

The Fighting Sixth

Manitowoc
Calumet
Winnebago



Fond du Lac
Green Lake
Marquette

Sixth District Department of Wisconsin The American Legion

Minutes of the October 26, 2008 Fall Conference Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 AM by Commander Robert Krause at CJ's in Ripon hosted by Post 351 in Montello.

Important note from the State DEC meeting, Department Conferences will all be held at a centralized location in 2010, Wisconsin Dells, at the Wilderness Hotel. Legion rooms will be \$70 and you are encouraged to bring the kids and they will be given free passes to the water park. There will now be one hospitality room for all candidates running for office. Three of the committees present did not have a quorum to run a meeting. One was the Camp American Legion.

Greetings were given by the 6th District Auxiliary President Dorothy Gruber. She presented the Commander with some apple pie for him and his wife and a baby doll to add to his collection. She talked about their theme this year which is "Ocean of Love for our Vets".

Special guest Gary Mader who received the Wisconsin Lifetime Achievement Award, State Vice Commander Willard Christensen, and Winnebago County Service Officer Robert Stone who talked about the veterans coming back from the current war we need to honor and support them. We need to remember to take care of our own those from the past war as well at the current.

A roll call of the Executive Committee was conducted. Sergeant at Arms Jerry Opperman and Fond du Lac County Commander Jerry Krebsach (sp) was absent. The following post had no representation Calumet County Post 127 Hilbert and Post 265 Darboy, Fond du Lac County Post 156 North Fond du Lac who still owes their dues assessment, Post 378 Brandon-Fairwater who still owes dues assessment from 2007 and Post 478 St. Cloud, Green Lake County Post 282 Markesan, Post 306 Green Lake, Post 366 Princeton, and Post 395 Kingston, Manitowoc County Post 88 Manitowoc and Post 199 Reedsville, and Marquette County Post 244 Westfield.

Minutes of the spring 2008 District Conference were read and a motion was made by Clary Reinhardt to accept the minutes as read and second by Stan Jezeski. Motion Carried. Then the minutes of the Fall DEC were read and a motion was made by Dan Bailey to accept the minutes as read and second by Harland Zietlow. There was a discussion on item number 10 at the end with concerns on when are you to hold County elections and if your county does not meet during that allotted time frame. That is why they did elections in May. He was assured he handled it correctly and was thanked for clarifying the issue. Motion Carried.

Finance report it was noted that \$42.00 in dues assessment for 2008, Post 156 North Fond du Lac, 222 Campbellsport, and 244 Westfield is still outstanding. Post 222 Campbellsport later in the meeting did pay their dues reducing the amount to \$34.50 still due, and for 2007 \$45.00 is still due. It was also noted that the current assessment only takes in half of the anticipated expenses. The expenses paid for this year was only the PC Website at this time.

A motion was made by Harland to deviate from the agenda to discuss the current financial dilemma. The Commander brought up an incentive from National for membership. If our District can be at 100% by the 1st of January for membership we can get a check for \$650 from National which could eliminate our deficit in 2009-2010. State has proposed a \$50 incentive if we have a 1% increase in membership by

December 31 from last years membership totals on December 31. If we can show a 2% over last year they will give us \$100 and so on. The main object of the Legion is to get new members. There are a lot of feelings about the website but you got to remember one thing that the people coming back are the people we want to attract are techno people. They have been communicating home from Iraq via the computers. If we shut the website down we will be eliminating potential new members. We must keep the website open if we plan to grow. Not much money is generated by a raffle and there is a lot of bookkeeping and headaches to get that done. There are a lot of posts that opposes a raise in the assessment they done want to come up with more money for the District with all they pay the State as well as National but the increase would not affect the individual members just the Posts and the money needs to come from somewhere. We are loosing members everyday our State has dropped 10,000 members. We need to get new members the younger generation and not shut them out by not modernizing and keeping up with the times. Commander is hesitant in raising the assessment \$0.15 and believes it could be avoided if we can get membership up and get the money from National and State. Ideas from the floor:

- Rick Diese, from the Omro Post, What about a silent auction at the Americanism Banquet?
- Sharon Woelfel-Nett, from Chilton, can we get money from State for the website? Comment from Jim Romnek with having 12 Districts which might want to do the same as well as Posts it is highly unlikely that it would fly.
- Bob Wipf, from the Omro Post, There is a sponsor page on the website we could put in place to get community sponsors. Bob will work on this area. A reminder from the Finance Officer this website that is a concern is only a small portion of what we are short.
- Greg Polly, County Commander Green Lake, when we collect dues from our members it should not be the sole support of the Posts there should be other fundraisers to support the posts. The money you are asking for is to support the 6th District.
- The Commander is willing to donate \$100 to offset the cost of the website.

