for that reason since the 6th of March, 2023. After no return call following a voicemail I left with the camp commander and their continued Memorial Day activities in 2023 and 2024, while under suspension under the guise of the SUV CW Howell Camp 48, the only and final option was to request revoking the charter, which only the Commander-in-Chief is authorized to do.

Following issuance of General Order 15, I sent letters via registered mail with signature required to the camp commander and secretary, notifying them that the camp is dissolved and camp property needed to be returned. After receipt of the letters, I had calls from Sean Cromer, the former camp treasurer, and Donald Cromer, his father, the former camp commander. Interesting how that happened.

The conversations, I'm very thankful, were cordial. And I suggested that they look into obtaining non-profit status as an independent entity with no SUVCW reference in order to continue their Memorial Day activities, which had been going on with that camp for more than 100 years. And they thought that that was a good idea and they've been pursuing it and working on that non-profit status as an independent under a different name.

I also mailed a letter to the United States Army stating that Howell Camp 48 had been disbanded by the SUVCW and that the order and the Pennsylvania Department had no responsibility for the ceremonial rifles that the camp had been issued and used for decades. Disposition is strictly between the United States Army and former camp members. I've been working to recover camp property, but the former commander, Cromer, knows nothing about a camp charter.

It has become evident that Howell Camp 48 was a paper camp using the SUVCW and the Pennsylvania Department non-profit status for its benefit. The camp somehow filed the required 990N annually with the IRS, but could not timely file annual or other SUVCW required reports. I wish the former camp members success as an independent non-profit in continuing honoring local Civil War veterans.

And just for a short update about that, I've had calls with Sean Cromer and they have no record of a charter, they have no record of a camp flag. He is in the process of sending me the last six months of their bank account and a check with the remaining balance in it. I had not received that before I left to come here.

I just found out today from Executive Director Demme that there is actually a photocopy, a black and white photocopy, of Howell Camp's charter at National Headquarters. So at least we do have that historical document, not the original, but we have that record. So I thank Brother Demme and Brother McMillan for checking on that.

All right. All Brother Demme. March 22nd, I attended my testimonial dinner hosted by Griffin Camp 8, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

I truly appreciate all who organized and who attended this memorable event. April 2nd, 2-11, thanks to Senior Vice Department Commander Peter for assuming command of the department during my Ireland vacation. Somehow I knew by January I was going to need a vacation and it was quite enjoyable.

No cars. No cars. We flew to Dublin, took the tram around for a day, took the train to Athlone in the Midlands, walked around that little town in the big castle for a couple days, took the train to Galway, spent four days in Galway, and took the train back to Dublin.

So no cars for ten days or so. That was very nice. Thanks again, Brother Peter.

April 26th, attended the Bradbury Camp 149 meeting in Westchester, Pennsylvania. May 1st, presented the Cadet Award at Wilkes University Air Force ROTC in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. I attended, on May 3rd, the Barnhart Tent, Daughters No.

56 60th Anniversary Luncheon in the thriving metropolis of Pleasant Unity, and I appreciated Brother Bray and Cribs Secretary Ken Williams being there as well. May 7th, the Cadet Award's a whole other story, but I drove two Cadet Award packages that were inadvertently mailed to me by National to 7 Shays Camp 7 to Commander Weissman's home in Lebanon, PA, because the awards were only a day or two away. Fortunately, Brother Weissman was able to present one and got the other to the other junior ROTC unit in Reading in time for that presentation.

May 17th, attended the A.P. Davis Memorial Service in Allegheny Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA, hosted by Davis Star Camp. May 25th, attended the last veteran of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania ceremony hosted by Brindle Camp 50. June 18th to the 22nd, I'm here.

I thank the Department Encampment Committee, Brother Wrigley and Brother Johnston, for their diligent work. As those of you who have worked with our sisters, sometimes things go smoothly and other times not quite so. So thank you very much.

I hosted Pennsylvania Department elected officer calls via Zoom to share information on July 16th, September 17th, November 19th, January 21st, March 18th, and May 20th. I hosted Pennsylvania Department camp commander and secretary calls via Zoom to share information on October 29th, December 17th, February 18th, April 15th, and June 17th, this past Tuesday. And while I appreciate everybody calling in, I especially appreciate Brother Bray, who was usually sitting in the back of his semi, either somewhere in Quebec or Indiana or somewhere else.

Everybody who attended, I mean, that's dedication to us trying to fulfill our mission. So thank you very much. I also thank webmaster Kevin Kuhn for adding the likeness disclaimer, as mentioned before we started our encampment, as a footnote on every page of the Pennsylvania Department website.

I noted that was the case on the Department of New York website, and I asked Kevin to see about doing that for our website, and he did. We always need to remember that disclaimer. Remember to include it on all department camp social media posts, websites, brochures, and programs, since it is a standing general order for everyone's legal protection.

It's not just busy work. With agreement of the department elected officers, I had the webmaster remove contact information, email addresses, addresses, and phone numbers from the Pennsylvania Department website to try and reduce phishing scams, because Brother Kevin told me within a day of things being posted that I was the department commander, that folks were asking for gift cards in my name from India or other places. So we then ensured that that contact information for the elected officers and the camp commanders and secretaries, all that personal information, if you will, did go out to the camp commanders and secretaries to be able to share with brothers in their camps with a note that it was for official use only.

So the scams continue. That's the situation we're in, but I think that it has reduced them, and by now most brothers know that no department officer is ever going to ask for gift cards. I assisted several brothers seeking membership in camps closer to their homes.

I repeatedly reached out via emails and phone calls to Frank Spano, organizer for Matson Camp 506 in Valley Forge, including Tuesday night before I had my camp commander Zoom call. I leave voicemails. Brother Rob has called and left voicemails.

We get absolutely no response. It would be nice if he said we've given up trying to organize. The bottom line is about two weeks from now the opportunity for that camp to form and get their form 54 and 55 or whatever they are in is over, and it's not because we have not tried to assist them in any way possible.

Again, no communications, and honestly, while it's disappointing, if this is the kind of response we're getting trying to form, what would have been the response when we have reports that need to go to Brother Rob? So it is what it is. We celebrate that we had two camps chartered this year, and we look forward to more, and we look forward to robust activities with the camps we have. On a side note, I received a 20-gallon donor pin from the American Red Cross for 160 lifetime whole blood donations, and if you're eligible, please consider donating.

There's always that need. Please review my separate reports as Department of Graves Registration Officer and Cadet Award Coordinator. They have important information.

Brothers, thank you for bearing with me for the last eight pages of my report. We must encourage brothers to consider taking on department roles, also camp roles, in order to build depth and redundancy so that critical work continues when primary appointed officers are unable to fulfill their duties. Mentorship is critical to success.

I mentioned that when I took command at last year's encampment. Willingly share your expertise. Allow brothers to informally perform work under your wise counsel and review.

Not that you pass it off to them and they do something and submit it because they are not officially in that position, but I think that will help them build confidence. Offer positive critique and offer praise for jobs well done. Even being retired, I knew that my time would be limited for continuing to successfully carry out my duties as Department GRO and Cadet Award Coordinator while serving as Department Commander.

I asked capable brothers with sound knowledge and demonstrated success in those positions in those jobs at the camp level to take over at the department level while I commanded. Unfortunately, I was turned down for both positions. We desperately need to increase our pool of capable brothers doing department work and you know at the camp level that's the same.

So step up and encourage other brothers to do the same. Once again, I thank my wife Sue and all brothers and sisters for their support while I served. I have two recommendations.

One, renew the department Zoom Pro account because I believe it has proven successful in improving communications across the department. Second, provide a department budget

line item of \$200 for department cadet award packages mailing to units in areas of the commonwealth where no camp can present. The national program change does not allow direct mailing from national to units since the cadet award certificate requires a signature.

Please see my cadet award coordinator report for more information. I will just comment on that for just a second. I have spoken with Ken Jacobson, the national coordinator, four times since November.

Now that job is a grueling job from February to April where one person, one brother, is getting hundreds and hundreds of award requests. The year before this one, the national order after expanding the program to allow for Civil Air Patrol, Young Marines, and United States Navy Sea Cadet Corps members to be awarded our SUVCW Cadet Award, we ran out of award packages. Unfortunately, things that happened at national trickled down to the folks, all you muddy booters who were doing the grunt work.

You're the ones, I'm the one that looks stupid when we're dealing with the cadet units. Again, I've spoken with Brother Ken and he's had health problems, pretty severe. I made a couple of recommendations to him last year that maybe you have regional coordinators and he can dole out the awards to five or six other brothers who have the awards and they can get them out quicker so it's not one guy trying to deal with 75 requests that came in that week.

That didn't happen. The big issue with the Council of Administration changing the ruling that it can't go, the award packages can no longer go directly to cadet units was because there's a block on there for a signature, camp commander, department commander, department secretary, whomever. The simple answer to that is put the commander's in chief signature on it for that year, make that the template, and then there's no issue with an unsigned certificate.

Hopefully, he will bring that up at the national encampment. I'm not making any recommendations. Again, I've talked with him and we agree that there are certain things that need done.

The biggest change that needs done immediately, which some members of the Council of Administration were quite lackadaisical about after making this change, was that the Form 7 was not properly updated. The award is the cadet award. It was changed two years ago.

The form still says ROTC award. Brother Ken's email address is ROTC at SUVCW. Folks in Civil Air Patrol, Young Marines, and U.S. Navy Sea Cadet Corps are not in ROTC.

That form desperately needs and must be updated so that it shows, because you can still read, that cadet cadre still put their address in there for it to be mailed to them. As you know, I put out a three-page department order breaking the Commonwealth into areas of responsibility for each camp. Some camps, like South Central PA, might have only had one county.

Others may have five counties because they're the nearest, and the department took responsibility for eight counties for covering those awards. We have 26 Civil Air Patrol units

in our Commonwealth, and we've just started tapping into that. There needs to be a better way to operate the system.

My complaint to Brother Ken initially was, I saw this on page 10 of the banner that has Commander-in-Chief Martin's picture on it, two sentences, post-encampment C of A actions or whatever, saying that the award could no longer go directly to units, cadet units that had to go to camps. My complaint to Brother Ken was, there's not a single camp or department who has budgeted money to possibly have to mail those because we can't make every single ceremony. We can't make every Eagle Scout ceremony.

Again, it's our brothers at the local level who are made out to be stupid because of decisions that they had no impact on. That's enough. I encourage you to read through my other reports.

Respectfully submitted in FCNL, William E. Fisher, Jr., PCC, Department Commander.

SVC Michael Peter: Brothers, is there a motion on the floor to accept the commander's report as written? All in favor? Aye. Opposed? Ayes have it.

PCinC Mike Paquette: Before you pass it back, Senior Vice, point of order. For the two recommendations from the Department Commander, you need to refer those.

SVC Michael Peter: Do I need a motion for that or just refer it?

PCinC Mike Paquette: You do it because you had the gavel.

SVC Michael Peter: I would like to refer the two recommendations by the Department Commander to the Recommendations Committee.

Commander Fischer: The second report. Again, as I mention your report, please state if you have any additions, corrections, or deletions. Office of the Senior Vice Department Commander, Mike Peter.

SVC Michael Peter: No additions or deletions.

Commander Fischer: All right. Thank you.

Any recommendations?

SVC Michael Peter: I recommend the current Department Commander seek a new editor from the Brothers Assembled for the newsletter. If that fails to locate a new editor, the incoming commander will appoint a committee to update the newsletter format and locate a new editor before January 2026. I believe the newsletter is an important part of our department and could be expanded to include profiles of brothers within our department as well as record department traditions as remembered by longstanding department members.

My hope is that it would add to the overall communication and continuity of the department. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: I'm going to rule that out of order because it is a required job of the Senior Vice Department Commander.

Now, the Senior Vice Department Commander is welcome to find anyone else who was willing to do that, but it falls on the Senior Vice Department Commander, which is why Brother Peter did it this year and why I did it last year. So, those of you with skills, feel free to help Brother Zeman next year. And I should have done this before Brother Mike's.

Is there a motion to accept the submitted officer, camp commander, and committee reports which do not have any recommendations, changes, additions, deletions at the drop of the gavel as we go through them? Is there a motion? Brother Lafey, thank you. Is there a second? Brother Gibson. Any discussion? Again, this is only for where there's no changes and no recommendations.

All in favor? Aye. Those opposed, same sign. Motion carries.

Next report is from the Junior Vice Department Commander.

JVC Ted Zeman: Brother Commander, I do not have any additions or deletions from my report, but I do have a recommendation. My recommendation is that in the future, the Junior Vice Commanders of the camps across the Department submit the numbers of new members that have contacted them and the status of their membership process so the Department Junior Vice Commander can submit the numbers in his report to the Department at the end of the year.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. That will be forwarded to the Officer Reports Committee. Thank you.

Department Patriotic Instructor Report.

PI Steve Johnston: Commander, I have no recommendations, no additions or deletions from my report.

Commander Fischer: Very good.

That stands.

Brother McNulty in his multifaceted roles.

PDC John McNulty: I issue a consolidated report because I don't want to murder any more trees and you don't want to read any more stuff.

I have no further suggestions, sir. And no recommendations. And no recommendations.

Commander Fischer: Very good. Thank you.

Graves Registration Report.

You can see that that's also been pretty busy. I appreciate the camps who submitted graves work reports. And when we talk graves reports, we're not just talking about adding graves to the database, that kind of thing.

We're talking about cemetery work, cleaning, resetting of headstones, ordering VA headstones. That's all related work. So I appreciate those who took the time to let everybody else know what they're doing.

The only change I have, I'm sorry. The only change I have is at the bottom of my first page of my report, the National Committee on Graves Registration, of which I'm a member. The meetings, the Zoom meetings for June 9th and June 16th.

I did not attend the one on June 9th, and the one on June 16th was canceled by the contractor. We're having a lot of issues with the contractor making headway. No recommendation.

Does anyone have any issues with my two deletions? Any discussion? Okay. Thank you.

Cadet Award Coordinator Report.

I've already talked about the Form 7. I'm sorry, I do have a recommendation.

Brother Mike, I pass you the gavel.

For the Cadet Award Coordinator recommendation on the second page of my report, that the Form 7 be fully updated to make it clear to cadet unit cadre that they must submit the application to a camp or department and not directly to the SUVCW quartermaster, and that ROTC be changed to cadet through the form. I should also point out that besides my three-page department order, I sent a three- or four-page email to every ROTC, Junior ROTC, Civil Air Patrol, Young Marine, and United States Navy Sea Cadet Corps unit in the Commonwealth to explain this process.

And Brother Ken was still getting Form 7 sent to him. The Council, whoever committee is responsible at National, must get that form updated before we get into the next cycle next spring. I move the recommendation be put to the Recommendations Department Committee.

To the Officer Reports. Officer Reports.

Civil War Monuments Officer Report. Any changes, additions, deletions?

PDC Alfred Carty: Commander, I have no recommendations at this time.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. Brother Demmy, Camp 300. Any changes, additions, deletions?

David Demmy: David Demmy, Secretary of Camp 300.

I have one little recommendation that for years, the National Encampment Hotels have always provided a link for us to register. I just recommend that Pennsylvania, in the future, our hotels offer a link also, make it easier, that's all. Okay.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. That'll go to the Officer Reports Committee.

GAR Memorials Officer, Brother Zeman.

JVC Ted Zeman: Brother Commander, I have no amendments or deletions for my report, but I do have a recommendation. As I have not received any reports from Camp Memorial Officers on the state of GAR Memorials in their areas around the Commonwealth, I urge that Camp GAR Memorials Officers make an inspection of the memorials near them and submit their findings to the Department GAR Memorials Officer so that a report can be compiled for each encampment. Okay.

Commander Fischer: That will go to the Officer Reports Committee. Thank you.

Brother Esenwein, Crawford Camp 43.

Any additions, deletions, changes?

PDC Richard Essenwein: No recommendations, no changes, and no deletions.

Commander Fischer: Thank you for submitting it. Bradbury Camp 149.

Do we have a brother from Bradbury Camp? Okay. There are no recommendations listed. We'll take it as it stands.

Finally, and it needs to be read through, the Budget Report from the Secretary-Treasurer.

Sec/Tres Rob Konigsberg: Brothers of the Pennsylvania Department, SUVCW. I would first like to thank Department Commander Bill Fisher and Department Counsel for their assistance over the past year for answering all of my questions as well as their guidance, as this was a trying year with many issues.

For the 2024-2025 year, the Department has 24 camps in good standing. We lost one camp and gained two over the past year. We have 590 lineal members, 46 of whom are life members.

We have 35 associate members, one junior member, one junior associate, for a grand total of 627 total members, 23 of which are dual members. This is 66 more members than last year. As of the writing of this report, Department financial funds are as follows.

Checking account, \$35,286.91, which is to the plus \$1,189 more than last year. Savings account, \$134.49, which is exactly the same as last year. Six-month CD, \$23,608.18, which is \$662.59 greater than last year.

Our three-month CD, \$11,794.38, which is \$236.55 greater than last year. Our money market account, we have \$1,816.73, which is a whopping 17 cents higher than last year. The site committee has \$4,757.16, which is \$3,844.50 less than last year.

We have a total of \$77,397.85, which is \$1,698.32 less than what we had last year. I know I do have a plus where that should be a negative. Storage of records that we have in Carlisle.

We pay a monthly fee of \$63.55 times 12, which gives us \$762.60 that we pay for the year. In closing, my report, I do not have any recommendations. Fraternity, charity, and loyalty, Robert Koningsberg, Secretary, Treasurer of the VA Department, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. Since we will be discussing the budget for the coming year before we have nominations of officers, if you have issues on this, I think we can do that discussion at that other time. Thank you, Brother Rob.

Reception of communications.

(Guide Reports to Commander)

Okay, thank you. Brother Alex.

Members of the Auxiliary are here for a visitation. All right, Brother Guide, and if you need assistance escorting the ladies in. Thank you.

Yeah, on the other side of the altar, please. Please watch your step. Both step to your right.

ASUVCW Deligation: Thank you. Rosemary Martin, National President of the Auxiliary. Our Pennsylvania Auxiliary, Barb Inden and Betsy Matthews, on behalf of President Darlene Alcorn.

Commander Fischer: If you would care to say a few words, please come this way.

Nat Aux Pres Martin: Dear brothers and sisters of the Department of Pennsylvania, I am pleased to extend, as the National President of the National Organization Auxiliary to Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, to the dedicated brothers and sisters attending this year's Department of Pennsylvania Encampment, greetings. Traveling from Frederick, Maryland, only took me about four hours, and I thank you for having me here today.

I do thank you for all the prayers for my husband, Commander-in-Chief Kevin Martin, for his mother, who is still not being very responsive. So he wishes he could be here. He gives his greetings and thinks the world of the Department of Pennsylvania.

Also, the SUVCW Department of Pennsylvania is dear to me, as I'm originally from York, Pennsylvania, from a little town called Dover. And I'm a dual member in the Jenny Wade Auxiliary in Gettysburg. I want to thank you, our SUVCW brothers, for being so supportive of the ASUVCW.

I cannot begin to express how much this is and was appreciated. Again this year, our National ASUVCW Chief of Staff and National ASUVCW Patriotic Instructor are accepting donations. Denise Thompson, her goal is to raise \$3,000, and our Patriotic Instructor Rebecca Thomas has a goal to reach \$2,000.

She has chosen a charity in Houston, Texas called Hives for Heroes, and it has a dual purpose. Hives for Heroes helps veterans with PTSD by teaching them beekeeping, and also it helps the bees. Of course, I wish you would consider donating to the National Chief of Staff and Patriotic Instructor.

In their stead, I'm here to help them reach their ASUVCW goals, and I hope that you do too. It has been a great pleasure meeting the brothers and sisters of the Department of Pennsylvania, not only here, but during my travels and your travels and previous national encampments. It is always so good to see you.

You all bring great pride to our beloved organization in your many acts of service. Every action we take to honor our ancestors or the boys in blue and care for our current day veterans brings positive attention and results to the Allied Orders. I look forward to reconnecting with many of you, I hope, at the upcoming National Encampment of the Allied Orders of the Grand Army of the Republic in Houston, Texas, August 7th through 10th.

It's very reasonable, \$99 a night, and it's worth your while to go. I wish the Department of Pennsylvania an enlightening and productive encampment as you keep our values of fraternity, charity, and loyalty at the forefront of your decisions. Please know that you, my dear SUVCW brothers and ASUVCW sisters, have the support of the National Organization of the ASUVCW, as we must remain cohesive as brothers and sisters.

PDP Barb Indan: Thank you again for having me here today. Greetings from the Auxiliary. Brother Bill, this is a little token of Darlene's appreciation.

I hope you're having a successful and harmonious encampment. And we love you guys. You're my brothers, I don't care if you like me or not.

I'm your family, so you have to like me. But Darlene wishes you a good time. And personally, I'm so happy that you're Commander.

We worked very nicely together last year, I think.

But congratulations.

Brothers, while we're standing, I'll ask the chaplain to close the Bible. We'll take a 15-minute break and be back at 40 after.

Your attention, please.

40 past.

Meeting Breaks

Commander Fischer: Brothers, it was brought to my attention that I need to be a little closer to the microphone, so I apologize about that. I do have one correction to my department commander's report that was brought to my attention during the break. December 1st, I attended an enjoyable dinner with Gettysburg Camp 112 and the auxiliary and installed officers that night.

I apologize, that was totally unintentional. I don't know how I could have missed it in my very short report. Also, there are, Brother Berezovsky brought old encampment medals that are in the back corner that are for the taking, so if you have interest in those, I'm sure he doesn't want to continue to take them home every year after year.

