



Department Executive Committee Meeting February 21, 2026

Meeting Began at 1:00 PM

(3 RAPS OF BELL)

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Face the colors. With the colors of our country being in the proper place, we will render the right-hand salute. Two. Uncover. I call for the Department Chaplain, Rachel Merlos to offer us an invocation.”

Department Chaplain Rachel Merlos – A prayer was offered.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of American. Accordingly, the POA/MIA flag has been placed on the Empty Chair, a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Please face the colors and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.”

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Cover.” Remain standing for the preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

To maintain law and order;

To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;
To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
To make right the master of might;
To promote peace and goodwill on Earth;
To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;
To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

(1 RAP OF BELL)

Cover.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Welcome everyone. Please be seated.”

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Welcome everyone to the Spring Executive Committee Meeting. I remind you that this is an open session and all Legionnaires are welcome to attend. To speak on any matter, however, you must first obtain permission from their District Commander. When speaking, please give your last name and District or title for the recorder. One person speaks at a time, please. I, now ask for the Department Adjutant, Lowry Finley-Jackson, to complete a roll call.”

Adjutant Lowry Finley-Jackson – “Good afternoon.”

Commander Jerome Goolsby – Here

Sr. Vice Commander Alex Slocum - Here

Zone 1 Vice Commander Daniel Sauer – Here

Zone 2 Vice Commander Edward Weaverling – Here

Zone 3 Vice Commander Mark Reed – Here

Zone 4 Vice Commander Kevin McMeel – Excused

NECman George Scarborough – Excused

Alt NEC Kerry Boardman – Present

Immediate Past Commander John Buckwaiter – Here

Judge Advocate Christine Sapp – Present

Finance Officer John Buckwaiter – Still Here

Chaplain Rachel Merlos – Here

Historian – Chris Wallingford - Here

Sgt – at – Arms - Albert Jackson – Excused

Past National Commander Joe Frank – Excused

Adjutant – Lowry Finley-Jackson - Present

District 1 Commander David Blickhan – Here
District 2 Commander Phyllis Campbell -- Here
District 3 Commander Ricky Volkmann – Present
District 4 Commander Mark Hummer - Present
District 5 Commander Thomas Tanner – Here
District 6 Commander Gary Grigsby – Present
District 7 Commander Stephen Olson – Present
District 8 Commander Paul Backues - Present
District 9 Commander Roger Gansmann – Present
District 10 Commander Arden Jordan – Present
District 11/12 Commander Darlene Coats - Present
District 13 Commander Paul Kohm – Excused (sitting in: John Kramer)
District 14 Commander James Walton – Present
District 15 Commander Milo Daniel – Present
District 16 Commander Charles "Ron" Jones – Here
District 17 Commander Barb Riggles - Present

Past Department Commanders:

Joe Frank – Excused	David Voyles – Here
Clark Pointer – Excused	Richard Heigert – Excused
Dave Shafer – Here	John Neger – Excused
Dave Jennemann -- Excused	Charles Goodin – Here
Lynn Dorrell – Excused	Kenneth Goth – Excused
Thomas K Goodin – Excused	Dennis Woeltje – Here
George Scarborough – Excused	Betty Gonzales – Here
Cary Kellett – Here	Kerry Boardman – Present
Hallie Williams – Here	Gary Grigsby – Present
Rose Noonan – Excused	Mark Clark – Excused

Adjutant Lowry Finley-Jackson – "Commander, we have a quorum."

Commander Jerome Goolsby – "Everyone please note that we will have a closed DEC meeting immediately following this session. I request approval of the minutes from the meeting on October 19, 2025 as distributed."

Mark Reed (Zone 3 Vice Commander) makes a motion.

Gary Grigsby (District 6 Commander) 2nd the motion.

No discussion. It is so ordered.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – "Now, the Sub-committee. Anything to report?"

Sub-committee Chairman Steve Olson – "Nothing to report.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – "Now, we'll hear from the Adjutant and the Adjutant's Report on Post Charter Activities."