Bill from Post 423 stated we will be fighting this same problem forever and motioned we should increase the District dues by \$0.15 a member and Seconded by Jack Frank.

Discussion:

- Ed Mason, Omro Post 234 Finance Officer, After they collect \$30 dues and pay State, National, County, and District they are left with \$3.15 left from the dues.
- Sharon Woelfel-Nett, Chilton Post 125, concerned we are charging them dues on inactive members in their posts. We need to reevaluate what our expenses are. Their rosters have many on who have chosen not to renew and we are charging them dues for them. She says all members on her roster are being charged dues even the ones she has not renewed. The Adjutant had stated the members that are being counted are the ones off of the State Membership Report 30 days prior to State Convention. These members are the ones the Posts have sent a transmittal and dues to the State for, not ones that have not renewed. She insists all members on the roster are being counted as paid members. She has been Post Adjutant for 25 years and she knows what members are paid for and who are not. All members are being counted and we are charging them. She has been directed to contact State to get her active members corrected. She insists there is no mistake. There is nothing we can do she must contact State.

Motion again was restated to clarify any confusion. Motion to increase District dues \$0.15, making it \$0.45, per paid member 30 days prior to State Convention. This increase will be a permanent inclusion from the Spring Conference on.

Motion Carried.

Break 10:25 resume in 10 Minutes.

Vice Commander Zietlow reported his areas are doing well. Good representation here today. We have restructured our communication program. Every Post in Calumet County has turned in an email address

and we can contact them now on email. Thanks to Ron Deets the adjutant and the County for making this happen. We continue to try to do the same for Manitowoc County. We have improved our communications and improve our membership recruiting which is the name of the game for the Legion.

Vice Commander Romnek would like to recognize a few of our own District Members who have State appointments.

Bob Wipf, from Omro Post, for the second year State Americanism & Government Testing chairman.

Barbara Belmont, District Adjutant & Neenah Post, is the current Children and Youth Chairman
Roy Helms, Oshkosh Post, Vice Chairman of the Membership Committee

I would like to thank Robert Stone, County Veteran Service Officer, for coming on his day off.

Had one main issue to bring up which has to deal with our health, Flu shot season. It is vital for anyone over 50 to get the Flu Shot. Please encourage them to get a flu shot. If they are enrolled in the VA Health System these shots are free. If not most communities have flu shot clinics and at most of these the presentation of a Medicare card it will also be free of charge. The shot will not necessary prevent you from getting the flu but by getting the shot you are 30% less likely to end up in the hospital.

Vice Commander Barke I'll just cover a couple things of note in 6th District West area of Green Lake and Marquette counties:

1. First--the Vietnam "Moving Wall" war memorial was in Princeton Oct. 9-13. Its main sponsor was the Princeton VFW, but most of the 9 American Legion posts in our area participated. In fact, 2 of the 5 evening ceremonies were conducted by American Legion posts. I won't cover this event further to leave time for further coverage by our Marquette and Green Lake County Commanders, Dan Bailey and Greg Polly.
2. Second--in this politically very active time--in at least one case, one of our posts hosted a debate between opposing candidates. As a non-profit tax exempt organization, the American Legion is non-political. This means our organizations cannot support any candidate or party. But we can and should participate in educating the electorate and encouraging voting. One of our posts had signs supporting a candidate. I reminded them at a County meeting we cannot do this. Incidentally, all of you probably have noticed that at campaign events on TV, you see Legionnaires with their Legion hats. I think these people are probably technically in violation.

Adjutant Finance Officer had no further report.