I appreciate that. We will be breaking at 3 o'clock so that I can go visit the auxiliary. I have my countdown clock so I don't forget.

I would like for brothers to get in line and come up to the microphone. Please introduce yourself and what camp you're with. I should have done that at the beginning, but I also want to get that recorded so that other brothers can hear.

Please, we'll start with Brother Bennett. If everybody else would just come forward and get in line on the far wall, and we'll go through introductions.

Brothers Introduce themselves

Timothy Bennett, secretary, past camp commander, Isaac Eaton Camp, number 504.

Frederick Grant Bender, Camp 120, Washington, PA. I'm a recruiting officer.

Dave Berezovsky, camp commander, Garfield Camp, 34, Mount Carmel.

Ricky Wade, camp commander at Camp Crowther, James E. Crowther, Camp 89,

Fred Ebert, Isaac Eaton Camp, patriotic instructor.

John Kreider, Colonel Crowler Camp, Tyrone, past camp commander. I forget the other thing. Oh, I'm the council chair.

John Matthews, Mount Union Camp 502. I am the current junior vice commander and also a past camp commander.

Jim Graham, Davis Star Camp.

Joshua McMillan, Brindle Camp 50, past camp commander and current senior vice commander.

Wayne Blatner, Camp 15, secretary.

John Tenney, I'm a past camp commander, 504 Eaton Camp.

Bob Wrigley, Mount Union Church Camp 502, past commander, General Thomas Camp 19, current camp secretary, treasurer.

Good afternoon, brothers. My name is Trevor Taylor. I have the honor of commanding Gaithersburg Camp 112, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

John Taylor, Camp 112, patriotic instructor.

Stephen Law, current secretary of Camp 112 and past commander.

Bill Bray, camp commander, Captain George A. Cribbs, Camp 276.

Walt Lafty, Baker Fisher Camp 101, camp secretary.

Bill Massinger, Baker Fisher Camp 101, current position treasurer, past camp commander.

John Gibson, I am a past camp commander at Davis Star Camp and past department commander of the Pennsylvania Department.

Rob Clair, camp commander, Baker Fisher Camp 101.

Brian Harris, Baker Fisher Camp 101.

Alex Johnston, department guard in Isaac Eaton Camp 504.

Doug Cook, camp commander, Isaac Eaton Camp 504.

David Demmy, dual life member and secretary of Camp 300 at Colonial Park and treasurer of Camp 15 in Harrisburg and the national executive director.

Richard Essenwein, a dual member of Davis Star, secretary treasurer of John T. Crawford in Katanning, past department commander, current department chief of staff, and pick an office in Katanning, any office, it doesn't matter, I've held them all.

Harry Blackwell, commander of 502 Mount Oak, and now I guess my title is conductor.

Bob Dowler, 502, just a member.

Alfred Cardy, secretary treasurer of Joel Searfoss Camp number 273.

Mike Paquette, past commander in chief, I am a dual member of the Crowder Camp in Tyrone, and I am your national counselor and chairman of the National Site Committee.

Doug McMillan, past department commander, current commander, Carlisle Camp 50.

I'm Clark Brock, I'm past commander of the Mount Union Church Camp 502, and I currently serve as your chaplain.

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Ted Zeman, past camp commander, Joel Searfoss Camp 273, currently junior vice commander, Department of Pennsylvania, and GAR memorials officer, Department of Pennsylvania.

Mike Peter, I am past camp commander of Baker Fisher Camp 101, currently serve on camp council, and I am the Pennsylvania Department senior vice commander.

John McNulty, past department commander, past and current commander of Joel Searfoss Camp 273, and a whole bunch of other things. We'll leave it at that, it's easier.

Rob Cunningburg, past camp commander, Jacob M. Campbell Camp 14, Johnstown current department secretary treasurer.

Commander Fischer: Thank you brothers. Again, with the Zoom meetings you've gotten to see some faces, gotten to know some brothers that you otherwise only knew by name, and that's always good to refresh those relations here at the encampment.

I want to run through a few quick things. I have eight minutes before I'm going to head over to visit the auxiliary with Brother John. Per Robert's rules of order, no unfinished business can be carried over from the 2024 department encampment.

As Brother Carty and Brother Teeters noted last year, the department has often passed recommendations for which no action was taken during the subsequent year. We have made progress toward preventing that in the future, first by having the 2024 encampment proceedings completed in a very timely manner and posted to the Pennsylvania Department website by mid-July. I thank Brother McMillan and Brother Kuhn for that, so that everyone can access them.

My thanks again. I just appreciate that and appreciate Brother McMillan agreeing to be the recording secretary this year. That's something we have to discuss as we move down the road, but we'll suffice it to say for now, thank you.

Unfortunately, I failed to follow through on an important issue that arose last year when I put forth a bylaws change proposal for moving the department encampment earlier in the year. After much discussion, I rescinded that proposal. However, the incoming commander, me, was to form a committee to discuss with our Pennsylvania Allied Order sisters the reasons for hosting our department encampment with the sisters earlier as they host their conventions, possibly even earlier than May as some departments do.

With my efforts to visit our camps, attend events, host Zoom meetings once a month, serve as department graves registration officer and cadet award coordinator, as well as participate on the National Committee on Graves Registration to bring about an updated National Graves Database 2.0, I failed to form said committee to coordinate with the Allied Orders to examine the possibility of moving our encampment and conventions earlier. I apologize for that, and I ask that the incoming department commander consider forming such a committee early in his tenure so that this issue can be addressed. I'll just leave it up to the incoming commander to decide.

With my apologies. The Carlisle Storage Unit. A continuing concern is the Carlisle U-Haul Storage Unit where the department has stored historical artifacts given by the GAR Museum in Philadelphia.

As previously noted in my department commander's report, PDC McMillan, PCC Josh McMillan and I moved the objects last July from the larger storage area to a smaller one, saving the department about \$50 a month, but we still have a multi-hundred dollar bill every year with that. My wife Sue and I scanned four Searfoss Camp auxiliary ledgers dating from 1903 to 1931 and created an inclusive name index for those ledgers. The physical ledgers were given to Searfoss Camp 243 along with the name indexes and scans on flash drives.

However, there remain many artifacts in the storage unit and the monthly costs continue to eat into our budget. So we will probably be discussing that in new business. The last thing I want to bring up is that last year at our meeting, the brothers in encampment back in 2017 approved authorizing up to a \$500 expenditure each to appropriately honor late past commanders-in-chief Bud Atkinson and Charlie Kuhn.

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PDC John McNulty: Thank you. We have the hardy hat that he always wore and everybody remembers him. Can you hear me better now? Okay.

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Is there anything else, Mike, at this point? Commander, if you will, the museum named the archive room in memory of past Commander-in-Chief Bud Atkinson, and that's where it's going to be placed, in the archive room. Okay. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: We will have more discussion on this at new business. We will break for an hour so that I can go visit, but also so that the committees, the Encampment Bylaws Committee, well, Brother McNulty, Brother Esenwein, I'm sorry. All right.

We're still going to go with a break for an hour. A couple of the committees don't have too much work, and we honestly don't have too many recommendations. Let's make it 345 to be back here, okay? 345, and we'll go through what we can before we need to break to give everybody time for dinner and campfire prep.

All right. Again, Encampment Bylaws Committee, Brothers McNulty, Esenwein, and Kreider, Encampment Resolutions and Officers Committee, Brothers McMillan, Carty, and Peter, and

the Constitution and Regulations Committee, Brothers Zeman, Paquette, and Lafty. Thank you.

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Meeting Breaks

Commander Fischer: We're going to go through some of the committee recommendations. Bylaws committee, Brother McNulty, does the bylaws committee have any proposals to bring before the encampment?

PDC John McNulty: We didn't get anything sent to us, so we can't make proposals. Understood.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. Fraternal relations, Brother McNulty, are there any fraternal relations issues to bring before the encampment? No. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Brother McNulty. I'd like to please. Constitution and regulations committee, Brother Zeeman, does the constitution and regulations committee have any proposals to bring before the encampment?

JVC Ted Zeman: They do not.

Commander Fischer: Thank you very much. The encampment resolutions and officers reports committees. We will hold off until tomorrow morning.

With that, Brother Rob has some comments about tonight.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: Brothers, tonight's campfire event after the presentations of the Patriotic Instructors Award is going to be a play put on by my camp that was written by one of our brothers. We have probably about 1,000 hours into practicing, writing, purchasing the props and everything, so we would really like to see as many people there as possible.

We will also have shirts for sale that help us to pay for the props and for us to travel around. They'll be 20 bucks a piece, so hopefully as many people can be there as possible. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Thank you, Brother Rob. They did a play at a local winery in the Johnstown area, and they sold out very, very quickly, and it was very well received, so it should be a lot of fun. And they certainly have put the time and effort into it, so please do attend.

I thank you for being timely all day. What time do we start tomorrow, Brother Rob?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: Eight o'clock. Registration table opens at 8.30.

Commander Fischer: I'll hit the gavel.

Brother Chaplain, I'm sorry, and I did fail to announce that we have cards for some ill brothers and sisters over at the chaplain's table. Please sign them when you have a chance. Thank you.

Thank you, Brother Clark. Again, hope to see you tonight at 8.30. We start tomorrow morning. Thank you.

Bible Closed, Meeting Adjourned Until Morning

Saturday Morning Meeting Resumes

Commander Fischer: Brothers, please be seated. I need a color bearer and a guide down front. I need a brother from Eden Color Guard to be the color bearer.

And who can I pick on? I'll pick on Brother Jim back there to be seated as the guide. Yes, you, Brother Jim. Thank you.

Since we have some new brothers here today that were not here yesterday, just a reminder that attendance at events hosted by the Sons of Union, Veterans of the Civil War, by virtue of their attendance, agreed to the usage of their likeness in the banner of the Battle Cry of Freedom. Any camp newsletter, any SUVCW website, and or SUVCW social media outlet promotional brochures or any other SUVCW. Likewise, no one shall post to any social media outlet and or website or any other means of communication any live or video recordings or selected video clips from any business sessions of this encampment.

This requirement is in accordance with General Order Number 7, Series 2021-2022, as issued by then Commander-in-Chief Paquette. Also, please ensure that all your electronic devices are silenced, since mine went off last night during the campfire. The brothers and members of the 145th Annual Encampment of the Pennsylvania Department, Sons of Union, Veterans of the Civil War, continuation from yesterday will now come to order.

Guide, guide and color bearer, would you verify that everyone in attendance is authorized to be here by a show of membership cards? Brother Jim, if you'll do the left side, Brother Doug, the right side. And if you do not have your membership card, if a brother can vouch for you, please have them do so. I wouldn't trust Brother Ted either, Brother Doug.

All right, everything good?

Guide: Yes, sir.

Commander Fischer: Thank you very much. We have no change in the officers, so we will not do another roll call today.

Brothers, upon what principles is our order founded and what duties do we inculcate?

Brothers Assembled in Unison: Fraternity, charity and loyalty.

Commander Fischer: Welcome, brothers that were not able to be here yesterday. Appreciate your attendance.

We meet again as Sons of Union, Veterans of the Civil War in annual session to review the work of the past and to plan for the future. Hopefully I won't have too many P's to say. May our conduct and our deliberations be marked by mutual tolerance and fraternal courtesy, ever keeping in mind our duty to our order, to our country, to our order and to ourselves.

The department chaplain will invoke the divine blessing. *(Three Raps)*

Chaplain: Our Heavenly Father, the high and mighty ruler of the universe, Who looks down upon the government of men, we earnestly ask Your favor to bless our native land and preserve in purity and integrity its free institutions for all coming time. Bless our Order. Grant that it may long exist, and that it may continue to be an instrument of great good to all. Give us willing hands and ready hearts to carry out properly its principles and objectives. Keep green in our minds the memory of those who sacrificed so much that the life of the nation might be preserved, and deal with them in all things with Your special mercy. Give us Your aid in conducting the business for which we are assembled, and so bless us that Charity and Justice, and Peace and Harmony shall remain and flow from us. Amen

Brothers Assembled in Unison: Amen.

Commander Fischer: Color bearer, if you'll just put your hand on the staff of the flag while we present the Pledge of Allegiance.

Brothers Assembled in Unison: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Commander Fischer: By virtue of the authority vested in me, I hereby declare the continuation of the 145th Annual Encampment of the Pennsylvania Department's Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War duly open for the transaction of such business as may legally and properly come before it.

The guard will admit all brothers qualified to enter.

Just a few housekeeping issues that I'd like to mention before we continue on.

I appreciate very, very much all your kindness. Last night during my roast, very little of my hair was singed last night, so I appreciate that. Also, if you missed the campfire program, you missed an entertaining time.

Camp 14 has put this on at a winery that was sold out very quickly and had rave reviews, and I think all of us that were there last night can appreciate the hard work that Brother Greg, the banjo player, put in writing it and for all the cast members that participated. And I just learned from Rob that Brother Greg is writing a trilogy, so hopefully at future encampments we'll be able to enjoy more of his presentations. And I'd like to point out that

we, I thank Ellen Higgins for 10 years of putting our brochure together, honoring our ancestors and our camps and friends.

This year is exceptional. It's full-size, color, and I'd like to appreciate and have us all give thanks to Brother Lucas from Camp 504 for putting it together. He's a very wise, young, married man because he gives his wife all the credit.

Thank you, Brother Lucas. And of course, please share our thanks with your wife.

All right, yesterday we left off with the Encampment Resolutions and Officers Reports Committee.

Brothers, is there a motion that as the recommendations are read and the committee offers its concurrence or non-concurrence that the recommendations be adopted or rejected ad seriatim at the sound of the gavel if there is no objection?

We have a motion. Thank you, is there a second? Second. Is there any discussion on this? If there is an objection, if you object to the committee's findings, you have the option to object and we can go into discussion. All in favor of having the ad seriatim ruling, raise your hands.

Thank you. Deny, same sign. Okay, that motion passes.

Past Department Commander McMillin, would you please provide the Encampment Resolutions and Officers Committee Report before the encampment with committee concurrence or non-concurrence?

I overlooked having to have an updated Credentials Report since we do have new brothers here. Brother Rob, thank you. Camp Commander, Past Camp Commander, 13, Delegates, 23.

Thank you, Brother Rob. Brother Doug.

PDC Doug McMillin: Thank you, Commander.

Okay, first resolution we had was on "renew the PA Department ZoomPro account as it has proven successful in promoting, improving communications across the district and the department."

The committee concurs with the recommendation.

Two. "Provide a PA Department budget line item of \$200 for the department cadet award package mailing to units in areas of the Commonwealth where no camp can present. The national program change does not allow direct mailing from national to units since the cadet award certificate requires a signature. Please see my cadet award coordinator report for more information."

The committee concurs.

Commander Fischer: On both. Next recommendation. Is there any objection? *(Single Gavel Rap)*

PDC Doug McMillin: Next recommendation was...

"I would recommend that in the future that the junior vice commanders of the camps across the department submit the numbers of new members that have contacted them and the status of their membership process so that the department junior vice commander can submit the numbers in his report to the department at the end of the year."

The committee did not concur with this. We found that there was a procedural problem with that and so we actually did not concur.

The next recommendation.

"That the form seven be fully updated to make it clear to cadet unit cadre that they must submit the application to a camp or department and not directly to the SUVCW quartermaster and that the ROTC be changed to cadet throughout the form."

The committee concurred that this should be forwarded as a recommendation to the programs and process at the Council of Administration as we actually have no authority over this at the department level.

Commander Fischer: Any discussion? *(Single Gavel Rap)*

PDC Doug McMillin: Let's see, the next one.

We had a recommendation to the site committee to require the site hotel to provide a link like in the, I'll have to change this a bit. It could be a little confusing. The point is that when the advertisement goes out for the national encampment, the advertisement has a hyperlink in the actual ad that you can click on that will take you directly to the reservation page for the event so you don't have to call up, try and figure out is it Allied Orders of the Grand Army of the Republic, sons, daughters, whatever, and have somebody say, I don't know what the heck you're talking about.

We've all been there. So this is to the site committee. The recommendation is "that from now on, the hotel provide a link to the encampment for the department just as they do at national."

We're actually already addressing this for next year and the committee did concur.

Commander Fischer: Any Objection? *(Single Gavel Rap)*

PDC Doug McMillin: Okay, and the final recommendation, and I'm sorry, Ted, to pick on you again.

"As I have not received any reports from camp memorial officers on the state of GAR memorials in their areas around the Commonwealth, I urge that the camp GAR memorials

officers make an inspection of the memorials near them and submit their findings to the department GAR memorials officer so that a report can be compiled for each encampment.”

This one got a little dicey. The GAR memorials officer is not an elected position in the camp and actually more than half of the camps in the department do not have a GAR memorials officer to make such a report. It is incumbent upon the department GAR memorials officer as part of his duty to reach out to the camps and try to get that information from them or encourage them to put someone in charge of that.

So, the committee did not concur for that reason.

That concludes the report of the committee.

Commander Fischer: Objections? *(Single Gavel Rap)*

Commander Fischer: I appreciate the work of all of our committees to consider what has been brought forth before the encampment and to provide you with more insight on those. Thank you.

Brother McNulty, do you have any issues from the department council that need brought forth?

PDC, John McNulty: No, I do not, sir.

Commander Fischer: Okay, thank you. We will move into new business.

Camp property reports.

I issued department order number 13 on October 1st, 2024 requesting camps to inventory their property and provide a report to the department secretary not later than May 1st, 2025, providing seven months to do so. I sincerely thank the camps that work diligently to inventory camp property.

Some camps have much more property than others to inventory and it was no small task. The reason for the report was defined in the department order, but the bottom line was I was dealing with Howell Camp 48 and it's likely impending and then agreement by the commander in chief to revoke their charter and not knowing what they have. So, because when a camp folds or their charter is revoked, all camp property defaults to the national order in trust held by the department and department commander.

It's really vital that we know what camps have because all of us have experienced over the past, especially with camps that are 100 plus years old, that camp property has a tendency to disappear and having a camp property report and an annual update when things change. I mean, even if you have no change, just a simple email to the department secretary saying we have no change in our camp property, that's really important so that as we encounter these situations like we did this year with Howell Camp 48, we know what was claimed as property and we have a better means to go and secure that property. It's a tough call of

time because Brother Rob is working nonstop in the spring, getting annual reports in and getting a department report out to national.

Perhaps, and again, I'm not making a recommendation, but this is something that the incoming department commander can consider to maybe change it to the 31st of December each year. But I'm just saying these are really important so that we don't lose, we collectively, as the Pennsylvania Department and as the National Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, that we don't lose our heritage. As I mentioned yesterday, Howell Camp said they had no knowledge of a charter, which I don't doubt.

They've been in existence for well more than 100 years and things have disappeared, but fortunately, Brother Demmy at headquarters found a photocopy of their charter. Granted, it's not the original, it's black and white, but at least we have that history with the charter members, et cetera. So please, when you go back to your camps, take this seriously.

Thank you. Brothers, one thing that has come to my attention, not specific to this department, but to add on to your department commander's comments in this regard, the other aspect of this camp property is when you take a position at your camps or within the department, you're supposed to take a report for all the property received from your predecessor. And I know, habitually, we do not do this, but I encourage you to do this because there's no other way, in some instances, to keep a recorded chain of custody for these things.

And even at the national level, things can and have disappeared. So it's in our C&R, you're supposed to be doing it. I would just encourage you to, sure, we know each other, we take each other at our word, but at some point, if something happens, there's no documented chain of custody.

So please pay attention to that section of the C&R. And when you do accept property as a new officer at the camp level, or even at the department level, make sure you have some type of documentation that provides that exchange of the properties. Thank you.

I'm gonna hold this. (*microphone*) Hopefully it'll be a little better sound all the way to the back. Especially as you acquire new property, perhaps the most notable example that most of you are seeing for the first time is right over here with the Davis Star flag.

The originals in the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in downtown Pittsburgh framed, and that's based off of that. So Brother Wayne, if you would please come, and I know Brother Jim would be pleased to be relieved of duty as the guide. And for those of you that donated to Davis Star for their new flag, thank you very much.

It's quite striking and unique for our order, and appropriate.

Restoration of Past Camp Commander Honors. SUVCW Regulations Chapter Two, Departments, Article Two, Membership, Section 1a, Footnote 46, Subsection 4, I'm sure you've all read it.

If a past camp commander should transfer to a new camp, their voting status as a past camp commander is forfeited. Also, Chapter Two, Departments, Article Two, Membership, Section

4 reads, to obtain restoration of rank of past camp commander, the brother shall make request in writing to the camp of which he is a brother. If acted upon favorably by the camp in regular session, said request shall be forwarded to the department commander, setting forth the causes for loss of rank and reasons for request of restoration.

The department commander shall present same to the department encampment, where, if acted upon favorably, such rank shall be restored. I received a letter from Brother Eric Staley, George W. Mears Camp 505 Commander, dated 28th of April, 2025. Dear Brother Fisher, this letter is to confirm that at our April 12th meeting of Camp Number 505, the members unanimously voted to approve Brother Lee Miller's request for reinstatement of past camp commander honors.

Brother Miller served as camp commander of Captain JPS Gobin, or says Captain, but that's not correct, of JPS Gobin Camp Number 503, and now serves as secretary of Mears Camp 505. He did an outstanding job during his tenure as commander at Gobin and continues to provide exemplary service and leadership to Camp 505. Is there a motion to restore PCC honors for Brother Lee Miller? Is there a second?

Motioned and seconded.

Is there any discussion? All in favor, please raise your hand. Thank you. Those opposed, same sign.

Motion passes, thank you very much.