Department Adjutant Lowry Finley-Jackson -

"Recommendations for Post Charters: None

Recommendations for Post Cancellation / Merger:

Patrick Cleburne Post 402, Pacific, Missouri, 9th district

Paperwork turned in

Licking Memorial Post 559, Licking, Missouri, 16th district

Received all the paperwork

Neal Smith Post 251, Carrollton, Missouri, 2nd district

Pending paperwork

All these posts are needing cancellations."

Commander Jerome Goolsby – "May I have a motion for these post cancellations?"

John Buckwalter (Finance Officer) makes a motion with these post cancellations, with regret.

Gary Grigsby (District 6 Commander) 2nd the motion.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – "We have a motion for the cancellation of posts."

No discussion. It is so ordered.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – "Senior Vice Commander, Alex Slocum will speak for the Membership Report."

Senior Vice Commander Alex Slocum – "Thank you, Commander. Good afternoon, everybody. For the Department as of Thursday, we were at 88.67 percent of the National goal. Missouri is currently in 16th place nationally. Missouri is less than a percentage point from being 4th. District 15 is leading the pack with 93.56 percent followed closely by District 7. If we are going to reach 100 percent of our goal we need multiple districts. For posts with 100 members or more, we are doing pretty well. We

have 8 posts that have not reached 85 percent. This last 11.33 percent will be the hardest membership to get. We have 81 days to get to 100 percent.”

Discussion follows about membership: District 15 is having problems with MY LEGION and terms expiring.” District 6 mentions sending delinquent letters to members. Rural areas have a harder time finding people with less population. Try to find members' sons and family members who served in the military. Posts have 30 days to process that membership.

Commander Jerome Goolsby: “Thank you, Alex, for all your hard work. We've got a chance to make some history. Keep up the good work. Is there any unfinished business? None. Any new business? Finance Report from Finance Officer, John Buckwalter and Finance Chairman, Brian Sapp.”

Finance Officer John Buckwalter – “In your packets you have a few notes from me, as well as a balance sheet and a permanent loss statement. I call your attention to the first few lines of the balance sheet. The first few lines are our bank accounts and investments totaling \$1,402,939.34. The rest of it is a breakdown of fixed assets, liabilities and equities. You also have the Budget List report. One thing I want to point out is that we are at 89 percent membership, but we are at only 80 percent for membership based on dues based on the budget. Noted previously, the grant with MO Veterans Commission was less than we had anticipated. One thing of interest, there is a line for posts to see how much they budget. I am working with GAC (CPA) to try to get our audits caught up one and get taxes done for last year in June. I will now turn in over for a report on the Finance Commission, Finance Chairman Brian Sapp.”

Finance Chairman, Brian Sapp – “We will send email within a month about budget training in May. So, look for that.”

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Thank you. I now call upon the Oratorical Chairman recommendation: the following individuals' terms expired this year: Larry DuFore, David Shafer and Christine Sapp. Chairman Benton would like to for all three of these individuals to be reappointed to the committee. May I have a motion to approve the recommendations of the Oratorical Chairman?”

Gary Grigsby (District 6 Commander) makes a motion;

Paul Backues (District 8 Commander) 2nd the motion.

No discussion. It is so ordered.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “The Registration fee for Department Convention. The current fee is \$10.00 which went into effect at the last convention. I would appreciate a motion to approve the Department Convention Registration Fee of \$10.00?”

Christine Sapp (Department Judge Advocate) makes a motion;

Gary Grigsby (District 6 Commander) 2nd the motion.