Historian Miller Wanted to let you know that preserving and compiling history should be a very important part of every Legion Post and I encourage each and every post to elect or appoint one and keep records and pictures through out the year. I have received a few pictures and some news articles but not as many as she would have liked, please send what you have to make a complete book for the commander. Any one wanting to send a bio if themselves and picture of themselves we can put that in the history book as well. Please send to her. As an added announcement at the State Convention a member of the Sixth District was awarded the Gung Ho Award presented to our Membership Chairman Roy Helms. A very prestigious award given to him for all the work he has done for the Legion Riders and his Post and for the Sixth District.

Chaplin Jezeski Thanked everyone for their hard work on the Funeral Honors programs. A few question has come up during hot days can you remove your sport coats. The rule of thumb with funeral honors is everyone needs to be uniform all on or all off. April 1 the deadline for your Deceased Member List due to the District. Now is the time to start thinking about it and compiling your list. Electric wheelchairs and electric scooters are in desperate need at King. Since we received the State award from the Department Veterans Affairs we have become well known and there has been a higher demand for our Veterans. Our veterans and their wives are always taken care of first and then we reach out to other various diseases that might cause them to have a disability. Another thing needed, are walkers with

handbrakes and seats. Thanks to the King Committee for the donations of 12 brand new ones for various size of people up to 500 pounds. If you see any electric wheelchairs or scooters at Rehabilitation Centers or Retirement Home get the word out that they can donate them back and we can provide them with a statement for a tax deduction for them.

Judge Advocate Cerney reminded everyone as a Nonprofit Organization in order to conduct an official meeting or any type of business that each Post needs to have a Constitution and Bylaws. Make sure you have a copy and know where it is so they do not need to be redone. Having a silent auction at the Americanism Banquet by standing rules of order we cannot do there is a note stating fundraisers or raffles of any kind are not permitted at the banquet. If it would come out that we do want to have this then we would need to make this change at the DEC meeting.

Seagrent at Arms Norse has no report.

Service Officer Glaser no report at this time.

Calumet County Commander Schneider reported they have 70% of their membership in, five of the seven posts are here, and they have a Communication Officer for each Post.

Fond du Lac County Commander Krebsbach (sp) not present, no report.

Green Lake County Commander Polly reported that the County supported a Vietnam Wall in Princeton and there were a number of Posts in the VFW and Legion that did Color Guard there and would like to thanks to everyone in support of the wall in Princeton. Would like to commend the post in Princeton for paying off their debt of over \$20,000 and are no longer operating in the red. Was invited to Poyissippi, part of the Berlin school system, where the Amvets awarded the Silver Helmet Award to a Teacher for all her work with Americanism and Veterans promotions. They are working with the VFW for Veterans Day doings in November. Jack Meyers from Princeton is in charge of the fund to support a Post in Texas that was destroyed. Back at the Spring we mention cannibalizing and he checked with several of the Posts and was assured the members that transferred wanted to move this is an ongoing thing and you cannot prevent a person from going to another Post. The Children and Youth and County Government Day person has been replaced since Tony Soda has given the position up. Discussion has been made with putting up signs for voting the Post and has been taken care of. Comment by the Neenah Commander that the Princeton Post was very hospitable to their youth group by letting them spend the night free of charge and provided them a free meal.

Marquette County Commander Bailey Thanked the Posts that participated in the presentation of the Vietnam Wall in Princeton, Post 351 and 423 of Green Lake County. Post 351 was there for both opening and closing ceremony both days and pulled Guard Duty the last night from 7pm to 7am.

Manitowoc County Commander Backhaus Reported that he is the new County Commander and was sent in May. We possibility have 100% membership in but are debating on a few Paid up for Life Members. Nov 8 is their Veterans Day Banquet coming up which is very large and well accepted and they will do their County Government Day in April. Other than that all Posts are running smooth.

Winnebago County Commander Pitz reported their memberships are coming in and all 5 Posts are present today. 28 October Tuesday will be their County Government Day and they are expecting between 105-110 students. They will be holding a mock trial this year. Post 70 will host a Veterans Day Dinner and a Senior Citizen ceremony at the Court House followed by a dinner at the Waters. All Post are running well.

Committee Reports

Americanism – Roy Helms would like to thank everyone for their programs in Americanism everybody is doing a great job. One thing coming up is Legionnaire of the Year award a letter will be coming soon and must be back to the Commander by Jan 5 and will be judged at the Mid-Winter Conference. Americanism Banquet will be held 21 Feb and the Department Commander will be present and all arrangements are in order.