There was a request by General Thomas Camp 19 in Lancaster for a grant from the Pennsylvania Department to help restore the Reynolds Family Plot in Lancaster Cemetery. I will briefly summarize the two-page letter.

The Reynolds, and they've had an exhibit out on the table outside the meeting room. Hopefully you'll take a look at that. I believe they have some fliers there as well.

The Reynolds Restoration Project seeks to preserve the memory of Lancaster natives, Major General John Fulton Reynolds, Admiral William Reynolds, and other members of the Reynolds family interred in Lancaster Cemetery through the repair, rehabilitation, and stabilization of the family plot and its grave markers, utilizing the services of professional monument conservators. Most of the markers in the Reynolds Family Plot date to the Victorian era and are showing the signs of their age. General Reynolds' marble obelisk in particular has multiple cracks in its base that worsen each year as a result of the freeze and thaw cycle.

Our work would repair those cracks to minimize this issue and ensure the obelisk is stable and secure. Likewise, many of the grave markers in the plot have shifted as a result of the ground freeze and thaw and will be straightened. These leaning headstones can be safety issues for visitors to the site.

Similarly, some sections of the granite copying around the plot have large cracks and other sections have fallen over. We will repair and stabilize the broken sections and replace those sections that have fallen over. One last point, John F. Reynolds is widely regarded as one of

the greatest Civil War figures and his brother and others in the Family Plot serve the city, state, and nation in a variety of roles.

His grave site is a highly trafficked destination for those interested in Civil War and American history. Without the proposed conservation efforts, the monuments and markers will continue to deteriorate, may cause additional safety concerns for the cemetery and its visitors, and could ultimately break and make repairs and stabilization far more difficult. I've had the pleasure of being out there for a Thomas Camp ceremony at the GAR plot, which they work on and have been cleaning the headstones and have gone over with them to look at the Reynolds plot and it needs work.

So they are asking for, I'll go to the end here, the current cost estimate for the Reynolds Restoration Project is \$15,000. We have received over \$7,000 in donations and pledges, including grants from Grave Concern Incorporated of Lancaster and MOLLUS. We have submitted applications for additional grant funding and are awaiting decisions on those applications.

Brother Wrigley, do you have anything else to add?

Bob Wrigley: First, let me thank some of the camps around. The department have already made generous contributions and we thank them for that support.

We continue, fortunately, early this year, we expanded our promotional material. There's a website which shows more of the detail about the repairs that you referred to and we think the undertaking, in addition to trying to get ahold of some of the past family members, which don't seem to indicate much support, but we are looking forward to also submitting, in addition to the request here, working next week on the National Monument Fund request to submit that. So any additional support would be greatly appreciated from our camp here.

Commander Fischer: Thank you, Brother Wrigley.

As most of you know, General Reynolds was killed on the first day at Gettysburg and his legacy would have been even, I think, much broader had he survived through the war. It was a major loss for Union forces with his death.

Is there a motion to provide Camp 19 with a department grant? Moved and seconded. Discussion, please. Yes, the big question is our treasury.

In this discussion, we do need to set an amount. Okay, brothers, just hang on for a minute. Okay, yeah, brothers, I'm going to table this until we have the budget discussion before we do nomination of officers because our budget has some serious issues with it.

So this is tabled. We'll bring it back later. All right, we will continue on.

Brother Rob, I'll need your attention here. Delegates to the National Encampment. Okay, we will go back to the grant request by Thomas Camp 19.

Brother John.

PDC John McNulty: Brothers, I'm well aware of this situation. Brother Rob and I have talked about this quite a bit.

John Reynolds was one of the most significant military men to come out of our state at any time. It can't? It's not working? Is it working? Okay. Oh, there it is.

Bob Wrigley and I have talked about this. I've talked about this with some other brothers of Camp 19. John Reynolds was one of the most significant military men to come out of our state.

And even though William Reynolds isn't as well known, since most people don't know the Navy that well, he was significant as well. And many other members of the Reynolds family have been important in our state history. And I feel, at least, that we should support keeping this together in one piece, especially General Reynolds' grave, which is not in good condition.

The committee has thought this out, the Finance Committee, and we believe that we can afford \$1,000. I would also recommend to all of you to do as some of us have done and contribute to it. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. So the motion is to provide Camp 19 with \$1,000 to go to the Reynolds plot restoration. Is there further discussion? Is there any further discussion? Those who support the measure, please raise your hand.

Those opposed, same sign. Okay, the motion for \$1,000 for the Reynolds plot restoration passes. Thank you.

Delegates to the National Encampment. We need to determine Pennsylvania Department delegates to the 144th National Encampment to be held August 7th through 10th, 2025 in Houston, Texas. We anticipate the incoming department commander will attend the National Encampment in that capacity.

Past department commanders who attend will do so in that status. Are there any past Pennsylvania department commanders planning to attend? None here. Based upon the unofficial department strength as of the 31st of May, 2025, the department is projected to be authorized how many elected delegates? We will probably not hit our authorized strength.

Who here is planning to attend the National Encampment? Brother Demmy? Brother Mike? You will do so as department commander. Is there anyone else here planning to attend? Okay. Do I have a motion to nominate Brother Demmy as a delegate for the Pennsylvania Department or does that, do you automatically go as executive director? Okay.

Do I have a motion to nominate Brother Demmy as a delegate? We have, okay, it's been said, adopt error. We received the motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Is that David Junior? Thank you.

Thank you. Okay, so the motion has been modified to accept Brother Demmy and Brother Demmy, Jr. as delegates from the Pennsylvania Department. Is there any further discussion? Those in favor, raise your, thank you.

Those opposed? Brother Rob. Brother Rob will figure out how many delegates we are authorized. It's very unlikely that we're going to reach that.

However, Brother Rob. Our delegate number could be 31. It is moved, all remaining brothers of the Pennsylvania Department in good standing as of this encampment are hereby elected as alternates to the 2025 National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Thank you. There's a motion and second that all brothers who are in good standing as of this encampment across the department are elected as alternates. Is there any further discussion? Those in favor, raise your hand.

Those opposed, same sign. Motion passes, thank you.

The department commander, all past department commanders and elected delegates will receive their credential cards from the department secretary as soon as possible.

If you have not already done so, please refer to the SUVCW website for pre-registration, hotel, and other information. The National Encampment Program booklet is accepting ads. A full page ad is \$50, a half page ad is \$35, and a quarter page is \$25.

However, if the department is to place an ad, the ad must be received before June 30th, not too far away. If the department wishes to place an ad, we must determine today who will design and place the ad. Do I have a motion to have the Pennsylvania Department submit an ad to the National Encampment?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: I would make the motion to put the ad in the book for a full page, and as in the past, I have always designed it and sent it in, and would be willing to do so again.

Commander Fischer: Okay, we have a motion and a second for a full page ad that Brother Rob will take care of all the details, and of course, he's done a fine job. If there's anybody else that wants to jump in, we can discuss that. Is there any discussion? Those in favor of a full page ad for \$50 that Brother Rob will design and place before June 30th, please raise your hand.

Thank you. Those opposed, same sign. Motion passes. **(Single Gavel Rap)**

Thank you, Brother Rob. The information that you already have, I'm sure. The 2025 National Encampment is in Houston.

The 2026 National Encampment will be held in Gettysburg. The ability for departments to organize and host National Encampments has become increasingly problematic as associated costs continue to rise. The Department of New York initially explored hosting the 2026 Encampment, but backed away due to upfront costs and other issues.

Then the Department of Tennessee stepped up, but also found too many issues to contend with for 2026. Therefore, thankfully, the national organization took over hosting the 2026 Encampment and selected Gettysburg as the location with the same conference center location as Remembrance Weekend. I'll ask Past Commander-in-Chief Paquette to kindly address the Department about next year's National Encampment in Gettysburg.

PCinC Mike Paquette: Thank you, Brother Bill. So what I'd like to provide you a little background on how that decision was determined. I'm the chairman of the National Site Committee, and my back was up against the wall trying to get Tennessee in line, but I had to make a decision because once you get within a year, you cannot lock in locations large enough to accommodate a National Encampment.

So strictly due to the existing relationship between the SVR, Sons of Veteran Reserve, and the national organization with the Aspire and Eisenhower Hotels, we had an in with the hotel and they were giving us a sweet deal. Basically, we're getting the same rate in the middle of the summer tourist season that we get in November for Remembrance Day. Both very expensive weekends, but we got a very good rate.

Before the decision was made, and it was basically my decision, I did meet with your department commander and we discussed it and I explained to him that there was no intent of coercion by the national organization to force the Pennsylvania Department into this situation. The national organization will absorb all financial responsibility for hosting the unit there, the encampment there in Gettysburg. And there would be no expectation by a national's part that Pennsylvania would need to organize and plan this, that the responsibility would also fall in with the national organization.

However, comma, if there were brothers from the Pennsylvania Department that did want to participate on the host committee, they would be most welcome to participate. So I offer that opportunity up. There is no obligation, and as I said earlier, no intent to coerce anybody into doing or supporting this event, but the response that's gone out has been overwhelming, especially for brothers that don't make it to Remembrance Day in the middle of the country or elsewhere.

I've heard a very favorable response. So I believe this is gonna be a huge event next summer. And as I said, I don't expect, but your participation as brothers in the organization and at whatever level the department would choose to help with on this, I have hosted two other national encampments as the host committee chairman, so I've got experience doing this.

So I know what's required to pull it off, and we can really hit this out of the park for the Pennsylvania Department. There has been one other national encampment in Gettysburg in 1905, so there is a historical precedent, and we have something else to relate back to if the host committee so chooses to do a tie-in of some nature with the 1905 national encampment. So there are tons of possibilities here, and I welcome any input from you brothers on what do we wanna do to best represent Pennsylvania in this encampment, and not just make it a national sponsor thing.

So I do offer that up to all of you. I would suggest, though, that hold off until we get this year's national encampment done and taken care of, because that's gonna be my focus for the next couple months. And then we'll hit this in earnest in September.

What I would ask you to do is, if you are interested in assisting on some level, contact your incoming department commander and just get a list of names to me. But what I can put out there is, typically, the first six to nine months is just all upfront planning with a smaller group of brothers, typically five to six is what I've done in the past. But where we're really gonna need help is during the execution of the actual event that we need brothers to man the registration table, help pack the goodie bags, and all of the mechanics of actually conducting the event.

But if you do have input on some suggestions of maybe what would be appropriate to do tours in the area, or other activities, or how do we best showcase Gettysburg. On my way up here this week, I did stop in Gettysburg, and I stopped at the tour guide desk at the visitor center at the national park. So if we're gonna do something on the battlefield, we have to use a certified tour guide.

So I've got some of the details involved with that. But if there's something else that we should be doing other than the Gettysburg, or maybe we offer another alternative tour for people that have already seen the battlefield and wanna do something else in the area, that's an opportunity. That's basically an explanation of how we got there.

I would fully expect next year that we exceed our delegate count, since it's gonna be here in Pennsylvania. So we should be able to really stack the numbers for the first year, and probably quite a number of years, with a very heavy representation from the department. That's a basic description.

I mean, this was not done in secret. As I said, I did reach out to your department commander, and then immediately after the contract was signed in the fall, there was a Zoom meeting with all of your department officers. So everything was above board on the table.

And I just wanna emphasize, my intent was not to coerce the department into doing this, but our back was up against the wall for having an encampment for next year. And we had to move quickly, and Gettysburg was the best option at that point. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Can you provide the dates, just for our information, or would you rather not?

PCinC Mike Paquette: Yes, yes. 30 July to 2 August. Yes, Thursday through Sunday.

The business meetings will be on the 31st.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. Yeah, as background, Brother Mike is the national counselor, and I wanted to speak with him informally about how Camp 48.

So I got in touch with Brother Mike and found out that he was going to be in Gettysburg. And he graciously agreed to let me come down. We had lunch together, and then he offered to let me walk around the Eisenhower Conference Center with him.

I've been to Remembrance Day parades, but I have two left feet, so I don't go to the ball, and I've not stayed there. So I appreciate that. And that was just totally secondary to my initial concern about how we would move forward dealing with how Camp 8. So I appreciate Brother Mike's willingness to talk to me and allow me to walk along with him.

Again, this is a great opportunity for us at no cost. It's a great opportunity for many of you who have never been to a national encampment to do a little bit of the grunt work, but also see how things work. I'm not recommending or suggesting that any time in the near future that our department host a national encampment, but there will never be a better opportunity for our brothers to be able to see what goes into it.

And, you know, as Mike said, we'll hopefully max out our delegates to be able to see the business sessions of the national encampment. Thanks again, Brother Mike. When were the dates, and again, when was the voting?

PCinC Mike Paquette: 30 July to the 2nd of August, 2026, Thursday through Sunday, the business sessions, Friday and Saturday.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. Okay. We need to set department per capita.

Department, Pennsylvania Department Bylaws Article 7, Finances Section 1 states, there shall be fixed at each annual meeting of the department by a majority vote of the brothers present in voting a per capita tax or dues to be paid by the camps and forwarded with the required reports upon the number of members reported. Do you wanna hold off on that till the budget discussion or? Okay, we will discuss that when we have our budget discussion. We also need to set the dues for Memorial Camp 300, our at-large camp.

Pennsylvania Department Bylaws Article 12, Members at Large Section 1 reads, eligibles from areas where no camps and or provisional camps exist may become members at-large of the memorial camp or a regular member of another camp in the department. Dues for members at-large shall be set by a resolution of the department encampment. I'd like to bring that discussion forward at the same time.

And Brother McNulty and I are due to visit the daughters at this time. So chaplain, if you would come and close the books, Bible. As soon as we're finished with the daughters, they will come for a visit here.

So let's plan on a 10-minute break. It may be a few more minutes before we are back over here. And yes, Brother Clark, the chaplain has cards to sign for brothers and sisters in distress.

(Three Raps)

Chaplain Closes the Bible

(One Rap)

(Break)

(One Rap)

Following Break Chaplain opens the Bible

Commander Fischer: Brother Guard, we have a visitation from the Daughters. Thank you. Brother Guide, please escort them in and grab a few brothers if you need them.

Daughters, thank you for visiting. Please come around this way if you would.

DUVCW Deligation: The Daughters, I extend to you best wishes for a successful convention.

May we all remember our purpose for coming together once a year to preserve our Civil War heritage. I have a gift for you from our Department President, Daryl Reed. Thank you very much.

We have something for David Demmy, who is the winner of the lottery tree. David Demmy here. Yeah, if you would pass those to him as we are exiting.

Commander Fischer: Anyone else like to speak? Well, Daughters, we appreciate, as I just mentioned at your meeting room, the opportunity for us to get together.

We don't see each other enough because we're spread out throughout the Commonwealth, and we all do our good work often individually or maybe with one or two units together, but when we can all be together, all of the Allied Orders, it reminds us of those fraternal and sororal bonds that go back almost to the Civil War. So thank you so much, and we wish you a very good continued convention, and look forward to seeing many of you at the banquet tonight. Thank you.

Brother Blattner, and Alex, of course.

Thank you. This is just information. There's no real recommendation or discussion.

There was a resolution at the 11th encampment of the Department of the Columbia that reads, it appears to the brothers assembled in annual encampment that the 143rd National Encampment in adopting new subsection D of Article VIII Life Member Programs, Chapter 5, General Regulations of the National Regulations inadvertently eliminated the rights of members between the ages of 14 and 19 to become life members. To rectify this oversight, the Department of the Columbia humbly requests the 144th National Encampment to amend new subsection D of Article VIII Life Member Programs, Chapter 5, General Regulations of the National Regulations that currently starts with life membership at age 20. When it was updated, it was left off to include life membership for ages 14 through 19.

They would like to restore the right of members between the ages of 14 and 19 to become life members. The Department of the Columbia, which is the Pacific Northwest, will bring

this forth at the National Encampment. I just wanted to let the brothers know that they're taking that action.

We do not need to take any action.

Also, just for information purposes, next Saturday, June 28th, Mears Camp 505 is hosting the last veteran of Columbia County in Pine Grove Cemetery in Berwick for Private John Henry Taylor, Company, Private Company B-194th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.

There was a request from Gettysburg Camp 112 dealing with a former brother who had lived in Connecticut, had been a department commander slash past department commander of the Department of Connecticut, was given an honorable discharge, I believe 2019, let his membership lapse, and now is wanting to rejoin or has rejoined Camp 112 since he had moved to Gettysburg.

There was a request for restoration of honors. However, because there was the gap, he has lost those honors. Brother Mike, would you like to?

PCinC Mike Paquette: So I was sitting here during the break with Brother McMillin, and we checked the CNR just to be sure on this.

So when you request an honorary discharge, you lose your past honorary titles. It's in black and white. It's a footnote in this section, and the ruling was made back in 1889 by then Commander-in-Chief Griffin.

(6 An honorably discharged member who again joins the Order does not regain his past rank. CinC Griffin. Op.

XXXV, Blue Book, 23. Constitution, Article VII, Section 1(a))

So it's in black and white. We cannot restore, his honors cannot be restored. And he requested an honorable discharge, not a transfer.

Transfer's only valid for one year. So he's gonna have to reapply as a new member with the regular routine to become a member, and there's no way possible to give him his PDC status back. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Brother John, I'm gonna ask if you would discuss the past Commander-in-Chief honors situation.

PDC John McNulty: Brothers, I would ask that Brother Mike Peter work with me on this, because he's done a lot of the work for the one for Bud Atkinson.

SVC Mike Peter: So we have met and discussed this issue for this past several months. Originally, we were talking about getting a flag to honor the past Commanders-in-Chiefs.

Then we talked about getting a streamer. I did order a streamer. It's a double-sided streamer, and this is what it looks like.

What we're working on now is how we would put the names on the streamer, how we would find out how to write, and we could get all of them on one streamer that could be attached to the department flag. So that's kind of where we're at right now. I showed this to some other brothers.

It was a thought to maybe change this to a purple or something like that instead of black to go on the flag. So I'm gonna look into that.

PDC John McNulty: Brothers, initially, we talked about this for Bud Atkinson, Charlie Kuhn, and Richard Partington.

Many of you knew one or others of them. They were all past Commanders-in-Chief of Pennsylvania and very active in our department. For Bud, we are working on his hat, as I said yesterday, to get that displayed at the GAR Museum in Philadelphia.

For Reverend Partington, we haven't really come up with an idea yet. He's a very complex man and trying to find the right thing for him. His grandfather took him to the one GAR hall when he was a kid.

That's how he got involved. And he knew the last GAR man in Philadelphia. And we talked about them.

The one day, I was in the museum looking at one of the pictures. And he said, oh, I knew him. He was a nice old man.

And I was like, what? So we're not sure on what to do with that yet. The other question had been, do we do something for all of the PCNCs from Pennsylvania? The problem that we looked at with that streamer is nobody would be able to read the names. And there has to be another way if we do this.

And the question has come up, should we do this at all? I know it's been voted on, but when Ivan Franz called me and said he was not coming to this, he said that he was objecting to spending any money on notifying and memorializing some of our people. He said it should go to memorializing the Civil War veterans, since we are sons of Union veterans of the Civil War. The other thing he wanted me to tell you is, and this is separate, but I'll tell you this now.

There's talk about getting a Pennsylvania state flag. And we've discussed, well, that might change it or whatever. That's not the point here.

He said he does not believe that we should spend the money on a Pennsylvania flag. We should simply have the department flag and the national colors. It's what we've always had.

He objects to the idea of buying a state flag. I'll make one comment on that. Joel Searfoss Camp and we got new flags.

We were fortunate that the state rep in Bangor gave us a new national flag and a new state flag. So we carry both and we've bought our camp colors. So we carry three flags, but a lot of places don't.

And I promised Ivan that I would bring his message to you. He is against the state flag and he is against memorializing any of our members. The money should go to memorializing the Civil War vets.

Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. We do have some very serious concerns when we will get into the budget discussion and the issues that Brother John spoke about will be addressed at that time, just for better context.

At this time, I'd like to have PDC McMillin come up to discuss his special report on the recording equipment. Again, this will come up again during the budget discussion.

PDC Doug McMillin: Thank you, Brother Commander.

Okay, after last year's work as recording secretary, I was asked kind of off the record, it was not a formal office, it was just a request that I look into what it would take to update the department's equipment and provide a situation so that we can have our recording secretary done not by one brother over and over and over as it has in the past. For, well, ever, Brother Ivan Franz has been our recording secretary using pretty much his own equipment and doing all the work of transcribing the proceedings. With Brother Ivan's withdrawal from active participation in the organization due to age and health, it kind of left us a little flat-footed because with him went all of the equipment and the only volunteer.

So I stepped in to pinch hit last year and am doing again, and if you see the report that was put out back yesterday, it pretty much speaks for itself. I tried to keep it as simple as possible. We've got a real problem, not just with finding volunteers to do it, but the recording equipment and the audio equipment that is required.

If we rent it from an outside audio company, we're looking at at least \$1,500 for the weekend, possibly much higher. And in the hospitality industry now, finding a hotel that will actually provide audio equipment at no additional charge is becoming almost impossible. And so they will charge you for the mics, for the amplification, and that does not include any recording secretary.

So I put together a package suggesting some equipment that after researching what National does, what other companies do, and what would be the easiest system and smallest amount of equipment possible to provide amplification for the meetings as well as recording equipment to get the proceedings, I put together a proposal and a package here that would provide a, and all, how do I wanna put this? I wanted to make it wireless, if we could. Right now, the equipment that I brought from home, you can see there's still spaghetti all over the place. All three microphones we're using are wired.