No discussion. It is so ordered.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Baseball – Tom Rhoades – “Distinguished members of the Missouri American Legion Executive Committee, American Legion Baseball must thrive – not just for those who have carried its legacy, but for the next generation. It is vital for kids who need more chances to play, for late bloomers, for seniors wanting to wear their hometown uniform one last time and for all those who simply love the game and the community around it. This is not a debate between community leagues and travel teams. Every player’s journey is unique. But whenever Legion Baseball can benefit kids and communities, we must roll up our sleeves and adapt – building programs, combining leagues and rethinking schedules to offer more opportunities. The status quo won’t sustain us. Twenty-five years ago, Missouri had 250 teams: last summer, just 90. Pennsylvania has lost nearly half its teams in a decade. Kentucky lost all their teams. This trend is not isolated-it’s a call to action. We can accept, decline, or we can rebuild. If we rebuild, kids will keep playing under the lights, families will keep cheering in the stands and communities will stay connected. Let’s commit to keeping American Legion Baseball alive for Missouri’s youth. Thank you.”

Judge Advocate – Christine Sapp – No report

Oratorical – Dave Shafer – “How many of you attended an Oratorical contest this year? These schools have been competing for a lot of years. The contest will be at South Boone just a few blocks from here on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 1 PM. Our winner will compete at the National Oratorical competition is May 15, 2026 – May 17, 2026 in Hillsdale, MI. If anyone here wants to participate in Nationals, you are welcome to do so. There are ambitious kids who want to win the contest. Please come out and support these kids.

National Executive Committee Member Report – George Scarborough (not present-excused) – No report

Legislative Chairman – John Kramer – “MAVO has a big rally on March 9, 2026 at the Rotunda at 11 o’clock. I’d like to see everybody there. MAVO is always full funding for support for AR115, 100 percent handicapped veterans’ property tax, legislation, and full funding for the MO Veterans Commission.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Thank you, sir. Tony Rumbo, do you have anything for American Legion Riders?”

ALR Director – Tony Rumbo – “This morning we had our conference. General highlights are chapters are keeping busy. They are out doing charity rides, food drives, comedy nights, casino night and trunk or treat. The most important thing we are very excited about is our Legacy Ride this summer. It’s going to be June 18-21 at Sunrise Beach Post 624. This is open to all legion families. Even if you don’t have a bike, come and join us. Have some fun! See what we do! There may be a Bike Rodeo and a Cornhole

Tournament (post against post, mixed doubles, men's, women's). Plaques will be given out. I need help with my Rider of the Year selection, Anita Backes (post 152) or Steven Gumble (post 55). I will get it to Kevin McMeel. Please email within a week.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Kerry Boardman, do you have anything for Boys State?”

Boys State – Alt NECman Kerry Boardman – “Yes, I do. You should have received your email about Boys State and housing. If you haven't, let me know. Those of you who are interested in volunteering for Boys State let me know. There is lots that has to be done - class to take, background check, housing. You learn a lot about Boys State. Last year we have 35-40 people. It was really great. Are there any questions about Boys State? Legion date is June 25. Write that down. Everyone here should attend. They will take you around campus and you can see what the students are doing. You'll get the most wonderful meal that you have ever had. You'll go to a store that will put Walmart to shame. Workers there are absolutely awesome. Any other questions? Thank you, Commander.”

Commander Jerome Goolsby: “Thank you, sir. Before the Department Adjutant comes with announcements, are there any other commission or committee chairman who would like to make a report?”

Department Adjutant Lowry Finley-Jackson – “Mark is not here, so I just want to talk about the Legion College. Legion College will be held April 9 – 12 at Camp Mihaska in Bourbon, Missouri. So far, we have a total of 18 applications. Last year, 25 people attended. We would like to have 25 people for this year. If you'd like to attend, applications are due by March 13. They had a good time last year. If you have people who would like to go or should go because they want to be in a leadership position, it would be a good time for them to come and learn a few things and eat some ice cream. It's a great location. The campus is beautiful. There are no televisions. You do have Wi-Fi. You'll be able to get on your social media. Please get your applications in by March 13. Thank you.”

Scouting – Commander Jerome Goolsby – “Kevin McMeel is not here for Boy Scouts. Advise scouting leaders if they are not following the rules like they should be. Get with post charters and have them check on scouts. Keep on an eye on them. If changes happen, does it fit into the American Legion? The Department Adjutant will speak about Department Convention.