Americanism and Government Testing – Fred Barke reported In late August, Department of WI mailed Americanism & Government (A&G) Test Program packages to all Wisconsin high school principals. By now, post A&G Test Program Chairpersons should've contacted principals in their area to encourage their participation in this no-cost, easy-to-conduct, high-reward program. But it's still not too late to contact these principals. Actually, I've had better luck contacting the guidance counselor.

Using the Test Order Form from their package, the schools simply order their free tests by October 30. Then during the week of November 3 (plus or minus a week) teachers give the tests to 10th, 11th and 12th graders in their classrooms, The 1 hour test has 50 questions on county, Wisconsin and U. S, government history, and Flag etiquette plus a 300 or fewer word tiebreaker essay.

School officials will grade the tests with a supplied key and will forward the top two from each grade to the District 6 A&G Chairperson (me) by Dec. 15.

The District 6 A&G Test Committee will select 2 winners from each grade and send their tests to the Department A&G Test Program before January 7, 2009. Department will award \$500 scholarships to the top 12 12th graders, \$250 scholarships to the top 10 11th graders, and \$250 scholarships to the top 10 10th graders.

For complete program details see the 2007-2008 Administrative Manual distributed at the State Convention last July--some hard copies, some on CD. This contains duplicates of the material mailed to principals in August. Schools get tons of stuff. If the school doesn't have the A&G info package, maybe it was tossed. So, when visiting your high school, take with you at least the Test Order Form from the Administrative Manual. A third way to the Administrative Manual is through your computer: www.wilegion.org ; then click on Resources; then click on Administrative Manual.

By the way, how many posts here today have contacted your schools? Hopefully more students will take the test this year.

Last year all six of our District winners went on to be State winners.

Bob Wipf the State Chairman added if the schools cannot administer the tests can be ordered and given at the Posts. Home-schooled children can be included at the Posts who give the tests. At the State Level there are about 6-7000 tests ordered seems like at lot but there are 225,000 students eligible to take the tests we are not even tapping the resources available.

Athletic Activities – Jack Frank honored to coach the American Legion All Star Aug 10 at Miller Park and is the Associated Director of American Legion Baseball, which requires our District to pick the umpires. Should a Post plan to organize a team which boys can play up to the age of 19 and no minimum age. You can have Junior Teams if you have more wanting to play.

Blood Donor Program No Chairman but a question was asked If you are over 65 can you still give blood? What if you had cancer? The answer was yes there is someone 87 who gives blood and if there are no signs of cancer after five years you can also give blood.

Camp American Legion – Jack Frank The Commander commented from the DEC meeting in Portage they talked about the rowdiness of people, pet problems, people shooting off fireworks, and firing of guns a real problem. These problems are at the post cabins on the other side within the Recreation side. A motion was brought forward that now the keys must be handed out by the Director and a letter that describes the conduct to be followed and if you do not abide you will be removed. Ripon has a cabin and rents it out for all members. There are 8 or 9 individual cabins available.

Children and Youth – Barbara Belmont There was a National Convention in the middle of September that I did attend and was not aware of all the organizations we support. Some are Children’s Miracle Network, Child Welfare Foundation, Special Olympics and all they ask is that at a Post level just to pick one cause and donate. They rely heavily on the money donated and the American Legion is one of the highest contributors to these organizations. Please at a Post level contribute something to one organization even if it is only \$10. Help support these causes for the children. All the brochures were handed out at State Convention and if you need any more let me know and I will get them for you.

Membership Program – Roy Helms We are currently in 4th place at 73.2% and Department of Wisconsin is currently in second in the Nation and currently 1st place in the central region and we are doing a good job. Would like to thank the 2009 membership teams for a great job they are doing. You need to work as teams in the Post and cannot be done by one or two people. There is a person here who at the State Conference received Recruiter of the Year award, National Silver recruiter award, and the Badger big 10 award was earned by Vern Bartels. 2009 Membership reports were sent and if you did not get that report please contact your County Commander to get it. You need to get the ones who renewed last year to renew early this year. What about suggesting to the spouse to renew them as a Christmas gift? If they are not renewed on Dec 26 their membership will expire by Dec 31. This year we have a unique opportunity Our State goal used to be unrealistic and this year National has listened and gave us a realistic one for a change and we might meet that goal. We need to go face to face for new members. People from the Vietnam era are the hardest to recruit. Why do most people not join the Legion? It is because no one asked them.