We had to move all of the desks in closer because the mic there would not reach out as far as the audience. We've got a lot of spaghetti here, and it's not necessary. What I'd like to do is set up something where we have a microphone for the commander, a microphone for the secretary and the parliamentarian, and we have one microphone in the front of the room for the brothers to come up to and speak, and a second microphone for the brothers closer

to the back of the room so the brothers don't have to come walking all the way up to speak to a motion.

It's exactly the way they do it at National. One front mic, one back for the brothers. We're just not dealing with about 200 people at a time.

We're dealing with about 40 or 50. Then there was the speakers. I'm proposing getting two wireless speakers rather than putting one in the center of the room.

I'm talking about potentially putting one on either side, getting two, one on that side of the room, one on the other side, so that we have a little more even volume and don't have to turn one central one and weigh the heck up to reach the back of the room and then rearrange your hairdo in the front. There is a diagram on page three of it of how the room would be set up, and on page four, I kind of tried to draw out what the system would look like in theory to try and give a clearer idea how it would be working. This was about as basic as I could make it, and it's all battery-operated instead of requiring electricity, because another problem we're having with hospitality is that even if you don't rent the audio equipment, some hotels are now charging you to plug into their outlets and use their electricity.

In order to try and prevent us from having to get soaked for all of this money, the idea was let's go battery-operated. That speaker has a 10-hour battery on a full charge. The mixer there is battery-operated.

The recorder is battery-operated. The only thing I have plugged in right now is my laptop, which is not part of the system. That's just there for looking up stuff as we need it.

So the other benefit of this is not only if we have a battery-operated system that is completely wireless, we can do our annual encampments with amplification and recording, but if during the middle of the year the department wants to do an event outside or some other venue and we need amplification, we can do it. We are completely untethered to the grid as long as we've got this. So it's a very versatile system.

The only drawback that I find that I can't really resolve is, well, there's two. Who's gonna store it and transport it and who's going to volunteer to run it? It's not a very complex system and it can actually be trained in a matter of 10 or 15 minutes to use. So that was my report and there's a recommendation at the end, two recommendations that I would recommend, a motion authorizing the PA department purchase the equipment listed in the report and two, a motion that the incoming department commander appoint a committee to resolve the questions of storage and to write appropriate language to update and formalize the position of recording secretary with the enumerated duties for submission to the department bylaws.

This committee to present its work at the 2026 encampment for action by the Brothers Assembled. And that concludes what I've got.

Commander Fischer: Thank you, Brother Doug.

Brother Doug had this system out at Mount Holly Springs Cemetery on Memorial Day weekend for the last Civil War veteran ceremony for Cumberland County. And it worked very well. He posted to the department Facebook page and again, you can hear everything just fine and it was very helpful to have a battery powered system.

As Brother Doug mentioned, and as Brother Mike noted, departments are struggling to try to get decent deals with hotels. Brother Steve mentioned to me that the new manager for this place was, he about fell over fainting with the deal that we received. I mean, this is a Hilton, right? And the days of us or National going to a downtown major urban center for encampment, those are pretty much gone because we can't afford it.

Our brothers can't afford to pay the room cost, let alone when we get charged for meeting space, for any extras. Many of the places are trying to push requiring use of their audio visual equipment, which is not free anymore. And so we have a major challenge and I thank Brother Doug for taking the time to investigate this and just to try and figure out how we really move into the 21st century given all the impediments that we face, given that there are two recommendations.

Has, have most of you been able to look at this report? The bottom line, the recommended equipment, wireless microphone system for microphones, \$150, four channel mixer with optional battery power, \$50. We have a Zoom audio recorder, two monster portable 600 watt battery powered speakers, which I assume this is one of them, okay? Wireless transmitter and two speakers, two receivers for the speakers, \$95, two tabletop microphone stands, \$29 each. And I'm sorry, the battery powered speakers, 350 each.

The two floor microphone stands, \$30 each. Two audio patch cables, two at six foot, one at 20 foot, \$60. One line splitter, \$10.

Two 40 foot extension cords, \$20 each. One multi-outlet power strip, \$10. And a buffer for shipping and handling of \$100, not knowing what the cost might be for shipping this equipment.

That's the bottom line. Is there a motion to authorize the Pennsylvania Department to purchase the equipment listed in this report? Motion, second. Motion and seconded.

Discussion, please.

PCinC Mike Paquette: So brothers, as the chairman of the National Site Committee, this is exactly what I do when I negotiate contracts for the national organization. Contract with the hotel, and then get the contract in place for audio visual.

So hotels have kind of gotten out of the in-house business since COVID started, and they'll go to have a preferred partner for audio visual services. And they'll come in and they coordinate with the hotel, they do all the setup, charge you a rental fee for each day that you're using their equipment. And then in order to get that contract in place, the hotel charges you an additional 25% for bringing that business into the hotel.

Now some hotels will let you go out and bring your own stuff in, which obviously you've done here. And we're gonna be able to do in Gettysburg next year. But it really depends on the hotel.

So this diagram that you have right here in this package is almost identical to what we do at National, except we have an additional microphone for this table over here. So we go with five microphones total with a mixer. And the speakers that go with it, sometimes they can tap into the in-house speakers in the facility.

But this dollar figure of what Brother Doug has provided you, National pays that daily per day for what we do at the National encampment. So the bills that I'm typically looking at, the price tag is typically a minimum of three to \$4,000 for National. Now National doesn't really have the option to buy our own stuff to do the audio portion because you gotta take this wherever over in the country and you probably pay as much in shipping to get things to point A to point B. But I think this is a very common sense approach for the department to save money in the long run, provided you're able to address the challenges that Brother Doug has brought up.

Where do you store it? Who do you train to run it? Those types of things. But if you can address those issues, Pennsylvania Department's gonna save a lot of money in the long run by taking this approach rather than paying an AV company to come in every year and we're here for two days. So you're looking to a bill potentially as high as what National pays in order to just conduct your encampment.

So my two cents.

Commander Fischer: Thank you, Brother Mike. As you know, everything gets more expensive.

A few years ago it was \$5 for a big Mac meal, now it's like 12. Brother John.

PDC John McNulty: I have talked with Doug about this.

We've discussed this for a while. One of the things I like is that this will be no wires for outside. I remember back in 2008 when Ruhl Camp 33 rededicated four artillery pieces that had been in town.

They put them out in Hanover Junction and they were over from where the station stands and where the track swings off towards Gettysburg. And they had to run wires from the station building, which is a museum, all the way out there, run it under the tracks. And it was cumbersome.

It was very cumbersome that day. This has the advantage of doing away with all the problems we had at Hanover Junction. So I think this is a good idea.

Commander Fischer: Brother Steve.

Brother Bennett, would you fill the chair, please?

PI Steve Johnston: Thank you, Commander. Being a member of the site committee and negotiating with this hotel in particular, I fully support the recommendation to get a sound system like this.

What we're dealing with right now is about \$188 per day just for this room. The more that we add to their system, the more it costs. So additional microphones, additional placements, microphone stands.

So we're very fortunate that the Hilton Double Tree here has allowed us to bring our system in and use that. They were very flexible with that. I actually have two sound systems up in my room if they were needed for the women's rooms.

So I highly support this. Very flexible. In my own job, I deal with things like this every day.

So very supportive.

Commander Fischer: Yeah, Brother Doug has laid things out very clearly. And we, as mentioned, Brother Doug deserves gratitude for last year when Ivan was unable to come after he had been doing it for, probably since reconstruction, I think.

But, yeah, just after reconstruction. And then Brother Doug putting the legwork in on this and then stepping up to do this again. We all love Brother Ivan, but he gets very, I know we're in the middle of a motion here, but a discussion.

He would always get very busy over the winter because he plays in several community bands, which is wonderful. And the proceedings would languish until almost it's time for the next encampment and it would get to the top of his list. That left us as a department unable to act on many of the issues that were approved during that preceding encampment.

And having this and getting things transcribed in a timely manner has really helped me in leading the department to resolve some of the things that were brought up last year. Is there further discussion? Yes, sir. Brother Fred.

Brother Fred: I'm not clear exactly what is the total amount that we're gonna vote on.

Commander Fischer: I'm sorry, I laid it out except for the total. The total is 100, or I'm sorry, \$1,334.92.

Yes, sir.

Brian Harris: Thank you, Brian Harris, Baker Fisher 101. With that total amount, I just wanna say working in technology, that is not even a quarter of what I usually see for a system like this. So that's whatever deal you worked out is a great deal.

I just wanna add to just taking consideration the wireless capabilities. There are limitations with wireless, obviously. We had an event at a church cemetery not too recently that the speakers could not walk past a certain distance.

So I just ask you to take that into consideration as well. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Discussion?

PDC Doug McMillin: Doug McMillin , Camp 50.

Just to speak to the point that was just brought up, that is very correct. There is extreme limits on the distance that we can go with wireless. These speakers, that's why if you take a look, if you have the diagram available, I put one over here and one over there at the end of the officer's tables is because that's about as far as they'll reach comfortably wirelessly paired.

And that's also about as far as they will reach from this point wirelessly with solid signal. You can stretch it a little bit, but as you stretch it, you might wind up with gaps at moments or nothing at all. So those are absolutely correct.

But if you lay it out the way that I have it diagrammed there within those distances, it should be solid. The four mic wireless base unit that I was looking at has 16 different channels available. So you have four different radio channels available basically per mic.

So if you have conflict over one of those channels, you can adjust it and change channel for that mic to something else. Same story with the speakers, the system I'm looking at has a couple of different channels so that if you have conflicts, you can resolve that between the speakers and the mixer. I think, yeah, that should be about, oh, the other thing was it's a little scalable.

Brother Mike mentioned at National, they like to use five mics. We can add another base unit with up to as much as four mics on that other base unit and still on a four channel mixer, that base unit only has one line that feeds into the mixer. So we can double that number of mics if we want and not have to enlarge our mixer because we have a four channel mixer and we'd only be using two.

So that's it.

Commander Fischer: Thank you, Brother Doug. Discussion? Any further discussion?

All right, we have a motion on the floor to authorize the Pennsylvania Department to purchase the equipment listed in this report with a total cost being \$1,334.92. That includes \$100 buffer for shipping and handling.

All in favor, raise your hand. Thank you. Those opposed, same sign.

Motion passes.

PCinC Mike Paquette: So brothers, on the topic that we've just been discussing, we are using Brother Doug's setup here and so you can see the type of money that he has saved the encampment this year. And I think we just owe him an expression of appreciation.

(Applause)

Commander Fischer: Brother Doug has a second motion in his special report.

Motion that the incoming department commander appoint a committee to resolve the questions of storage and write appropriate language to update and formalize the position of recording secretary with enumerated duties for submission to the department bylaws. This committee will present its work at the 2026 encampment for action by the brothers assembled.

So this will take some time to get the committee organized and write an appropriate proposal for the bylaws. And again, will be presented next year. Is there a second to Brother Doug's motion? Okay.

And in case I did that wrong, is there a second to the second? Okay, thank you. Discussion, discussion. No objection, incoming department commander.

A motion that the incoming department commander appoint a committee to resolve the question of storage of the equipment that the department has agreed to purchase and to write appropriate language to update and formalize the position of recording secretary. With enumerated duties and have that added into the department bylaws.

Thank you.

Okay, on the first page of Brother Doug's report under challenges, these are the issues that are trying to be resolved. Storage, where will the system be stored?

That's a big challenge, having carried around the department equipment or most of it for a year. Transportation, who will be tasked to transport the system to department events? Because we're not dumping this on Brother Doug.

He had to bring two vehicles to carry the equipment that we needed to successfully have this encampment.

Training, even the most user-friendly systems do require some knowledge and training. We bought equipment several years ago for an East and West components of our education committee so that we could record talks with longstanding brothers like Brother Ivan, Dave Kleinpeter, who is now gone, and others.

And what we have for the education committee has worked fine for that type of a setting, which is two or three people talking, not for this type of setup. So this will be a little more complex. Some folks who are tech-savvy will pick it up pretty easily, but we also need to have, and as I mentioned earlier, yesterday, that we really need, with my department commander's report, we need to have backups, we need to have assistance, we need to have brothers who are knowledgeable so that when somebody gets ill, somebody has a family emergency, somebody's car breaks down on the way to the encampment, we have, you know, we're not gonna answer every possible scenario, but we need to be better prepared for those kinds of things.

Another challenge, setup and tear down. Every day the equipment must be set up or torn down as meeting rooms are repurposed during the encampment. We were fortunate to be

able to lock the doors last night, so we didn't have to break things down and reset up this morning, but that may not always be the case.

Maintenance, whose responsibility will it be to maintain the equipment in working order?

That flows in with storage, transportation, and all these other issues. Again, Brother Doug has been very thoughtful in trying to provide a well-detailed special report. Any further question on that, Brother John? Further discussion? Yes, sir.

Brian Harris: Brian Harris again, Baker Fisher. I'm probably gonna shoot myself in the foot with this one, but it was mentioned about coming into the 21st century, and it sounds a lot like what we're going towards is a technology committee for the state if we don't already have one. Usually with AV like this, it would fall under a technology department or a committee, so it sounds like that's where we may be headed, and maybe that could be a suggestion.

Commander Fischer: I think that falls, thank you, Brother. I think that falls within this motion of appointing a committee to examine all those facets and get that codified in our bylaws. Is there any further discussion, Brother McNulty?

PDC John McNulty: Having thought this over a little bit more, it just occurs to me we're already having problems storing the things that came from the GAR Museum now, and it's a \$700, \$800 a year expense.

If, where are we going to store this? I mean, we're trying to get rid of the storage for that. Are we going to end up picking up storage for something? I'm just beginning to wonder. It makes wonderful sense as long as we have a place to storage, but if we don't have a place to store it, then it becomes more of an expense.

Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Storage will be an issue, but just my comment that this equipment, if we have to store it in a five-by-five, it would fit in a five-by-five unit, which we're paying \$75, \$76 a month on. That's still a potential savings of \$1,000 a year if we end up having to rent from the hotel and their preferred vendor.

Again, I agree totally with Brother John that the storage unit in Carlisle has just been sucking money down the river from our department, and we do need to be very conscious of that, and you'll have more of that as we deal with the budget in a little bit. And again, we just can't rely on one person to have to carry this stuff all around.

PDC Doug McMillin: Doug McMillin Camp 50. I hate to say it, but with this report, I violated one of my own personal rules pretty badly, and that is never complain about a problem unless you're also bringing a solution. And I left some big problems in this one, but I honestly couldn't find the solution myself, and I don't believe I have the right to make that solution in this case because it really is up to the brothers who are paying for this and are served by this, and whoever is going to step up and actually do the work. Brother McNulty's absolutely correct.

We've got some budgetary issues that'll be coming up here for discussion that are pretty serious this year. As much as we're trying to save the department money, sometimes you gotta spend some money to save money. But I wanted to point out that the motion to authorize the department to purchase the equipment was simply an authorization.

That does not mean that tomorrow I'm gonna expect a check from Rob, and we're gonna go out and order it and just go gangbusters. We just have the authorization to do it as soon as we're ready. The committee has to answer these questions first before we spend a dime.

And I think that's really the key thing. So I would agree absolutely on the technology committee idea. That is absolutely on target, and Brother Mike also mentioned here that that's how National handles it.

So that's what I have to point out.

PDC John McNulty: That satisfies me for the moment. We have to figure things out before we have all these toys, and it's Christmas Day, and you don't know where to put them after Christmas.

That's my big concern. We need to figure out how we're gonna transport it, where we're going to store it, and is it cost effective? So this authorization, I'm okay with. Not that it makes any difference.

But just think about the long-term expense. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: So brothers, I move that actual procurement of the audiovisual equipment that we've authorized is deferred until the committee resolves the challenges identified by Brother McMillan in his report.

That's a motion. Brother Doug, would you accept that as an amendment to your motion?

PDC Doug McMillin: Yes.

Commander Fischer: We had the motion and a second. Brother Paquette, would you restate that, please?

PCinC Mike Paquette: The procurement of the audiovisual equipment just previously approved by the encampment is deferred until the committee in the second recommendation resolves the challenges identified by Brother McMillan's report.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. Any discussion? Any discussion? Okay. If you're in favor of this motion, raise your hand.

Thank you.

Those opposed, same sign.

Motion two is passed with that caveat that Brother Paquette brought up.

Thank you. All right, I'm gonna go back to a point that Brother McNulty brought up about, I believe it was Brother Ivan stating that there was no reason for a Pennsylvania flag. That decision to purchase a Pennsylvania flag was passed at the 2017 department encampment, and it's kind of been mulled over and tabled because of various reasons.

Pennsylvania was gonna change the department flag, whether we would get a flag appropriate to the era of the Civil War, if we would get a flag that was a regimental flag with white horses in the field, et cetera. Brother Ivan, his thoughts were not to purchase. Brother John, would you please?

PDC John McNulty: Brother Ivan said to me a few days ago when we were on the phone that he thought it wasn't necessary.

It was something else we had to store, and he thought that it just was not worth the money. Irregardless of whether we keep the colors we currently have, which go back more or less to 1790, or whether we come up with something new. He just said he didn't think we should have a national flag, of course, and our department flags represent all the brothers from Pennsylvania, and he thought that was enough.

Commander Fischer: So is there a motion to supersede the decision of the 2017 department encampment to not purchase a Pennsylvania state flag?

No, just one point. Yeah, again, the issue has been if Pennsylvania was gonna change the flag, if we were gonna actually go with a regimental flag from the Civil War era, et cetera, et cetera, but is there a motion to override that 2017 encampment motion that was accepted to not purchase a Pennsylvania flag? Brother Ed makes the motion. Is there a second? Second.

Second. Yeah, discussion.

PCinC Mike Paquette: Just one point of order here, brothers.

The only thing that can re-override a previous decision by a national encampment, I mean department encampment, is another department encampment. So this is the only way to go about dealing with what Brother John has shared with us. Thank you.

Yes, please, discussion.

PDC John McNulty: Making clear to you that this is not me speaking, this is Ivan speaking through me, and I'll leave it at that. Brother John Gibson.

PDC John Gipson: John Gibson, past department commander. All of these objections coming from Ivan were brought up when we discussed this before and disagreed with and voted down when we voted to approve this purchase of a state flag. So, you know, I think it's inappropriate for Ivan to get a second crack at opposing something that was brought up when he was at the meeting, and we ultimately voted in favor of it.

So, you know, I don't think it's appropriate to, and we actually discussed it in two different encampments. So, and again, Ivan was present both times, and Ivan brought up his opposition both times. And so it's, you know, it's been approved.

We're, you know, you don't get to keep going back and disapproving, trying to disapprove something that's already been voted on multiple times.

PDC John McNulty: Brother John, I will repeat to you, this was a discussion between myself and Ivan when he told me he was not coming and that he was ill. I promised him I would pass his point on because he would be here himself and probably arguing with you at this moment.

I'm just the messenger.

PDC John Gipson: I did not mention you at any point. I'm just mentioning this.

I'm basically speaking for him if he would be here. Okay, brothers. As Brother Paquette said, only a department encampment can override a previous approved decision.

Now, again, this would not be an issue if action had been taken since 2017. And again, that's been part of our problem in not having timely proceedings that brothers could reconcile what had transpired at an encampment. Brother Jeff.

Jeff Haggy: Jeff Haggy, Camp One. Although I would happen to, my personal feelings are it's not really a needed item, but I have to fully embrace what Brother Gibson says. I mean, especially, I wasn't at the 2017 encampment, but hearing what Brother Gibson said, that it was fully vetted, fully discussed, and passed at that point, I'd have to support going through with what was originally agreed to.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. Brother Doug.

PDC Doug McMillin: Well, since we're in discussion on this, and I think that's the beauty of the system, I got to agree with Brother Gibson that this has been voted on twice.

However, I also have to agree with the fact that it is part of the procedure, the parliamentary procedure we're in, that you can bring a motion, and even after it's been decided twice, so what we're doing is perfectly legit, discussing it. But I do agree. We've decided this already.

What I would like to hear from, if he's willing, is actually Brother Carty and his opinions on this, because what is not really known outside of the folks that have talked about this in the research is that Brother Chris here has done an enormous amount of research on this and has come up with some beautiful ideas of what we might do. And I don't know if you're interested in talking about it at all, Chris, but I'd really love to hear from you in discussion.

Commander Fischer: Brother Carty.

PDC Alfred Carty: Alfred Carty, Camp 273. The original motion was a lot bigger. I don't know if we have a copy of it here.

It wasn't just to purchase a flag, but the flagpole, the base, the finial, and also Baldricks to carry the flags in the Remembrance Day parade and the storage bags to carry it. No, they had discussed the changing of the state flag. There was a movement in a lot of flag groups that our current flag, they call it a seal on a bedsheet, that it doesn't really stand out.

It's like a state seal on a plain blue flag. It doesn't, I don't even think it says Pennsylvania on it. It just has our motto on it.

They wanted to simplify the flags, and some states have changed their flags, and they look terrible. They look more like some kind of Microsoft clip art than a state flag. There is legislation to change the state flag, but every time it comes up, it kind of gets defeated.

They've been trying to change our state flag for about 10 years now, and it just isn't happening. The current design that a lot of people are pushing called the Keystone flag is just hideous. It looks like a PA lottery logo.

It's just like a yellow keystone and the green and blue on either side. So we had discussed, since we're a historical organization, to try and get a state flag that looked like the time period of the Civil War. For those that don't know, the horses were originally white on the state flag, and then they changed them to black at some point.

Unfortunately, I can't find much in the way of images of old state flags, and we had discussed getting the Curtis flag, which was a flag that was specifically made up for Lincoln's visit to Gettysburg in 1863, that we get a reproduction of the Curtis flag, but that's gonna have to be a custom thing, and that'd be a lot more expensive than getting just a regular state flag from a flag store. So if you're gonna have a motion to vote this away, you're gonna have to include all the other stuff in the original stuff. You look for the Baldricks and all the other supplies that go with the flag.