Department Convention – Adjutant – Lowry Finley-Jackson – “Information is out there for convention. State Convention – Oasis Hotel & Convention Center, Springfield, Missouri. You need to have your housing forms completed by June 10, 2026. Make sure that when you register with the Oasis you get the group rate. If you call after the cut-off date, you will get a higher rate and I can not help you. If you are planning to have a vendor table for your post or district, make sure you call Theresa by June 10. The Convention schedule will not be ready until May 1.

National Convention – Louisville, Kentucky – make sure your registration is timely. We had a problem last year where some people had to be moved to another hotel and had to pay a higher price. If you do not get your registration in by the deadline, you'll probably be moving to another hotel.

Post Data Reports due April 15 to the Department.

Consolidated Post Reports – last year Missouri received 100 percent because the ladies in the office spent 2 days calling 83 posts. It is the District Commander's responsibility to make sure their assigned posts complete their CPRs in a timely manner. If posts start their report online – be sure to hit the submit button. District commanders, you need to stay on top of your posts, so we can be 100 percent again this year. These are due to the Department no later than June 15; June 30, if submitted online.

Cadet Patrol – We have one application. We need 15 students. The deadline for paperwork is April 1, 2026; pushed off from March 1, 2026. We need at least 14 more. This is our program, the American Legion, not the Highway Patrol.

Youth Government Day – No schools signed up as of yet. Paris Post coming this year? (Lloyd Miller answers, "Yes".) Lloyd has been very faithful and has been every year. All forms are on the web site.

Background checks – if you are dealing with any youth. The fee is \$15, not \$30.

The Fail conference will be at the Inn at Grand Glaize in Osage Beach. It is not 5-star hotel. Alex and I went and checked it out. They are not charging us for any meeting space. Food and beverage isn't the \$2,000 that Capital Plaza charged us. They do have a restaurant. They have a bar. Parking is free. It is an older hotel. It is a one-year contract. But, if you've got some place where you think we could go, please let me know. I'd be welcome to check it out. Any questions about that? No questions about Fall conference. Thank you."

Commander Jerome Goolsby – "Does anyone have anything else for the Good of the Order? Yes, Mr. Boardman."

Alt NECman – Kerry Boardman – "I'd like to make a motion that we donate \$150.00 to post 152 for letting us come here and use their post.

Kerry Boardman (ALT NEC) makes a motion.

Gary Grigsby (District 6 Commander) 2nd the motion.

No discussion. It is so ordered.

Commander Jerome Goolsby "Anything else?"

Senior Vice Commander Alex Slocum – "Yes, commander, I am collecting for the leading candidate. Please give it to me before you leave today.

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “The chair will entertain the approval a motion to approve mileage?”

Historian – Chris Wallingford makes a motion.

Zone 3 Vice Commander – Mark Reed – 2nd the motion.

No discussion. It is so ordered.

I would like to remind everyone that when you submit your reports, they must be signed and dated. It is so ordered.”

(3 RAPS OF BELL)

Commander Jerome Goolsby – “All arise. Will the Chaplain come forward and offer a Benediction?”

Chaplain Rachel Merlos – “Uncover.” - Offered Benediction

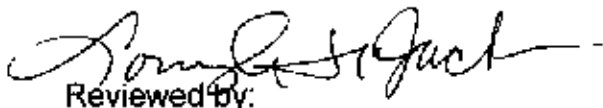
Commander Jerome Goolsby – “I now declare this meeting of the Department of Missouri American Legion Executive Committee now closed. We will conduct the Closed DEC meeting immediately following this meeting. Cover. Please face the flag. With the colors of our country being in their proper place we will render the right-hand salute – Two. Being no further business, I declare the Spring Department Executive Committee Meeting adjourned.”

(RAP OF BELL)

Meeting adjourned 1:52 PM

Respectively Submitted,

Rita Coleman, recording Secretary.


Reviewed by:

Lowry Finley-Jackson, Department Adjutant