Oratorical Program – Jon Jindra Last year the contest was in Fond du Lac and had a problem and ran it during the Midwinter Conference. This year the District Oratorical Contest will be Jan 25 with a snow date of Feb 1. The Department contest will be Feb 21 in Ripon. We would like to hold our contest again in Fond du Lac and will confirm with the group when he gets confirmation back. Anytime you get applications from prospective contestants please forward them to Jon so he can take care of them and send a copy to the Department.

POW/MIA Coordinator – Vern Farley no report because the guy he gets his information from did not put anything out yet because his daughter had a baby. Government Day there are too many kids wanting to participate with 11 High Schools one school wanted to sent 90 kids so they had to turn some away. Maybe it should be changed to two days.

Public Relation – Harland Zietlow apologized to the Commander for taking on a responsibility for getting the poster done by a little girl in his area on Patriotism and was not able to get in the Badger Legionnaire. We did get it on our website. Sorry to disappoint the Commander. We need to get information into the newspapers this is our best resource. Omro has set the goal standard for Public Relations and are the best. They own the newspaper in town and have a TV show and membership recruiting is fantastic. They need to write a book to help others. The Taps program has been cancelled. Bugles Across America has replaced them. We are having problems getting kids out of school to perform funeral honors. Go to bugleacrossamerica.org where you will find a list of volunteers willing to donate their time playing taps for funerals. He had a program he is going to experiment with one of the grade schools asked about a flag etiquette program for them. He ran a writing designating what the love of our country really is when you fold the flags. Will take two legionnaires and go before the kids fold the flag and explain to them what each fold stands for and hopefully these kids will remember that when they grow up and it is their time to serve their country.

Public Safety - no chair and no report.

Sons of the American Legion – District Coordinator Vern Bartels is appointed the 6th district SAL Commander.

Legislative – Delbert Schmidt letters have been sent to increase the medical staff in our Veteran Clinics in North Eastern Wisconsin has been heard. 39 new medical centers have opened for counseling. The Appleton VA Mental Health Building has added three psychiatrists, one psychologist, and four and a half social workers and after Nov 3 they will be adding one more psychologist and they also have one mental health nurse on staff. The new Mental Health Building in Appleton is located ½ block west of the main medical building. Green Bay VA Clinic now has one social worker and one psychologist on staff and their new facility will ground break next fall and will have an outpatient surgery. The letters sent to the three assemblymen we got favorable responses.

American Legion Riders – Roy Helms the Riders represented the District again at Arlington and the National Romp in Iowa and gave over \$6,000 in scholarship funds from Wisconsin.

The Commander has up front a copy of the State Budget and a brochure on the Wilderness for anyone to look at.

Break for lunch at 11:45 and will resume At 12:45. Salute the colors and break for lunch.

Conference resumed at 12:45

Roll call taken with the only change being Post 340 Berlin has one more delegate present this afternoon.

No Special Committee Report

New Business:

Site of Spring Conference April 26. Bid from Central Post 75 Bid accepted.

2009 46th Americanism Recognition Banquet no further report.

Good of the Legion:

Dan Daul had a question on the Midwinter Convention in 2010 are they all going to be in Wisconsin Dells? That is when the new contract will begin. We are already booked till then. There is a five year agreement and we can back out within a 30 day notice.

Veterans Memorial was built in the summer in New Holstein. There was a dedication on Labor Day. The Lions helped with the project. Stop by and take a look.

Nov 5 the Fond du Lac Post 75 will have a display of Military Veterans in uniform.

Gladis Hritsko has an operation and is in a home in Neenah at Valhaven on Byrd Street.

Awards given out for those that did not pick them up at the State Convention.

Post 454 Blood Donor Award

Post 282 Blood Donor Award

Post 351 Blood Donor Award

Post 126 Almond Buboltz was lost twice at State Headquarters

Post 28 Children and Youth Citation

There being no further business to conduct, Lead in prayer by the Chaplain, retired the MIA flag, Hand Salute the colors, meeting adjourned at 1:10 PM.

Respectively submitted by Barbara Belmont 6th District Adjutant/Finance Officer