But it's up to the brothers, and I'll just go with whatever they decide. But we should probably go over the budget more if we're talking about spending all this money and that we're in dire straits. I don't know.

But I know there are a lot of brothers that are aggravated that we haven't gotten the state flag after all this discussion. So I guess, I don't know, maybe we can start a GoFundMe to get it done since we can't seem to get it done at the department level. Okay.

Commander Fischer: Thank you, Brother Chris. Yes, when I said the flag, meaning that 2017 motion that was passed, I don't have the wording in front of me, but it would be that entire, everything included in that motion. Brother McNulty.

PDC John McNulty: This time it's me speaking, not Ivan Frantz. Having grown up in Philadelphia, I'm very familiar with the oldest interpretation of the state arms, which hangs in the legislative hall in Independence Hall. It was placed there in about 1790.

It's the oldest version we know of. It's the only one that survives, at least. And it's similar to the Civil War flag.

It has white horses, if my memory is right. If we're gonna argue about anything, maybe just go back to the one that was in what was our state house. That's my comment on that.

Please. Brother Essinwine.

PDC Richard Essenwein: Richard Essenwein, Camp 43.

Just by coming up here, I'm violating my own rule of all meetings where you sit down, shut up, and don't say anything to prolong the agony. However, in this case, why are we discussing purchasing a state flag? We can get a state flag donated by any state rep, any state senator. We all have representatives.

Why are we discussing a flag with white horses, the Curtis Curtin flag? Look at the flag behind you. That's a 50-star flag. Why do we have a 50-star flag and not a current state flag? If we're gonna get a historic state flag, then why don't we get a 34-star American flag? Like it or not, we are operating today under 2025 rules set by the Pennsylvania state government referencing child protection.

We all have to agree to that. We can't look at the governor and say, they didn't do it that way back in 1862. We're not doing it that way today.

If we have to follow state regs today, we deserve a current free state flag.

Commander Fischer: Is there any further discussion? This is why we meet in encampment, to air opinions and to move our department forward. Hold on just a second.

I've asked Secretary Koenigsberg to get on our website and see if we have the 2017 proceedings posted so we can look at that original motion. And we do have the 2017 proceedings on our website, Brother Rob's searching.

Brother Johnston.

PI Steve Johnston: Steve Johnston, Isaac Eaton Camp 504. This is a question to Brother Paquette and your travels as CNC and past CNC. Other departments, do they have their state flag represented?

PCinC Mike Paquette: Brother Steve, that's not something I've specifically taken note of.

Sometimes the hotels that we go to do have both flags. I can't address it from the national level because we have the Commander in Chief's flags and the US flag, but I think it's totally appropriate for a department to have its state flag at the encampment. And I would have no objection to that.

I mean, to do otherwise would, I don't think would be appropriate in my opinion.

PI Steve Johnston: Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Brother Kagey.

Brother Kagey: Just to respond to Brother Johnston, just last week at the New Jersey Department Encampment, we just voted to purchase a US flag for the first time and it's always been provided by the hotel. We do not have a state flag. We obviously use the department flag and also the camp flags, but there is no state flag.

Commander Fischer: Thank you. Brother Fred.

Fred Bender: Fred Bender, Camp 120.

Just to comment that I think we know that when regiments went into battle, I think I'm correct in saying they carried two flags in the center of the regiment. One was their regimental flag, the other was a state flag. So you could kind of think of that as a camp flag and a state flag, just throwing that in for two cents.

Commander Fischer: Thank you.

Brother Rob is not finding that in the 2017 proceedings. At this point, I'm going to table it, table this motion until after lunch.

We can try to get resolution. Okay, I'm still gonna table this for right now. We have about 25 minutes before lunch.

Is there any other new business to bring before the encampment? Brother Teeters.

Scott teeters: Scott Teeters, Camp 89.

This is a bit of housekeeping, but I was talking to Sister Ellen Higgins and she mentioned that they have two winners from the drawings last night that haven't claimed over there, a Dave B and a Bill B, who were winners in the drawings last night. And if you're Dave B or Bill B, please go over and see the sisters, and the daughters, excuse me, and pick up your winnings over there, all right? Thank you.

Commander Fischer: When we break for lunch, thank you.

Scott teeters: Yeah, not right now.

Commander Fischer: Brother Johnston.

PI Steve Johnston: Steve Johnston, Isaac Eaton, Camp 504.

As a member of the site committee this year, it was very enlightening to me, especially in terms of budget, and I know we're gonna have a deep budget discussion later. This is probably not related to that whatsoever. This is specific with the encampment.

For those of you that don't know, pre-registration obviously is \$7, on-the-spot registration is \$10. The medal that you're all wearing, plus the printing of the program book would exceed \$7 or \$10. So what we need to do is take a serious look at raising the price of registration for our annual encampment.

As a member of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association, to put some things into perspective of you, our annual conference, individual registration for a music teacher in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is \$275. That's just registration for the conference. You receive a program book and a pen, and that's the only thing that's given to you as you register for that conference.

Your room is in addition to that. The past couple of years we've been at the Kalahari Resorts where it's a minimum of \$185 a night, no breakfast included. So what we are experiencing here is a remarkable deal.

So I do think we need to take a serious look at raising the registration fee for the encampment so at least what you are provided with, the bare bones of the program book and the medal, those costs would be covered. In discussions with Brother Fisher, he's drawn me back off the ledge of how much I would really like to raise the registration fee to, and I understand that. I would like to, with discussion with Brother Bill, ask for at least in advance prepayment of the registration fee to be \$10 and at the door \$15 moving forward.

I think that would suffice for at least the next year in covering costs. Okay.

Commander Fischer: So in the form of a motion, what are you making?

PI Steve Johnston: Like to make a motion next year's registration fee would be \$10 in advance and \$15 payment at the door.

Commander Fischer: Is there a second? Second.

Motion and second to raise the Pennsylvania Department pre-registration cost to \$10 per individual and at the door \$15. Discussion?

Brother Rob?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: Encampment registration fees do not go to the site committee.

They actually get deposited into the GAR Memorial Fund that we have.

Commander Fischer: So your point is that it does not affect the cost or finances dealing with the encampment? Okay, I... Further discussion?

PCinC Mike Paquette: So that committee is running in the red.

How do we get them more money I think is the question. If it's not through registration, how do they get the monies to run the encampment if that's not the way to do it?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: A lot of the fees come out of the meals, the banquets, and the tours. And the ad book is the big thing that we get our monies from for the site committee.

Commander Fischer: Brother Steve?

PI Steve Johnston: This year the proceeds from the program book ended up being \$2,430. We were very fortunate this year to have the costs of the printing of that program book generously donated to the encampment. The printing of that book when I received a bid was \$718 for 125 program books.

There are other expenses in relation to the encampment that add up. So we need to come into 2025 as we were talking earlier. And I don't know how to do that.

Commander Fischer: Do you wish to withdraw that motion given that registration or pre-registration does not go to encampment costs?

PI Steve Johnston: Yes, yes, yes. We can withdraw that motion.

Commander Fischer: And do you have a different motion?

PI Steve Johnston: How can I say this as nicely as I can? If we don't fix the problem, we're not gonna be able to have encampments in the future.

That's a black and white, I mean that's, I mean if you look at the annual report from Brother Cunningsburg last year, the encampment, the site committee encampment was a minus \$3,844.50. That's not this year's encampment. That's previous encampment. So we're gonna run out of money at some point.

Commander Fischer: Usually the program, the ad booklet if you will, is the biggest generator of funds. This year that profit, even though the printing was donated, was fairly low. I don't know what it was last year.

PI Steve Johnston: It was about \$1,000 less than last year.

Commander Fischer: About \$1,000 less than last year for profit.

PI Steve Johnston: Yes.

Commander Fischer: Yeah, even though last year it was the cost of publishing.

PI Steve Johnston: So if you would subtract the cost of publishing, maybe \$300 total less than last year.

Commander Fischer: Okay, yeah, and again, we were very fortunate to receive the publication at Gratis.

That's not, that's very unlikely to happen in the future. So yeah, this is a discussion. An issue that we do have is that, that ad booklet includes the Allied Orders, and we would have to discuss with them any idea of increasing the cost for the full page, half page, quarter page advertisements.

We just can't make that carte blanche.

PCinC Mike Paquette: No brothers, you're probably getting tired of hearing from me, and I apologize.

This is an issue that a host committee at the national organization has to do fundraising in order to pretty much carry out its business. So national, for a department that's hosting a national encampment, they get upfront money for \$5,000 to offset some of the costs of setting up and the rest of that. And the auxiliary contributes a portion to the national encampment as well, and that's basically seed money to do what the department needs to do to host a national encampment.

Well, let's take this down to department level now. Now you have a site committee that all five orders have representation on. So this is not just a SUV problem, right? This is, that committee's gonna address it as an entity.

So I would offer up that this is not solely the responsibility of the Sons to address this problem, and that committee is gonna need to come to some consensus on how best to offset that disadvantage. Now in the past, if you've been able to generate enough revenue from your program book as a fundraising activity to offset your costs, but that's no longer sufficient to do what needs to be done, then the participating organizations are either gonna have to chip in more money individually, which would impact our budget, or come up with some other fundraising activities to address those deficits. So I'm just providing some insight, but I think this problem is, as I said, is not the Sons to solve specifically, but we need some recommendations.

I believe we need some recommendations from the site committee on how they could particularly address the problem, or they're just gonna have to go back to the organizations and ask for upfront money to help take care of that.

PI Steve Johnston: Yeah, I think for clarification purposes, if you're new to this, it's not one encampment that's going on at this time. It's the SUV plus all of the allied workers.

And there are, as I found out, and thankfully, Bob Wrigley, what a great mentor he's been, wow, there's just a lot of things. And to be able to provide what we have, we need to do something so we can ensure that we have this in the future. So I guess we need to figure something out.

Just leave it at that.

PDC John McNulty: Brothers, I apologize for having to be Ivan Frantz and give you history. I truly apologize.

Back about 1965, this department almost ceased to exist. The Reverend Pardington was the department commander, and that was like 64 or 65, I'm not sure. I wasn't a member then, I was only a boy.

But the department had no money. We were ready to turn in the charter the whole nine yards. The auxiliary had money back then.

How, I don't know, but they did. And they bailed us out. They gave us the money to make this organization continue.

As a result of that, Reverend Pardington and the other, the council and all, founded the GAR Fund. It's basically our doomsday fund. If we ever got into that situation again, we had some money to pull ourselves out of it.

The money from your registration fee is one of the things that goes to that. And the way it's written, we can't touch it, unless it's an absolute emergency. The other thing I'd like to say is I apologize for this stuff from Ivan about the flag and the mess it's made.

The reality is in the last week, I have spent about 35 hours with people calling me on the phones or emailing me or whatever, and I have no idea why with most of it, except that I've been around and they know who I am. So please, from the future on, if you want me to say something on the floor, don't ask, because I'm not doing it anymore. Thank you.

Commander Fischer: Okay. Brother Rich, and then we will be going to lunch.

PDC Richard Essenwein: Addressing the issue of encampments.

This has been an issue that comes up repeatedly every time encampment goes red. And Brother Doug, Brother McNaughty, you guys can remember back in 2011, when I was D.C., I appointed a committee to look at this very problem. And I told that committee, nothing is off the table.

Whatever it takes, you come up with recommendations. One of the recommendations to save costs was eliminate the badge. You would get, if I remember correctly, it was an idea where you had a bar and a ribbon down, and then every year you would get a numbered pin to put on that ribbon.

You remember that idea? Then we had the idea of, instead of at a hotel, we rent a college and have it in one of the high-tech, fancy dorms. We looked at the idea of a one-day encampment. All these ideas came up to save money.

Every single one of those ideas was accepted by the encampment of the Sons but our allied orders rejected every single one of them. And when, at the time, they were pleading, we have no money, we have no money. We had the money back then, so we kinda just, to keep the ladies happy, let's just do status quo.

Now we have no money, they have no money, and we're back in the same boat. It's going to take some hard decisions across the allied orders. It's going to take cooperation.

We can't do what we did back then, where you have a, and believe me, John and Doug will attest to this, I was standing where Bill was, and there was a knock on the door, and the guard said, I have a delegation from the ladies' auxiliary. And those doors, and Rob, you remember that. Those doors opened, and every woman in that room marched in here, and I swear they all had pitchforks and flamethrowers, and they were aiming right at me.

And that was the encampment where I ruled Rich Orr out of order. First time I've ever ruled a commander, past commander-in-chief out of order, and it was kind of fun. I ruled Faye Carlisle out of order.

You remember that. *(John McNulty inaudable interrupting)* Yes, she did. Mary Jo Long was out of order.

Let me tell you, *(John McNulty inaudable interrupting)* they were, and I even delegated you to try to go over and smooth feathers. But the point of all this is, we've faced this problem in the past. We cannot keep kicking the can down the road.

We have got to address this and address it quickly, or else we're going to be looking at this department in the rear view mirror, and everyone's sitting around saying, well, we should've did this, we could've did this. I know it's not easy to stand up to women, but sometimes we have to.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you, Brother Rich.

I am going to table further new business discussion until we get back from lunch. We have a lot of work to do this afternoon, finish up new business, hopefully quickly, and then we'll have a very challenging budget discussion, and then we need to go into nomination and election of officers. Thank you.

Three Raps

Chaplain Closes the Bible

One Rap

Recess for Lunch

Meeting Resumes Three Raps

Chaplain opens the Bible

One Rap

Commander Bill Fischer: All right, given that there is no motion that still stands and that will go forward with the incoming department commander to Determine how that is prosecuted. Thank you Yeah, okay, I I'm sorry. I have so many Things going through my head.

We had tabled that discussion. So we are untabling it and And everything I just said I don't need to repeat you heard that so Discussion is still open Thank you So is there further discussion to not follow through on Purchasing the Pennsylvania flag overriding the 2019 encampment vote This Is the last chance for discussion we had plenty leading up to please brother David.

David Barazoky: Dave Barazosky Garfield camp 34 We are discussing about donating thousand dollars to the Reynolds Memorial and \$1,300 towards a sound system and now With the flag, although you really don't have any objections to that And we're talking about

problems with the budget shouldn't we be discussing the budget first before we look into How we're going to spend money that we may or may not have until then.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: We need to discuss what we're going to spend before we can put it into the budget and Discuss the budget after we figure out what we want to spend. Okay.

David Barazoky: Thank you

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother John Brother Bray if you'd like to get up and ready to step in after brother John. Oh I'm sorry behind Go ahead brother John

John Danny: John Danny fast commander Isaac Eaton 504 More I was thinking about this like rich ass in the line said about Having a donated by a senator or a congressman Doug Mastriano I'm kind of a fan of his his district actually covers the Gettysburg battlefield queer military man And he's always down at Gettysburg going YouTube videos and Facebook videos that he's given tours I'm sure he could get you a Pennsylvania flag for nothing. Tell him it's for the veterans group Sons of Union veterans, I bet he gets you a flag.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you But the motion also includes the harnesses etc for that yeah more than just the flag. Further discussion to vote this down brother McNulty.

PDC John McNulty: I Will repeat what I said before When we went up to Bangor, Pennsylvania to save that camps Joe Searfoss Camp they had no flags and they all had nothing and we got the representative from Bangor To get us we asked for an American flag we figured we needed at least that he gave us an American flag on a poll and a state flag on a poll So if you ask they will give you at least some of them will give you polls too And it was they were not bad polls.

They were rather nice.

Commander Bill Fischer: Further discussion. Further discussion.

The motion is to override the ruling of the 2019 Pennsylvania Department of Encampment to purchase flag holders polls, etc as was read by brother Rob Those in favor of voting against continuing with this purchase raise your hand.

This is this is to support the motion to not purchase these things as recommended and passed at the 2019 encampment. If you support this motion raise your hand.

Thank you, okay Thank you.

And if you disagree with the motion raise your hand All right, the motion fails, thank you.

All right, Pennsylvania Department bylaws article 7 finances section 1 states There shall be a fixed at each annual meeting of the department by a majority vote of the members present and voting a per capita Tax or dues to be paid by the camps and forwarded with the

required reports Upon the number of members reported the department per capita is currently set at seven dollars Do I have a motion to set the department per capita for 2026?

Brother guide, could you go to the auxiliary and have sister McMillin come? Ann McMillin, yes as quickly as possible. Thank you.

All right, we've had some discussion already concerning the past 2017 and 2024 encampment votes to honor past commanders-in-chiefs Orr, Pardington, and Atkinson. I'd like to have brother McNulty speak on this.

PDC John McNulty: When we initially came up with these ideas I Think quite frankly was more emotional than practical My own opinion I saw a lot of people who were upset Myself included. I knew all four of these men and I miss them but I Believe the organization is about Union veterans of the Civil War. I tend to agree on that with Ivan and I do not believe that we should be putting our money into Memorializing our men our our brothers when we are in a tight situation and if we're doing anything it should be for the veterans. That was why we were founded.

I believe it's still why we exist as much as I Was very fond of all four of these men They taught me a lot. I Do not believe that we should be doing any memorializing for them and I would ask you that we reverse that.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother John, do you have a motion?

PDC John McNulty: I Move that we rescind the former action to memorialize past commander-in-chief Atkinson or Coon and Partington.

Commander Bill Fischer: Would you just hold hold sister McMillan out there for just a couple minutes, please. Thank you There's been a motion by brother McNulty to override the past Encampment decisions to honor individually past commanders-in-chief Atkinson Kuhn, Orr, and Partington and I need a second.

Commander Bill Fischer: We have a second discussion Brother Haggy.

Jeff Haggy: Jeff Haggy, Camp one. I just want clarification from the presentation that brother Peter made With my understanding there would be a black streamer for the department flag and it would list all past Commanders-in-chief not just those four. Is that correct? Or is that incorrect?

PDC John McNulty: Brother Jeff we were exploring that as another possibility because people had said well What about the other past commanders-in-chief that came from Pennsylvania and that was an option? We were just working on options at that point. But the main thing was still Partington, Orr, Kuhn, and Atkinson.

Jeff Haggy: So if If We would reject this is There still what we have to make another motion to do a streamer honoring all Pennsylvania past commanders-in-chief.

Commander Bill Fischer: That that would be a separate motion

Jeff Haggy: Okay. Thank you.

PDC John McNulty: No Jeff One thing we looked at it and to do a streamer The names would be so small you'd never see them We just we could not work out. There's 30 some of them.

Jeff Haggy: Well, those streamers they look pretty long and I Would think that you could list them I Mean 30 that would be 15 per streamer.

There's two Two of those.

Commander Bill Fischer: Okay, that that's another issue after we get off We'll come back to that Okay discussion on rescinding the past Encampment decisions to honor the these four recent past commanders-in-chief.

(Inaudible)... Camp 504: How are we planning on honoring those men I mean before we vote on to reject honoring the...

Commander Bill Fischer: Past encampments agreed to spend up to five hundred dollars to honor each one of those brothers those past commanders-in-chief The committee that I asked to be formed this past year was examining opportunities and options to honor Brother Atkinson and as they were doing that they were finding that costs were a challenge. Yes, please brother McNulty.

PDC John McNulty: Bear in mind one other thing we have struck a special badge for 50 years of membership for both Reverend Partington and Bud Atkinson. So we've already put a heavy a bronze badge For those two so they've been memorialized before they were both still alive when it happened So it's not like we haven't done some things but we had a lot more money than and people Put in their pocket took stuff out of their pocket and gave to us to help pay for it. Because they were over \$1,000 a piece.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother John, do you want to read? Reassert what brother Ivan said about honoring the four.

PDC John McNulty: Ivan and I were discussing this. I don't have it written down.

So this is not verbatim but he said he wanted it know that he thought that commemorating any of our people Was an improper use of money and I think he also knew that we well he's been on this committee for a long time He knows that our budgetary situation right now is not favorable But he felt just on general principles. We should be spending the money on Union veterans not on ourselves.

Commander Bill Fischer: Further discussion

PDC Richard Essenwein: I I Agree with brother McNulty. I ...

Commander Bill Fischer: Please identify yourself.

PDC Richard Essenwein: Oh, Richard Essenwein PDC. I agree with brother John. I knew all four of these gentlemen and Knowing Reverend Partington he is probably rolling in his grave just at the very concept of this idea What Said Partington is probably rolling in his grave at the very concept of this idea.

I Just I can't see spending that much money honoring our own officers regardless of who they are if a camp wants to honor a brother for attaining the rank of commander-in-chief or Department commander or whatever they want. It should be up to the camp to honor their own brother but at this level We We should be spending our money for the mission. We are here not and our mission does not state we honor each other Thank you.

Commander Bill Fischer: Just as an aside After past commander-in-chief Orr passed away There was a very nice ceremony at his graveside in which commander-in-chief then Paquette attended presented a flag to Richard Orr his mother Family members were there.

It was very meaningful and That was a very appropriate Effort to honor Rich Orr his life. During the discussion with the committee found that we have dozens of past commanders-in-chief since the order was founded and they were looking into that black streamer. Yeah, the streamers are cheap, but getting the embroidery done is another story So that's not part of this but that's how that black streamer idea came through because I asked them to Look at all options and I appreciate the work they did more discussion on this motion to override the former encampments decisions to spend \$500 each for those four past commanders-in-chief.

PDC John McNulty: I Can tell you what happened with those badges because I was a department commander when it happens for about a year or two before I Became commander Reverend Partington was complaining that the Masons had done something for him The Union League etc etc done something for him and his own order hadn't recognized him Well, they had but quite frankly at that point. I think Reverend Partington was starting to slip a little I'm not sure but he wasn't himself So at when I went in at Fort Ligonier, there was a big hoo-ha about it and several of the important members including Joe Long said we must do this we must do this and We did it and then after that it was found out that Bud Atkinson had gone into the order of the same year and Margaret Atkinson started pushing for that.

So two years later we did another badge For Bud I was opposed to the idea as the department commander, but my membership outvoted me so... But I think Partington by that point he was Slipping. I don't think he was the person that would have said that ten years before.

Commander Bill Fischer: One last call for discussion Brother Harry.

Harry Blackwell: Harry Blackwell camp 502 I'm no I'm new at this, but I've been in other organizations and the organization It was based on the local organization. If you look around the room, not all of us is looking at an age that it could be any day now and if you multiply that you could be above some money, so my Suggestion is it's up to the local individual camps to take care of their own

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank You brother Harry All right. I'm gonna call for the vote.

The motion is to override the decisions of past encampments to honor the four past commanders-in-chief Atkinson, Kuhn, Orr, and Partington.

Those in favor of overriding that and not spending the money Please raise your hand. Thank you. opposed same sign.

That motion passes.

And again as we've had in the discussion This is not to disrespect those four men who did great work for our order and for our department but Our order and our department is to honor you know those who fought in the war and Again Davis Starr did a fantastic job With Rich Orr memorial graveside service and that's the kind of thing we should be doing for our brothers as well as our deceased boys in blue Brother guard, would you please admit an escort sister McMillin forward? Although this is not an official visit sister Anne has things to talk to us about And I'll ask you to come straight forward, please.

Brother Doug, do you wish to give any background? Thank you very much, thank you

PDC Doug McMillin: Well, we're about to get deeper into the budget issue and one of the key issues that we're gonna have to address is the storage of the artifacts that were handed over to us from the GAR Museum in Philadelphia a number of years ago and we had to find a solution for that quickly right in the middle of lockdowns and And you've heard probably ad nauseam about it referenced all day and we have a tremendous number of boxes of card files of actual membership records from the Pennsylvania Department going back pretty much to the beginning I believe. Sure and I wanted to just give you a background of what that information is before we decide what to do with it

PDP Ann McMillin: First of all, thank you for having me over here to explain this.

This is something that's near and dear to my heart. I Brought one of the boxes home with me because I saw that there was something here that needed to be shared with you all I'm still working on that first box the database that I have since shared with your commander and Numbers 1,700 names and counting the box isn't quite finished the first box There's between 15 to 20 boxes of these membership records the front side of the of the card Details the member the son the member of the camp his name Where he was born Where he lived sometimes even down to the house number and street number. His occupation. When he joined. His... what happened with him as a member any offices that he would have held In some cases the offices. The back side of the card. That's where the real gold mine is. That's the Civil War ancestors record and What GAR post that Civil War ancestor belonged to if he belonged to a GAR post? Guys, this is our records.

These are our history. These are what our fathers did and For any members coming forward, you know, you you talk to people all the time. Well, I don't know if I've got anybody who served Imagine having a database that you can say well here.

Let me search your last name And you can do it. I know you can even search by the ancestors last name and pull it up that way and It's going to be a gold mine, it's a work in progress and it's a lot of paperwork and It needs help getting that into the database, but the database Has got a format now and people can add to it. Yet, we cannot throw the baby out with the bathwater. This is too important to who we are. Because if we don't save and protect these files, what legacy are we leaving for what we're doing here today? How can we say that what we're doing here today? Needs to be saved it needs to be remembered And if it's not worth remembering what are we doing here We need to protect these records for our own sake and for the sake of our children So they know that the heritage and of our proud boys in blue.

Commander Bill Fischer: I think it's understood that the records are valuable and And we need to find a way to preserve them whether they are transcribed the way my wife and I have done and has done or given to a Historical society that will do the same and protect them. The issue of the storage room will come up during our budget talks so we can Leave it at that for now. Thank you sister.

PDP Ann McMillin: I Should mention I've already warned my husband that if the cards for some reason couldn't be saved and they were told to be disposed Of they would be just I would find a corner in my house somewhere and he's like we don't have space for that I'm like doesn't matter.

I Don't need food these records have to be saved. So for his sanity, please help me.

Commander Bill Fischer: I Thank you sister Thank you for your insight.

We have a few things left over that we'll we'll have to deal with with during the budget Discussions. Is there any other new business that needs to be brought forth?

Is there any other new business To bring forth to this encampment?

All right, there being no further business other than dealing with the budget and the issues we have their new businesses closed.

Thank you for your patience, thank you for your discussion, that's why we meet Okay, we may not always agree, but we have to have that open discussion in fraternity charity and loyalty All right, I will turn over the mic to our department secretary Rob as we go through the budget and We are on a timeline, but we always are on a Saturday afternoon.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: The proposed budget for the year 2025 2026.

The Income Per capita 627 members at \$33 plus \$7 for department per capita puts us at \$25,080

Encampment registration fees \$200.

Interest \$20.

Love gifts \$150.

Miscellaneous \$150.

For a total income of \$25,600.

Our expenses to national for national per capita 627 members at \$33 which comes to \$20,691.

C&C courtesy gift \$100
C&C courtesy expense \$100
National patriotic instructor fund \$50
Add in the National Encampment Program book \$40
That's a total of national expenses of \$20,981

The department expenses for headquarters is \$1,000
2025 proceeding Preparation is \$200.
Our campfire presentation is \$300
Department commander appropriation \$1,000
PDC badge and engraving \$125
Department commander for national encampment is \$1,000
The SVC expenses senior vice commander and JV junior vice commander expenses. They're both \$150 each.
Wreaths for Remembrance Day is \$50
Postage and supplies is \$150
Love gift for the auxiliary \$50
Camp assistance \$150
Eagle Scout program \$200
Miscellaneous \$500
Mary Walker Awards \$60
Recruitment Awards \$100
Internet fees is \$400
Surety bond which we pay once every three years is \$350
The ROTC Awards \$200
Storage fees for the records that sister Ann McMillin was just talking about; We spend \$775 a year.
The proceedings equipment Which we've already approved is \$1,500.
The Reynolds grave site restoration...

I'm sorry, I should mention that the proceedings equipment is a one-time line-up Item which will not be in there next year.

The Reynolds gravesite Restoration again a one-time line item will not be in there next year is \$1,000.
Our zoom account is \$200.
It's a department expenses Or is \$9475.

Our total income is \$25,600.
Our total expenses is \$29,056.

Some of these expenses we won't use so we always Project a deficit.

This year that deficit with what we have is \$4856

To get to the discussion we need a motion to accept the proposed budget is there a motion.

Motion from Brother Snyder second Josh McMillin.

Now we will open for discussion brother Snyder.

Brother Snyder: I'm commander of 504. The number that you provided, that's a conservative number sounds like here.

What would be your best estimate that we would really end up seeing? You said we're not going to have all those expenses, but what would be your best case scenario?

Commander Bill Fischer: Could you mention what last year's proposed deficit was? Just for reference for that'd be perfect. That'd be perfect.

Brother Snyder: I Apologize. I'm a numbers a guy and I like these things.

Commander Bill Fischer: We all need to be numbers guys when it comes to this

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: Just off the top of my head last year we were right around +\$2800 to +\$3000.

Brother Snyder: Where'd we end up?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: We did not we didn't have a deficit we didn't we didn't overspend what we had budgeted at all.

Brother Snyder: Okay.

All right Thank you.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you discussion.

PCinC Mike Paquette: So brother secretary brother treasure Going back to a previous conversation the \$300 that went to the campfire. What was that specifically? Allocated the campfire.

Oh, we're talking about the campfire for the for the programs.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: For the charity.

PCinC Mike Paquette: So currently does the department give anything to the site committee for conducting the encampment? So we don't we contribute no funds towards The the encampment site committee to conduct the encampment

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: We have a checking account for the site's committee that whenever they send in the checks.

PCinC Mike Paquette: Right, so just for clarification on that previous discussion on the site committee the Department itself does not offer any financial support to the site committee and the site committee is reliant on its own means to bring in revenue to support the encampment. All right. Thank you.

Commander Bill Fischer: Discussion Yeah, brother Ed.

Brother Ed: just based off what you said here where last year we projected a deficit of 3,000 and we didn't have any You're projecting a deficit of about five grand this year so based on that we might be in a hole by two grand Yes? No? you agree?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: It's maybe maybe not. I I doubt we will.

Brother Ed: So, where would that money come from that we wouldn't have a deficit I mean Just not spending money on what?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: The surety bond that's minus. Every third year the or surety bond is \$350.

We won't we won't spend that this year. That's one place

PDC John McNulty: This is a we've done this for a number of years this way because there are certain things that we pay and Certain things we pay every other or every third year and rather than Forgetting them. We need them in the budget. It's a simple way.

So we're not suddenly saying well We don't need this your surety money this year and then the year we need it. We don't have it This is the way that we've done this budget. I know it's not the most efficient way perhaps But this is the way we inherited it from Ivan and I don't know what he probably inherited it from his father And probably for my cousin before that

Brother Ed: Well, oh, well what you gave was a conservative estimate here.

PDC John McNulty: Exactly.

Brother Ed: And you gave the best case scenario would be you know, we break even so I was just trying to get an idea Where we might fall in between there.

I know this may be the way we always do things and we've always done in the past, but there's Always room for looking at and there's opportunity for improving things here, too I'm not saying it's the wrong way of doing it But I just try and get an idea a clear picture of where we stand

PDC John McNulty: We try to be very careful so that we don't get in the hole

Commander Bill Fischer: Further discussion

Now my question is that there are several issues that we need to raise. Can I table this motion till later?

Okay, I'm gonna table this motion we'll come back to it.

I Started to point out that the Pennsylvania Department bylaws article 7 finances section 1 States there shall be fixed at each annual meeting of the department by a majority vote of the members present and voting A per capita tax or dues to be paid by the camps and forwarded with the required reports upon the number of members reported. That's an excerpt. The current department per capita is set at \$7.

Is there a motion to set the department per capita? for 2025 2026 I guess is when it actually falls. If there is no motion we cannot collect department per capita Brother Gibson,

PDC John Gipson: I make a... John Gipson Davis star camp... I make a motion that we keep the per capita where it's at.

Commander Bill Fischer: Motion is to keep the per capita at \$7 for brothers. Is there a second? Second thank you. Discussion.

Brother Chris.

PDC Alfred Carty: Chris Carty camp 273 We voted a while ago to raise the dues to eight dollars and we did that for like a year or so and then they Reversed it.

I don't know how many brothers we had at the time, but that was that was to fix fix our our finances. So I'm wondering if if anyone has crunched any numbers to see if we should raise our dues at all our per capita dues to fix any shortcomings. I mean how many brothers have we lost? Recently with the national increase in dues I mean, I'm sure we've lost some of our normal revenue from from the loss of brothers from that.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank You brother Chris.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: Does anybody remember what year national raised was it 2023? In 2021 We Had 692 members.

In 2022, 666. So right there you've lost 30 members when dues went up. Since then I should say 2022 we had 666.

2023 we had 631.

2024 we had 626.

2025 647.

So we actually went up last year.

PDC John McNulty: I Can answer brother Chris's question. Yes, we raised it and Nobody was happy with it.

There was a lot of complaining and brother Richard Orr decided, and made a proposal, that we give back two dollars as a gesture of goodwill and the membership agreed to that. Some of us were saying we have the money. Every time we've raised the dues, we've lost membership for as long as I can remember. So, we're very cautious and back then we had money that was working fairly well and for whatever reason Rich Orr... *"So let's give two back so that we look nice"*, and we've been tight ever since on it.

We should never have given that \$2 back Everybody was used to it. There was no complaining about it And that's part of why we have problems now.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Steve.

PI Steve Johnston: Steve Johnston Isaac Eaton camp 504. The yearly decline; We're saying that it's due to an increase in raise is? I Can't believe that because we have deaths on a yearly Basis we have so I'm not sure how we can Equate one To the other. I had that's just the thought I had.

PDC John McNulty: Every time For the last 30 years that we have jumped the prices up the dues up we've had people howling and we've had drops in membership. We did that several years ago and we said or not they people realized we needed we didn't lose much but then for whatever reason Rich Orr said well, we should give two dollars back each year from the department amount as a goodwill. For some reason the brothers who were in the room agreed to it. Some of us, myself included, said we're we're stable now. We have enough money to operate things Don't give it back when nobody is complaining I never got a good explanation for Rich and That's where we are now.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Rich.

PDC Richard Essenwein: The whole issue boils down to what every family in this Department in this state in this country faces every single day You have once and you have needs This department needs to work within their needs We're not with the federal government.

We can't just go out and raise taxes every time we feel like raising money Just today how much money have we spent on once? Not things that we necessarily need We existed before we thought of these ideas and will exist if we don't buy these things We need to make hard budget choices. We need to tighten our belts These once can wait until we are more financially solvent But right now we need to live within our means.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank You brother Richard. Brother Doug.

PDC Doug McMillin: Doug McMillin, Brindle camp 50. Okay Trying to put my personal feelings about this matter out of the way. Because when I was department secretary treasurer Under John McNulty's Administration, we found I found at that time I did a full audit on the books and I found that we were overspending every year by \$2,000 more than we were taking in. Now we had it close to a thousand brothers in the department at that time. So that gives you an idea that what our revenue was was a good deal higher than it is now. I Eliminated the print newsletter and Equipped the department with the ability the

first year to print our own rather than outsource it saved us \$1,000. Finally, we went ahead and went electronic with the newsletter and got rid of the postage and the printing cost altogether we still needed to come up with an additional thousand dollars of Cuts and we trimmed a few things and we did what we could during the encampment in New Cumberland that year. Ultimately, It was decided by the encampment that we needed to raise the dues because we just could not cut anything else out What that did was a \$2 dues increase at that time We took that deficit of \$1,000 and we wound up with a thousand dollars surplus every year for ten years afterwards we took our balance of available funds from \$15,000 up to about \$25,000 in that ten years We were able to start giving small grants out again, which we had suspended up to that point because we couldn't afford to give them that \$2 increase at that point after ten years of it doing a great deal for the Organization for whatever reason and I don't know because I was sick that year and didn't make it to encampment the vote was taken to reduce department dues by \$2. I Almost fell over when I heard. Because I knew immediately at that point that we'd be right here again in only a matter of years and here we are. I Don't like raising dues as we saw with the with the national We lost a lot of members over that. And a lot of different people have thrown a lot of different numbers out.

I personally counted between 11 and 14 percent nationwide. That's a big hit. We do have to do something. We talked about the budget in the in the audit before encampment this year and we had to adjust a few things commanders expenses the thousand dollar allowance for the commander is so that he can get to National encampment. That's part of his responsibility as his job. We had cut that a couple years ago back to about 600 I think or was it 800? 600? 600. We boosted that back up to a thousand because the cost of travel has gone way up again There are a number of other expenses that we had to Adjust because we just simply can't expect our officers or the department to do the job that they're doing on what we were giving them. We Cut a lot of other stuff out It was a very very involved discussion lasted a long time into the evening and they did the best they could but here we are and I just wanted to give you some background on how we got where we're at and What the math was on it, basically.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you, brother Doug.

I'll just say that I sat in as an observer on When Wednesday night or Thursday night when the audit was done and It finished at 1030 at night by the time I got back to my room. My wife was already asleep so you know, I and I I'm just Gonna comment and I'm not Swaying one way or the other that when I was a young child in the early 60s the first-class stamp was four cents and It had Abe Lincoln's Picture on it a little magenta four cents stamp They just USPS just raised first-class stamps to 77 cents this month. Costs continually escalate. One of the reasons why national increased their Dues was to continue to print the banner. It just costs more as time goes on and again, I'm not saying one way or the other. Brother rich makes a good point about we need to ensure we understand needs versus wants brother John.

PDC John McNulty: I'm gonna say something that a lot of people aren't going to like I don't like the reality When we worked with this budget and came up with it as close as we could

We thought we were okay. It turns out we're not But when you're at 1030 11 o'clock at night, you're not always with it.

Exactly I have supported the idea for The restoration of the Reynolds argument in Lancaster, I Have a high respect for John Reynolds. I have a high respect for all of our ancestors but realistically when I said this morning a thousand dollars I was out of line. We can't afford it.

I Hate to say this Bob, but we can't afford it. They're struggling. I I've helped with what I can other people have too, but we just cannot afford that thousand dollars. I Don't know where we should put it but we have to change that. And I hate saying that. I feel as though the organization is failing itself and failing its mission. But we do need to revisit that.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Fred

Fred Bender: Fred, Fred Bender, Washington PA 120 I worked re R&D research and development in support of sales and marketing for 26 years I learned there that the Selling starts when the customer says no.

In other words, they drop out. I Learned doing my recruiting into booths this past year or two That I wasn't really recruiting I was selling memberships So the annual membership at 60 bucks if you divide it by 12 It's about a cup of coffee a month at a Starbuck or something like that or a Panera It's not a huge amount of money So the customer in other words your members that drop out they they perceive they're not getting Value for their money. Okay, so they're not getting what they thought they were buying from a sales point of view.

So You know, you can drop membership rates You can raise membership rates, but as long as your customers in other words your brothers think they are receiving Value for that they they will pay all. So many of them will go down and spend a cup of coffee every every day every week But then they drop out because they get a dollar a month increase in fees so you got to think about this.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Bill.

Bill Massenger: I Am Bill Massenger from Baker Fisher campest camp commander Some of the organizations I belong to one is the National Association of Social Workers. We all get our Our Driver's license and we all have under there when we have our fees to have a contribution so Based on what everybody's needs are we could have a spot where? We if we have a form to be able to fill out that when we submit it we can nonlessly donate \$2 \$5 just for the department So that's my suggestion.

Thank you discussion.

Brian Harris: Brian Harris Baker Fisher. I just want to add on to what brother bill said Now what is it when you re-register your car with the state of Pennsylvania they ask another tagline Do you want to contribute three dollars to the presidential candidates or whatever political? Candidacy or debate or whatever? I'd rather give the three dollars extra with my dues than I would with the actual state or any political party So, I mean really consider what brother bill put up there of a little tagline.

It could be the love offering. However, it's lined up. Second, I'm not quite understanding. Is there anything on the table right now with what was mentioned that is going to be cut. We're looking to be cut? Because I understand there's expenses that we've listed But we're not discussing cutting anything

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: We've actually when we did the when we put this budget together We cut a lot of stuff out of it already.

Brian Harris: So stuff was already cut. Yes. Okay Because there's a ton that has come up especially with the storage for the archive So right now that's set for the year which personally like for me, I mean that should be that's the records we should keep that But have we considered maybe with that Partnering up with the state archives may be partnering with them that they could take them after we digitize and that takes something off of the budget Just a suggestion, thank you.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you.

Yeah, the Pennsylvania State Archives are our official repository But they have not they will not accept any more material Which is unfortunate Because that's where we would hope it would would be. We also have Just got five hundred dollars by not continuing on with the recognition of the four past commanders-in-chief for the next four years.

So, we've had plenty of discussion the motion right now is for the department per capita to stay at seven dollars.

All in favor raise your hands.
High, please. Put them up high, please.

I Count 17. Would you verify that brother guide? 19 For the motion Those Opposed raise your hands and brother guide, would you please count again? 21 the motion fails to keep at 7.

That does not resolve our issue we still need to set The department per capita for this coming year. I need a motion. Brother.

Unidentified Brother: What everybody else is that few of the guys to set stated why don't we raise the rate back to what it was a few years ago and also have a Voluntary line if somebody wanted to contribute a couple more bucks I it needs to go up.

Commander Bill Fischer: So what is your motion?

Unidentified Brother: What was it before? Was it \$8 or something? I Has anybody done number crunching to see what it should go up to that would help ten dollars ?

PDC John McNulty: I can tell you one thing right off in my my camp There are several brothers who pay the dues and they give us money So that's not uncommon up in Bangor at least.

Unidentified Brother: But, has anybody done number crunching to see if we raised it up for whatever how many dollars we raise it up per Member it'll bring it up Okay, then I'm gonna make a motion \$10 raise it up to \$10 with a voluntary line if you wanted to put an extra amount I know that may lose some members But I think the numbers that you said that we lost people was also due to mortality and maybe they moved out of the area here too. So that's my motion.

Commander Bill Fischer: There is a motion To raise department per capita to \$10.

Is there a second? Second. Discussion. Discussion. Brother Rich.

PDC Richard Essenwein: My only concern with raising at the ten would be the income may go up, but we also might lose brothers and If we lose brothers, can we afford to lose how many before we cease to be the largest department? Brother Doug, what was the we're currently number one.

What's the difference between us and New York? So about 200 So can we afford to lose more brothers and lose our status as the largest?

Commander Bill Fischer: Discussion Brother John.

PDC John McNulty: Brother rich and I've been around long enough for when We were the largest department. We are the oldest department. We are the founding department.

We are Pennsylvania. That's true, and I agree on it I like being a Pennsylvania and it would not want to be in Ohio in or Most other states, maybe I'd like to be in Maine. The reality is in those years we used to have influence and people actually listen to us. We're still in the biggest department, but nationally nor is this quite regularly compared to what they used to I Don't know that being the biggest department is really all that important anymore Because quite frankly the way I'm looking at the organization it scares me so I Mean Pennsylvania and we've said this in the last couple days. We have to change. And maybe it's not so important to be the biggest department anymore We'd just be Pennsylvania.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Bennett

Tim Bennett: Tim Bennett from camp number 504 just as a Offset we've have I've had five new members Joining our camp in this past two months They're all professional men and they never thought the dues were high at all to them That was the lowest they've in any organization they had Had been a member of and there was no question what they're gonna pay and they paid a lot of paid more than than what? We were telling they needed so I don't think You know if you're interested if you're gonna stay in the organization or join organization a three dollar increase is not gonna stop you. Thank You.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Mike.

PCinC Mike Paquette: So brothers, I know I'm a dual member, but I have been paying department dues ever since I've been a member here So I got a little skin in the game

Chesapeake our department dues is \$10 a year We jumped up from 6 to 10 to cover our insurance costs, which was the biggest thing We thought there would be a lot of kickback, but we explained, you know We needed liability insurance for whatever it we didn't see the impact I do understand.

There are people that are on fixed incomes That needs to be taken into consideration But we also have professional members joining our organization that one or two dollars or even three dollars is Not even a drop in the bucket The point I do want to make is From when brother Doug was department commander. You had a thousand members in the organization. So you had many more people supporting The department across the board you don't have that that resource anymore you're At least 200 and change short of that number and the cost of doing everything since Covid has gone up. I know I had a conversation with the department commander in Illinois Prior he's not no longer. But they were complaining their dues were I think was only five dollars. But they were getting eaten up on the mailing expenses of everything that needed to go up to national so just the mailings for the department whether it's membership applications or other correspondence that the secretary has to send up because that's the way we do business.

It's not email, right? Everything's gonna be paper copy right now, which I believe needs to change but the cost of postage continues to go up. So the bottom line is just to exist. Your cost of operations is going up. You've got fewer members supporting it and to do the things that you used to be able. We used to be able to do as a department. You no longer able to do because you don't have the revenue to do it. So I I believe raising the raising dues is probably your only alternative right now unless you can Someone passes away and endows a bunch of money to the department or something. But that none of that is guaranteed. I mean some benefit some departments have benefited from that but I'm in favor of raising it \$3.00. It's gonna have an impact no doubt but our ability to do things as a Department are going to be further and further restricted based on revenues that we're bringing in if we don't do it.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you. and Brother Fred you can approach.

I just would like to say that If you belong to the sons of the American Revolution or have a wife and the daughters of the American Revolution, you know, they're Annual dues are much much higher than what we charge. Brother Fred Bender.

Brother Fred: Put in perspective a \$3.00 increase is less than a penny a day less than a penny a day I would say, you know Most if not all brothers have this laying around on their dresser and a little change jar where you throw your pennies and nickels and stuff.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you. Brother Matthews.

John Matthews: Yeah, John Matthews 502. Just some clarification. Brother Rob when you were talking about the attrition numbers from year to year to year was that Strictly do do we know to the dues increase or some of that natural attrition? In other words, they died And I don't need the number but is there is that...

Some of it was natural attrition Some of it was due to the rate increase.

John Matthews: Okay, so so to me it seems that maybe the attrition due to a dues increase is Not as severe as it appears on the surface, right? Number two less than a penny a day Not too bad if we were to take it back to where before Doug got sick. Where was that two bucks? It went down That's step one. Why don't we just go up a dollar a year? That's a little less painful Okay, just an idea, thank you.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Mike.

PCinC Mike Paquette: So I hate to put brother David on on the spot but after national Increased dues by I believe it was \$10, right? Nationally at the national level? Do you recall how many we saw the drop the following year? Not off the top of your head? A couple hundred across the board. So I mean that's not necessarily how things are going to play out here in Pennsylvania But at least at a national level it it wasn't a huge impact.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Carty.

PDC Alfred Carty: Hey Chris Carty. I was wondering why we have three bank accounts. We have a checking account a savings account and a money market account Why couldn't the savings be put into a money market the savings doesn't look like it's earning any interest And when's the last time we shopped around for a new bank? There's places that have money markets that are close to 4% I mean we could be making \$1,300 a year off a money market if we took this stuff out of these CDs and Are we allowed to invest the money to earn? Interest like could we put stuff in a mutual fund?

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Carty, we'll have will address this after this motion, please brother I'm sorry, go ahead.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: I just did a quick calculation if If we were to raise it to \$10 Like somebody suggested it's an extra \$3 per member That's an extra 1800 or I'm sorry \$1,881 a year.

PDC Doug McMillin: Doug McMillan camp 50 there was a couple of questions that about membership and and where we stand and then I had a discovery that I made in the records at work a couple months ago. First of all a point of information someone was asking about membership versus other departments. Back in April someone asked that question and I looked it up at work In Pennsylvania, they wanted to know if we were the largest department and by how much at the time We had 676 The closest next was New York at 455 Ohio at 414 Michigan at 396 and California Pacific at 396 And it went on down from there So that's where we stood in April against other departments for folks who were asking. The other thing I wanted to mention was in the course of doing Research actually owe the credit to my wife for this doing a database on department records old card files at national headquarters We did made a discovery. That's really kind of interesting.

It goes back to pretty much The turn of the last century and this might be something we want to consider looking into on a camp level Because membership ultimately is what's going to drive our income That's what we're talking about is dues Something that the sons of veterans used to do that we have completely gotten away from is That at the time of

chartering their camp There were charter members of the camp organizing it but within a matter of weeks or a month or two of chartering their camps the camps advertised and held open musters in the public to raise members. And Some of the numbers that we uncovered here, for example, and I'll start with one that's near and dear to some of the hearts in the room. Kittanning, the John T Crawford camp 43 In April 23rd 1904 started with 63 charter members In on May 3rd 1904 so just a couple weeks later They did a public muster and we brought in 176 new members now, of course, that's extraordinary But that's not the only example like that We had camp 39 Abraham Lincoln in Philadelphia started with 77 charter members One week later. They held a public muster. They brought in another 107 Potential new members now, obviously those numbers reflect the patriotism, the feelings of the time, its a very different world we're in. but Suppose we all started doing something like that where we advertise publicly who we are what we do why we do it and Offer to hold some kind of a public muster of some kind of a public meeting If your camp brought in two or three or five new members out of something like that out of a public event What kind of a difference would that make for your camp. A camp like Brindle? We got 14 members. You know, we did an event the other last month We brought in three new ones that we're processing right now, and that's just out of an event. So I think if we take a page from the past here, perhaps, and we all start to work a little bit more to be public. Talk about what we are and invite people to come and join us. Maybe the answer that we're looking for right here in the future might in fact be calling to us out from a century ago.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank You. brother Doug. Brother Bill And I'm gonna call discussion after Brother Bill.

Bill Messenger: I this is Bill messenger again from camp Baker Fisher camp 101 we do do that our events that we do and We have learned over the course of the last couple years that we've been very successful of doing that We get a lot of prospects a lot of interest.

We talk about it. We get we show up we educate Probably within the last ten years You might Commander might you might know about ten Or at least several a year. We end up getting three four people a year So it's it's a good way to get out there in the community and teach and it's part of what we do Anyway is teach and educate.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you.

We need to take recruiting seriously Brother Fred Bender with camp 120 in Washington first time he's been to a department encampment.

He's the one that Has the Lincoln poster once wants you for the Sons. I mean we need to ensure and I've pointed this out and it's been stated at national encampments that we need to make it clear when we are out in the public at events that we are yes We're a fraternal organization, but you don't have to have lineal membership and you can be. Brother Fred I've called discussion on this issue. Thank you while you were out, but we need to make it clear that people understand We are not a reenactment organization and it's great that brothers dress in Civil War era uniforms But we also need people out there in business suits and we need to make it clear that somebody who has an interest and has no known Ancestor who served can still be although we call it an associate member That they are essentially full members that can be department commander. They can hold Council of

administration Positions they can only not be Junior senior or commander-in-chief That's it. They are not, you know the redheaded stepchild of the SUV CW, so Recruiting is vital to us and I appreciate all your efforts when you are out in the community.

That's where we need to be so.

We have a motion to increase the department per capita to \$10 per year.

All in favor raise your hands. I Thank you. oppose same sign. Okay,

The motion to raise to \$10 passes.

Yes, sir Okay, I Don't want to belabor things we only have about an hour and a half or so and we have a lot of work to do. We need to set the dues for Memorial camp 300.

Pennsylvania Department bylaws article 12 members at large section 1 reads Eligibles from areas where no camps and or provisional camps exist may become members at large of Memorial camp Or a regular member of another camp in the department dues for members at large Shall be set by a resolution of the department and campment. That is how our bylaws read I was speaking with Brother Demmy earlier in the week. He said back in 2011 at our encampment there was discussion that Members at large camp 300 life members be exempt from paying Pennsylvania dues along with national per capita. Someone asked Commander-in-chief at the time Leo Kennedy for his opinion and he indicated to do whatever you want. The encampment, according to brother Demmy's memory, passed a motion to exempt camp 300 life members from Pennsylvania dues along with the expected national per capita. However, the discussion of vote were never captured in a proceedings nor published Since 2012 as secretary of camp 300 brother Demmy has not collected Pennsylvania dues from life members of camp 300. Camp 300 has nine life members if we were to collect Pennsylvania dues from them the result would be a mere \$63. As had been standing now. The problem is it does not say anything in our bylaws that they are life members are exempted. So that's another issue for another time. But our bylaws as presently read state that we must set The price for A department per capita for camp 300 members.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: I'd make a motion to Camp 300 dues be the exactly the same as all of our other members at \$10.

Commander Bill Fischer: Is there a second?

I Had an issue in my camp We'll go into discussion and I'll start we had an issue in my camp two years ago. Three years ago when I was camp secretary where many of you know dearly departed brother Joe long. He could sell Saudis sand. I mean he was a skilled person. He carried membership applications with him. He got so many of his family to become life members he probably paid for them. And that's great. The problem is, for years long before I came along seven years ago with the camp eight. They never charged life members camp dues. Or As far as I know Department or department per diem now, that's all water under the bridge, but I brought that up when I was secretary saying our bylaws needed to be

changed or these folks needed to pay and they said they need to pay and so I sent letters. I sent emails.

I sent letters to folks. I did not have email addresses for stating that, you know, this was an error and the camp has decided that you per regulation you must pay. Now, you know for you need to pay your your Department dues and camp dues. Because the camp felt that it was an issue that many of them, you know, we're not active. They lived in Florida wherever and the brothers in Scranton and in the area in Northeast PA we're doing all the work and paying the money So I sent that out.

I lost... I Had to had a second page for the number of drops because almost no one You know, they were essentially privately flipping me off. There I Asked if you don't want to do that. We can make you you know, you can transfer to the camp 300 at large camp. Or I can give you an honorable discharge. Or you can transfer. I had maybe two brothers transferred to camp 300 and the rest no response, so it's, you know, you want to keep members but to keep members at the expense of Brothers who are doing the work over brothers who necessarily are not because they're not participating. You know, there's an equity fairness issue in there. So those are just my comments discussion, please Know to move it to ten Brother Tim.

Tim Bennett: Tim Bennett 504. had department ever considered a life membership amount at department level.

Commander Bill Fischer: Discussion Discussion.

And the motion is to charge at large camp 300 memorial camp 300 members Department dues of \$10 per year

No, they have not been they have not been paying at all It's this is for everyone these are for all members of camp 300 All right those in favor of the motion to have Our at-large members pay the \$10 department dues raise your hand Okay, those opposed same sign Okay, the motion passes Brother Rob want to discuss 501 c3 status.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: Brothers we are currently when the site committee signs the contract for the hotel The hotel asks us for a Pennsylvania State Tax-free Page to sign We Do not have one Because we as as a department are not a 501 c3 We have been using the daughter's 501 c3 for the Pennsylvania tax And I have looked into getting the 501 c3 my financial advisor told me Give me the paperwork.

I'll do it You just got to pay for the 501 c3 The 501 c3 would cost six hundred dollars She would not charge us a dime for doing the paperwork If we Get our own 501 c3 Then we do would not have to rely on the daughters to collect the money due with the for the for the hotel and have all that stuff At the department. Yes. So I am putting a motion out on the floor To bring the Pennsylvania Department to 501 c3 status.

Commander Bill Fischer: Discussion Brother.

Brother Bill: Bill, Cribbs Camp 276 now if the department filed for a 501 c3 would the camps be subordinate to the department 501 c Because right now camps can be subordinate of nationals 501 c3 which we're having an issue with right now.

Commander Bill Fischer: And that right now does not change the ability of camps Since they do fall under national with the 501 c3.

Well, yeah, I know that Cribbs has worked hard to try and get things resolved with the National treasurer concerning an EIN number. Thank you, brother Fred.

Brother Fred Bender: Camp 120. What is the exact economic? Benefit to the Department for doing such and not just relying on the national for the EIN

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: The Pennsylvania sales tax we would we would not have to.

Commander Bill Fischer: And just to follow up we have issues because we hold joint encampment and conventions and trying to coordinate five groups with our site committee and the hotel there are some Impediments that don't necessarily need to be there and this may help address it brother Tim.

Brother Tim Bennett: Tim Bennett 504. The we have to file each each year is the 991 one is it 991 or the past years we had a one of our brothers was a tax Consultant he filed it for us at no charge and this year our tax people charged \$150 to file that for our camp. Can we file it ourselves? We can. \ I guess I'm just have to get the information how to do that online. ourselves

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: The IRS has a website You go in. you fill out your information. You click a little button.

It says file. They'll send you a receipt that says you've filed. Okay,

Brother Tim Bennett: And that's it?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: That's it.

Commander Bill Fischer: Okay Brother Jim Thank you. Just clarification for my own thought process. So we're talking about filing for a 501 c3 federal status And then is that required to then get a Pennsylvania sales tax exception? Okay.

Thank you. That's why I wanted to clarify. Brother Demmy.

Nat Exec Director David Demmy: David Demmy camp 15 Harrisburg. Rob. You're saying if we become a 501 c3 The hotels are exempt our sales tax.

Do we need a Pennsylvania sales tax exemption? Do we already have one or not?

Commander Bill Fischer: That's what this motion is for.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: If we don't have a 501 c3 We can't get a Pennsylvania sales tax.

Nat Exec Director David Demmy: Yeah, I know because at the national level her national treasurer recently tried to get a Pennsylvania sales tax exemption account and they wanted our deed from 1800s they wanted our charter all all that old information. He gave it to him and they denied the whole thing. So right now if we he collects Pennsylvania sales tax. It goes in his coffer and because he doesn't have a sales tax number to pay it.

Commander Bill Fischer: Discussion. Brother Fred.

Brother Fred Bender: Again If you go with this and it's \$600 realize this is less than this is about a dollar per brother in Pennsylvania And it could just be raised for example as at the camps just donate a special thing and send it in.

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: And this this would be only a one-time fee.

Commander Bill Fischer: Discussion Discussion yes, brother McNulty

PDC John McNulty: If we have our own 501 c3 and get our own Tax exemption from Pennsylvania Department of State, it'll make life a lot easier for all of us because right now Every time we have to get something for the encampment we have to use the Daughter of Union veterans tax exempt form. And they always gripe about it. Or they do quite a bit. So if we just have our own 501 c3 then we can go for our taxes and Exemption from the Commonwealth and we're on our own. We should be on our own.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank You brother McNulty. All right, it's times getting on. We've had plenty of discussion I'm gonna call for the vote motion to spend the 600 some dollars with the financial advisor doing the work at Gratis to achieve a Pennsylvania 501 c3 status. Which will make things simpler for our site encampment committee.

Those in favor raise your hands. Those opposed same sign. Motion passes.

All right brothers again as time marches on we are going to Reopen our budget Discussion. That will be the last Work we have before nominations of officers. Brother Rob you want to Have anything to say about that.

All right brothers. We are back with the motion to accept the proposed budget open discussion again after you've heard all of the Issues that played into our budget concerns for this coming year.

Discussion.

PDC John McNulty: I'm withdrawing that.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you.

I Will say again as an observer sitting in on the audit of the books for this past year since last encampment. As I said, we worked pretty late or they worked pretty late into the night. This is a serious issue as has been mentioned. We typically run a deficit budget, but we do not end in a deficit. We have some big ticket items. That may not necessarily be charged this year depending on how things go.

Discussion.

PCinC Mike Paquette: So not necessarily related to the budget but This is a Brother Mike Paquette, past commander-in-chief crowther camp 89. So brother treasurer. What are the current balances in our account? Is that information been provided previously?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: It looks like national finally cashed our check for For our annual department per diem. Right as of right now our checking account is at \$17,802.67.

And again as our as as my report stated The six-month CD which is the GAR fund is \$22,590.

Three months CD \$11,134.

The money market fund is \$1,815.

The savings account is \$1,349.

The six-month CD fund which is the GAR Memorial fund, as John's has explained earlier. We cannot touch that as he explains it as the it's the doomsday fund. Unless we are totally out of money. Okay.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you. Earlier brother Carty questioned about Possibly being able to move funds into a higher higher yielding Funds. Would you address that brother Rob?

We can only put funds into certain accounts. A Mutual fund is not one of them because it is not FDIC insured. Everything must be insured by FDIC. As for bank shopping as brother Alfred Asked, I Use the bank that is closest to me I In the past couple years we've moved from Santander. Because there is not a Santander within a hundred miles of my house. I have to mail all the checks to Santander.

So we moved the bank to a local bank.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Carty, do you have any other points to bring up?

I Just want to try to ensure we address your concerns while we're on the budget

PDC Alfred Carty: Yeah, I was just wondering why we have a savings account and a money market Couldn't we just close the savings and put that into the money market or are we separating those funds for a specific reason?

Sec/Tres Rob Konegsberg: I Don't know why we have the both when I took over for Charlie Kuhn ten years ago. That's what we had.

PDC Alfred Carty: Yeah, so I mean if we're not making any money off that account, why not just close it and put that money into the money market.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you brother Chris.

PDC John McNulty: What's the advantage of moving these things what we can only do it within our limitations But what's the advantage of moving a checking account?

PDC Alfred Carty: Well, I mean, it's not a lot of money, but we're not making any interest on it If it's just sitting in a saving account a savings account That's not interest-bearing.

PDC John McNulty: Everything that I've seen recently is only bringing tup and say penny. They're not bringing any money at all Unless you have something that's risky, which we can't do.

PDC Alfred Carty: I there's money markets at Vanguard now I think they're FDIC insured and they're they're close to 4% But you're doing that online.

PDC John McNulty: Well, that would have to be brother Rob doing that unless you want to take over the job.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thanks brother Chris It's Something that perhaps we should look into over the coming year and have some recommendations at next year's. I know we go another year without interest and that kind of thing, but at this point. I don't think we are In a position to really explore what better options are. brother Demmy.

Nat Exec Director David Demmy: David Demmy, Harrisburg camp. Rob our CDs insured. Then why don't we take that? \$1,800 that only made 17 cents interest last year. You can get a 19-month CD Even at 1% you're gonna make a hundred and eighty dollars off of it then. Then you know 17 cents, I mean it's ridiculous to let that money sit there and rot.

Brother Bender: Brother Bender Camp 120. You may want to check on if you're not allowed to do anything except that by FDIC. Money markets originally are a form of mutual fund but invested only in short-term securities Back in the 80s.

I'm not sure if they're... Well, they're technically a type of mutual fund. Just double check Double check on that as far as if you're legally allowed to do that or not. I'm not positive

Commander Bill Fischer: Yeah among among normal duties the treasurer and the council can explore options Okay, we have the motion to Accept the budget. We've had good discussion.

We've had good interchange Those in favor of accepting the budget, please raise your hand Thank you. Those opposed same sign. Okay, the budget is accepted.

We will take a break until 10 after. We will start sharp at 10 after 3 for nominations and we will keep rolling.

Three Raps

Chaplain Closes the Bible

Commander Bill Fischer: 10 After.

One Rap

Recess

Meeting Resumes

Three Raps

Chaplain Opens the Bible

One Rap

Commander Bill Fischer: Pursuant to Robert's rules of order, if only one person has been nominated for a position, that brother may be declared elected.

Is there a motion that where there stands a single nominee for each elected department office, that the department secretary cast a single vote on behalf of the encampment?

Motion second. Second. Is there any discussion?

Again, this only deals with where there is no contested position.

Is there a discussion?

Guard: There are two ladies here for the installation of officers. Would you like a guide and one other to escort them?

Commander Bill Fischer: That's Sister Higgins and Sister Indan? Yes.

They may stay out there for the time being. Just let them know, because my wife's out there, too. Thank you.

So there is a motion and a second that where stands a single nominee for each elected department office, that the department secretary may cast a single vote on behalf of the encampment.

Those in favor, raise your hands. Those opposed, same sign.

Motion passes.

Nominations for the Office of Department Commander. Rob.

Rob Clair: Rob Clair, Commander Baker Fisher Camp 101. It's my sincere pleasure and honor to nominate Michael E. Peter for Pennsylvania Department Commander.

Michael Peter was born and raised in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and is a proud graduate of Pennsylvania State University. The middle child of five in a close-knit family, he's the proud father of two outstanding and beautiful daughters, his greatest accomplishment. In 2023, he became a grandfather and hopes his grandson will someday join the sons of Union veterans of the Civil War.

In 1986, he embarked upon a career in law enforcement, serving two years in Montgomery County Sheriff's Deputy before becoming a police officer with the Horsham Township. Serving since 1988, he has dedicated his life to fighting for victims of crime. During his time as a patrol officer, he was recognized with the department accommodations, receiving the award of merit on several occasions.

The last 10 years, he has been assigned as a detective and received two unit citations in recognition of that division's hard work. His work as a police officer has allowed him to pursue his Civil War passion. In 2001, he was sworn in as a son of a Union veteran on the Gettysburg battlefield.

His membership in the order is derived from his great-great-grandfather, who served in the 37th New Jersey and was a member of post-18 Grand Army of the Republic in Philadelphia. He has since discovered two great-great-uncles who served in Illinois regiments, one of whom was captured at Gettysburg and sent to Andersonville. Michael is a dual member belonging to Baker Fisher Camp 101, as well as Anna M. Ross Camp 1. He is a past commander of Baker Fisher Camp 101 and currently serves as camp counsel.

In 2004, he is one of the brothers instrumental in reconstituting Baker Camp into Baker Fisher Camp 101. Michael has served on the board of directors of the Grand Army Museum in Philadelphia since 2007, where he's currently the vice president. He is also the vice president of the General Meat Society of Philadelphia and a member of the Delaware Valley Civil War Roundtable.

He has been recognized by all three organizations for his passion for educating future generations. He has visited many classrooms and given lectures on the Civil War and the lives of Civil War soldiers. Michael has served the Pennsylvania Department since 2016, first as guard and for the past year as our elected senior vice commander.

In his capacity, he has discovered the joys of department camps as he edited the department newsletter, The Battle Cry of Freedom. He has attended many events in the past year and is honored to see the good work being carried out by our brothers in the department. As commander of the Pennsylvania Department, I am confident Michael will be dedicated to serving faithfully and is eager to help the Pennsylvania Department move forward in the future while maintaining the traditions of the past.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Michael, Peter is nominated.

Brother, if elected, will you serve in that capacity?

Are there any other nominations for the office of Department Commander?

Are there any other nominations for the office of Department Commander?

Are there any other nominations for the office of Department Commander?

Hearing none, nominations for department commander are closed. Congratulations, brother.

Nominations for the office of senior vice department commander. This office is currently held by Brother Mike Peter.

Walt Lafty: Walt, Lafty, secretary for Baker Fisher Camp 101.

Brothers, it's a privilege for me, really, to nominate Brother Ted Zeman for the position of senior vice commander. Many of you know he's been a member of this organization for 22 years. And in that time, he has served in all levels, camp, department, and national.

And those include, he's been commander of Syrfos Camp 273. And at the department, he has been the department memorials officer, the assistant chief of staff, the chief of staff at the national level has served on the National Scholarship Committee. And currently, as we know, he's our junior vice commander.

And I think in those offices, in every capacity, he has shown a sincere desire and a passion for completing the mission of this organization. And in addition, look out for the brothers here, too. In addition, he's a teacher at St. Joe's University.

And he's able to use that medium to promote and support this organization in every way. And he does so with many lectures in history to Civil War. He does that with high school students, college students, and even at times, groups outside of the St. Joe's community.

So when you look at those, his commitment, both within this organization and outside, I mean, he clearly demonstrates to me that he deserves the merits for this position. So I proudly introduce my colleague and friend and brother, Ted Zeman, for the position of senior vice commander. Thank you, sir.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Theodore Zeman is nominated for the position of senior vice department commander.

Brother, if elected, will you serve in that capacity?

Are there any other nominations for senior vice department commander?

Are there any other nominations for the office of senior vice department commander?

Are there any other nominations for senior vice department commander?

Hearing none, nominations for senior vice department commander are closed.

Nominations for the office of junior vice department commander.

This office is currently held by Brother Ted Zeman.

Alex Johnston: Alex Johnston, Isaac Eaton Camp, 504. I would like to nominate Brother Steve Johnston for the position of Pennsylvania Department junior vice commander.

Residing all of his life in Franklin, Pennsylvania, Brother Steve Johnston can trace five ancestors with service in the Union Army. Joining the Pennsylvania Department, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War as a member at large, Brother Steve became a charter member of Isaac Eaton Camp number 504. He has held positions of patriotic instructor, junior vice commander, senior vice commander, and commander of camp number 504, and is currently the patriotic instructor for the Pennsylvania Department.

During the COVID-19 shutdown of 2020, Brother Johnston conceived the idea of the Silent Sentinel Project as a way to honor and respect General Logan's orders regarding the observance of Memorial Day. Not only throughout many camps in the Pennsylvania Department, but throughout the country, the Silent Sentinel Project became and still is a way to bring our brothers and sisters of the Allied orders together to keep alive the memory of the boys in blue. Brother Steve has a deep interest in local Civil War period history.

He was a member of the 105th PVI Wildcat Regiment Band from 1997 to 2007, and has been a Civil War reenactor with Company C of the 150th Pennsylvania Bucktails for over 25 years. He has encouraged many of his friends in the Bucktails to become brothers in camp number 504. Brother Steve's historical interests have crossed over with his interests of local musical history of the time period, as he has been awarded a citation from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for the composition of the 63rd Pennsylvania Regimental March.

Making groundbreaking recordings of music he discovered and arranged by hand from the Drake Well Collection, selections from the CD Oil Fever, Music of the Pennsylvania Oil Boom, have been used for the PBS documentary The Valley That Changed the World, as well as many documentaries on the early oil industry throughout the United States and Europe. Brother Johnston, instrumental music teacher and director of the Franklin High School Black Knight Band since 1995, has taken his students to Washington DC on 10 occasions, seven of those to perform in the National Memorial Day Parade. The band was given the honor of leading the parade in 2018, and in 2025 was chosen to be the first band, military or civilian, to be given a feature performance opportunity of two minutes on the worldwide television broadcast.

The Black Knight Marching Band has received a personal, handwritten invitation to march in the 2026 Semi-Quincentennial Parade in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, honoring the 250th anniversary of the birth of our nation. The four-hour parade is expected to have well over one million viewers in attendance. Brother Johnston holds a bachelor's degree in music education from Baldwin Wallace College and Conservatory of Music, a master's of music and music education from Youngstown State University, and has done doctoral work in music education at Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

I nominate brother and my father, Steve Johnston.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Stephen Johnston is nominated.

Brother, if elected, will you serve in that capacity?

PI Steve Johnston: Yes.

Commander Bill Fischer: Are there any other nominations for junior vice department commander?

Are there any other nominations for the office of junior vice department commander?

Are there any further nominations for the office of junior vice department commander?

Hearing none, nominations for junior vice department and Commander are closed.

Congratulations. Nominations for the Office of Department Secretary-Treasurer.

This office is currently held by Brother Rob Koenigsberg. It is for a two-year term expiring in 2027.

Nominations for the Office of Department Secretary-Treasurer.

PDC John McNulty: John McNulty, past Department Commander, Department Counselor Number Two. It is my pleasure to nominate Brother Rob Koenigsberg for the position of Secretary-Treasurer. He has done this work excellently for 10 years now.

I've worked with him in one way or another throughout those 10 years. He does an excellent job. He has done as good a job as anybody I've known who has held that position, and I've known several of them.

Rob knows what's going on with the system. He understands the way things are run in the Pennsylvania Department and in the Sons of Union Veterans. He's easy to work with, and you'll have to excuse me, I was not expecting to be the nominator.

I figured somebody else had already said they would do that. There is no one that I'm aware of who's presently so well-prepared as to take on this job for another two years. It's my pleasure to nominate Rob.

He will be as good service to us as he has been these past 10 years. It's my pleasure to nominate him.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Rob Koenigsberg is nominated.

Brother, if elected, are you willing to serve in that capacity?

SEC/Tres Rob Konegsberg: I would.

Commander Bill Fischer: I'll take that as a yes.

Are there any other nominations for Department Secretary-Treasurer?

Are there any further nominations for the Office of Department Secretary-Treasurer?

Are there any further nominations for the Office of Department Secretary-Treasurer?

Hearing none, this just shows how wise our members are.

There being no further nominations, nominations for Department Secretary-Treasurer are closed. Congratulations.

Two Department Council members are elected to two-year terms, one elected in even-numbered years and one elected in odd-numbered years.

The third, the second, Department Council member has traditionally been a one- or two-year term reserved for the immediate past Department Commander.

However, all Council seats are up for election this year due to past Department Commander Ivan Frantz Jr. resigning effective today due to ongoing health concerns.

Let it be recorded that the Pennsylvania Department thanks Brother Ivan for his long and faithful service to this department.

We look forward to his continued wise counsel as a past Department Commander and a repository of Pennsylvania Department history.

The first Open Council member position is a two-year term expiring in 2027. That seat is currently held by past Department Commander McNulty.

Are there nominations for this position? The first Open Council position is a two-year term expiring in 2027, currently held by past Department Commander McNulty.

SEC/Tres Rob Konegsberg: Brothers, as Department Secretary-Treasurer for the past 10 years, I have worked with Brother Ivan and Brother John. With Brother Ivan stepping down this year, I would like to nominate Brother John McNulty basically for his knowledge of what and how the department operates.

He's very easy to work with, and it's been a pleasure working with him. So I nominate Brother John McNulty for this position.

Brother John McNulty is nominated.

Brother, if elected, are you willing to serve in that capacity?

PDC John McNulty: Yes

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you.

Are there any further nominations for this two-year Council member position?

Are there any other nominations for this two-year Council position?

Are there any further nominations for this two-year Council member position?

Nominations for the two-year Department Council position are closed.

Congratulations, Brother.

The second Open Council member position is a one-year term expiring in 2026. The seat is currently held by past Department Commander Franz, Jr., who is not seeking re-election. Is there a nomination for this one-year Council member position?

SVC Mike Peter: Brother Mike Peter, Baker Fisher, Camp 101.

Commander and brothers, it's my honor and privilege to nominate Brother Doug McMillan, past Department Commander of this department, for the seat of the Open Council.

Brother McMillan, as many of this room know, has served this department for 20 years. He gave me quite a list of his accomplishments, so I will highlight some of them, but he's held every office at the camp level.

He was a three-time camp commander at the Gettysburg Camp 112, and eight terms at J.P. Brindle Camp 50 in Carlisle. He spent two years as the Pennsylvania Department Secretary-Treasurer. As stated earlier today, he was able to eliminate a \$2,000-per-year overspending problem.

He's one of the first graduates of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Memorial University Officer Training Program. He spent two years as Department JVC, two years at Department SVC, and was heavily involved in resolving the youth protection issue within the department. He was Department Commander from 2014 through 2016.

He oversaw department response to IRS actions that eliminate our congressional non-profit status, meeting every IRS demand better and faster than any other department, and he guided the department through the 50C3 non-profit status transition. He was a delegation head to the National Encampment six times, and a delegate many times since. Organized the Pennsylvania Lunch many times at National Encampment.

Spent one year on Department Counsel. He spent four years on the Bylaws Committee for the department. He created the Education Committee and chaired it for 14 years.

Served on Recommendations Committee at Encampment for the last 14 years. Served as Counselor for two department commanders. Served on Forward Planning Committees at Department and at National.

Has acted as a department troubleshooter when emergencies demand it, most notably retrieving records and artifacts from the GAR Museum in Philadelphia during the pandemic lockdowns, including the rediscovery and preservation of five lost post battle flags. He served three times as the Parade Marshal, organized the Memorial Day Parade in Gettysburg. Five years assistant as the Deputy Parade Marshal of the Remembrance Day Parade.

He was a chairman of the SUCVW 150 Observance at the Battle of Gettysburg Planning Committee. 16 years with the SVR Gettysburg Blues with seven-time color guards at

Arlington Decoration Day. Organizer of the 160 Observance of the Shelling of Carlisle Citywide event.

Organizer of the Lincoln Lunch at U.S. Army Heritage Education Center. Regular guest speaker on subjects of the JAR history in the Gettysburg Campaign.

And as we know, recently, and he has just been appointed as the Assistant National Executive Director for the Sons, working at the National Headquarters three days a week, assisting in the actual day-to-day management of the organization, paperwork, records, and research at the direction of the Commander-in-Chief in the Council Administration.

On a personal note, Doug just astounds me with his selfless dedication to the department. I can't think of anybody better to serve on our Council than Brother Doug McMillin.

Commander Bill Fischer: Brother Douglas McMillin is nominated for this one-year Council Member position.

Brother, if elected, are you willing to serve?

Is that a yes? Thank you.

Are there any other nominations for this one-year Council Member position?

Are there any other nominations for this one-year Council Member position?

Are there any further nominations for this one-year Council position?

Hearing none, nominations are closed.

Congratulations.

The third Open Council Member position is currently held by Immediate Past Department Commander DeFebo. I pass the gavel to Senior Vice Department Commander Peter to call for nominations for the third Open Council Member position.

SVC Mike Peter: Are there any nominations for the third Open Council position?

We need a nomination.

JVC Ted Zeman: Ted Zeman, Junior Vice Commander, Department of Pennsylvania. I have the pleasure to nominate Brother Bill Fisher for the Office of Council. I can't think of anyone better qualified.

Having gotten us through this past year and with the passion and with all the work that he has done in bringing the department together, I think he would be an outstanding choice as a member of Council.

SVC Mike Peter: Commander Bill Fisher has been nominated as the third Council Member. Commander Fisher, if nominated, will you serve?

Commander Bill Fischer: Yes.

SVC Mike Peter: Are there any other nominations for the position of Council?

Are there any other nominations for the position of Council?

Are there any other nominations for the position of Council?

Having none. Bill Fischer is nominated.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you very much.

With that, nominations for elected officer positions are closed.

Congratulations to all our elected officers.

A little bit of housekeeping.

Do I have a motion to recognize and thank the Doubletree Hotel for providing the meeting facilities?

Brother Ted, motion. Second by Brother Steve.

We've had rather nice accommodations at a reasonable price.

Motion has been made and seconded. All in favor, raise your hands.

All opposed, same sign.

I ask Department Secretary-Treasurer Koenigsberg to present department awards.

SEC/Tres Rob Konegsberg: The highest membership gain this year, which is the Ivan Frantz Award, goes, Ivan Frantz Senior, I'm sorry, goes to Washington Camp 120, who had a 30% increase.

Highest number of new members, which is the Rosenberg Award, this year goes to Camp 112 Gettysburg. I believe they had seven new members.

And as we do have plaques that need to be engraved, I will be mailing the camp for the Ivan Frantz Senior Award to Washington Camp 120 as soon as I get it engraved.

The Rosenberg Award plaque, however, for the third year in a row, I am asking Anna Ross Camp 1 to please return it so that we do not have to buy a new one. I will have to have three years, or two years of engraving done on it before I can mail it to Gettysburg Camp. Thank you.

Commander Bill Fischer: Thank you, Brother Rob, and congratulations to the camps. Although we only have two awards, we have many camps that are doing phenomenal work. Please keep that up, brothers.

Our next department encampment is tentatively planned to be hosted by J.P. Brindle Camp 50 in Carlisle in June of 2026. More information will follow on that as time moves on. Is there any other housekeeping that we need to discuss at this point? I apologize, we still have a few books left in the back.

Appreciate those who have made donations to take some. That way Brother Mike doesn't have to haul as many home. There was a decision earlier by the elected officers to consider donating those.

Brother John Crider from Crowther Camp came up to me earlier and stated that he was, the camp was willing to purchase what was left at a price to be determined since many of the books have gone today, and I appreciate that. Brother Crider, if you are still interested in doing that, yes, okay, just work out with Brother Rob what you think is a fair price, and Brother Mike will probably pitch in a few bucks so we don't have to haul them back to Hatboro. That was a joke, okay, but thank you, Brother Crider.

Is there any other housekeeping?

SEC/Tres Rob Konegsberg: Not really housekeeping, but more of a good of the order. If you did attend the play last night, we sold shirts afterwards. I do still have some shirts here for sale if you would like.

I think we have large and extra large.

Commander Bill Fischer: Anything else that needs to be brought before the brothers? All right, brothers, we will take 10 minutes and then we will have installation of officers. Brother Clark, 10 minutes.

Three Raps

Chaplain Closes the Bible

Commander Bill Fischer: That's four o'clock p.m., 1,600 hours.

One Rap

Meeting Recess

Commander Bill Fischer: We will now have installations. I hand command over to Past Commander in Chief Mike Paquette to conduct the installations.

Installations conducted In accordance with the Ritual of the Order.

(Audio File Damaged from this point. Reconstructed from memory and the ritual of the SUVCW that was used verbatim in the installation.)

PCinC Mike Paquette: And now, by the virtue of the authority invested in me, as the Installing Officer of the Pennsylvania Department, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, I

hereby declare the Officers of this Department legally elected, and installed and qualified to enter upon the discharge of their several duties for the term ending June 2025, or until their successors are regularly elected, qualified and installed.

Now, I am pleased to present you with the Badge of the Office of Department Commander. Commander, assume your command. Be true to your vow, faithful to your trust, unflinching in your loyalty and rule with civility, impartiality and firmness, and may your administration be successful.

One Rap

Applause

Pennsylvania Department Commander Mike Peter: You will give attention while the Chaplain asks the blessing of God on our deliberations.

Three Raps

Chaplain: Our Father in Heaven, we pray You will deal with the events of this meeting as You deem proper and fitting. Please answer the heartfelt prayers of each one of us as permitted in Your perfect will. Preserve us in health, strength and integrity while we remain here, and when our mission on earth is ended, take us to a better world. Amen.

Chaplain Closes the Bible

Pennsylvania Department Commander Mike Peter: Brothers, we are about to leave this Encampment to retire to our respective homes. Let us regulate our conduct so as to bring honor and credit upon the great patriotic organization we represent. May we be faithful to our vows, mindful of our duties and exhibit toward each other an unbroken Fraternity, a tender Charity and an unswerving Loyalty.

I now declare the 145th Annual Encampment of the Pennsylvania Department of The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War duly closed.

One Rap

Index of Motions of the 145th Annual Encampments with page number in order to review relevant discussions.

- Motion to accept the commander's report as written. ***Passes. Page 13.***
- Motion to accept the submitted officer, camp commander, and committee reports which do not have any recommendations, changes, additions, deletions at the drop of the gavel as we go through them. ***Passes Page 14.***
- Motion that as the recommendations are read and the committee offers its concurrence or non-concurrence that the recommendations be adopted or rejected ad seriatim at the sound of the gavel. ***Passes Page 30.***
- Recommendation: Renew the PA Department ZoomPro account as it has proven successful in promoting, improving communications across the district and the department. ***The committee concurs. Passes Page 30.***
- Recommendation: Provide a PA Department budget line item of \$200 for the department cadet award package mailing to units in areas of the Commonwealth where no camp can present. The national program change does not allow direct mailing from national to units since the cadet award certificate requires a signature. Please see my cadet award coordinator report for more information. ***The committee concurs. Passes Page 30.***
- Recommendation: I would recommend that in the future that the junior vice commanders of the camps across the department submit the numbers of new members that have contacted them and the status of their membership process so that the department junior vice commander can submit the numbers in his report to the department at the end of the year. ***The committee did not concur with this. Failed Page 31.***
- Recommendation: That the form seven be fully updated to make it clear to cadet unit cadre that they must submit the application to a camp or department and not directly to the SUVCW quartermaster and that the ROTC be changed to cadet throughout the form. ***The committee concurred that this should be forwarded as a recommendation to the programs and process at the Council of Administration as we actually have no authority over this at the department level. Referred to P&P Page 31***
- Recommendation: That from now on, the hotel provide a link to the encampment for the department just as they do at national. ***The committee did concur. Passes Page 31.***
- Recommendation: As I have not received any reports from camp memorial officers on the state of GAR memorials in their areas around the Commonwealth, I urge that the camp GAR memorials officers make an inspection of the memorials near them and submit their findings to the department GAR memorials officer so that a report can be compiled for each encampment. ***The committee did not concur. Failed Page 32.***
- Motion to restore PCC honors for Brother Lee Miller. ***Passes Page 34.***
- Motion is to provide Camp 19 with \$1,000 to go to the Reynolds plot restoration. ***Passes Page 36.***
- Motion to accept Brother Demmy and Brother Demmy, Jr. as delegates from the Pennsylvania Department. ***Passes Page 37.***

- Motion all brothers who are in good standing as of this encampment across the department are elected as alternates. ***Passes Page 37.***
- Motion to put the ad in the (*national encampment*) book for a full page. ***Passes Page 37.***
- Motion on the floor to authorize the Pennsylvania Department to purchase the equipment listed in this report with a total cost being \$1,334.92. That includes \$100 buffer for shipping and handling. ***Passes Page 49.***
- Motion that the incoming department commander appoint a committee to resolve the questions of storage and write appropriate language to update and formalize the position of recording secretary with enumerated duties for submission to the department bylaws. This committee will present its work at the 2026 encampment for action by the brothers assembled. ***Passes Page 52 Amended "The procurement of the audiovisual equipment just previously approved by the encampment is deferred until the committee in the second recommendation resolves the challenges identified by Brother McMillin's report." Amendment Passes Page 52.***
- Motion to supersede the decision of the 2017 department encampment to not purchase a Pennsylvania state flag. ***Tabled Page 57. Motion never revisited, Motion dies on table.***
- Motion next year's registration fee would be \$10 in advance and \$15 payment at the door. ***Motion Withdrawn Page 58 - 59.***
- Motion is to override the ruling of the 2019 Pennsylvania Department of Encampment to purchase flag holders polls, etc. ***Motion Fails Page 63.***
- Motion is to override the decisions of past encampments to honor the four past commanders-in-chief Atkinson, Kuhn, Orr, and Partington. ***Passes Page 67.***
- Motion to accept the proposed budget. ***Page 70. Tabled Page 72. Revisited Page 84. Passes Page 86.***
- Motion is to keep the per capita at \$7 for brothers. ***Page 72. Motion Fails Page 76.***
- Motion To raise department per capita to \$10. ***Passes Page 77 -81.***
- Motion to Camp 300 dues be the exactly the same as all of our other members at \$10. ***Passes Page 82.***
- Motion bring the Pennsylvania Department to it own 501 c3 status. ***Passes Page 84.***
- Motion that where there stands a single nominee for each elected department office, that the department secretary cast a single vote on behalf of the encampment. ***Passes Page 87.***