

Department of Pacific Areas
Minutes of the 45th Annual Convention
12 – 16 June 2011
Bangkok, Thailand

OPENING CEREMONIES

The opening ceremonies of the 45th Annual Convention were held beginning 1000 hours on Monday, June 13, 2011. Department Commander James E. Oden asked everyone to be seated after the Salute to the Colors, and officially opened the convention with a short greeting. Commander Oden introduced Comrade Nuttaporn Ooppapan from Post 9951 as Master of Ceremonies. Emcee Ooppapan introduced the following VIPs: James Oden, Commander, Department of Pacific Areas; Senior Vice Commander in Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Richard DeNoyer; Inspector General, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Darrell Bencken; Comrade George Barlett, NCM District 16, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US; COL Edward “Al” Swanda, Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché, US Embassy; The Veterans Affairs Commission of Republic of China, Deputy Secretary General, Mr. J.K. Lu, accompanied by the Director, Overseas Liaison Department, Mr. Hans Song, and Mr. David Tsai; H. Steve Mason, Past Supreme Commander, Military Order of the Cootie; LTG Nappadon Kungamut, Deputy Director General, Thai War Veterans Organization, accompanied by Ms. Thippayathida Pakdeesupaphol, Deputy Director, Public Relations; Chief, Foreign Relations Department, Mr. Nuttapol Sangnatsawang and Mrs. Narissara Chokwanithchamong; General Chaturith Phromsakha, Senior Vice President, Unknown Warriors accompanied by Secretary General Air Marshal Santud Wongtip and Mr. Komkrij Dejrit; General Chaveng Youngchareon, President, Thai-Korean War Veterans; Supreme Council Member, District 15 William Wichmann; Orville Humfleet, Commander, Grand of the Pacific; Past District 16 Council Member Robert Zaher. Emcee Ooppapan then asked the true VIPs – our active duty military – to please rise and be recognized. Emcee Ooppapan next introduced the following Past Department Commanders (PDCs): Gerald Kraus, Robert Zaher, Paul Gasperson, William Wichmann, Richard Keeley, Ronald Teets, Kenneth Schaefer, Rhett Webber and Larry Lyons. Next, he introduced the following Past Grand Commanders (PGCs): William Wichmann, Gerald Prinz, Ronald Teets, Richard Keeley and Ken Swierzewski.

The head table guests addressed the members with a few words of greeting. The Convention adjourned for the VIP Luncheon with the First Business Session scheduled to begin at 0900 hours on Wednesday, June 15, 2011.

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

Opening Ceremonies: Commander Oden re-opened the Convention at 0900 hours, Wednesday, June 15, 2011, IAW VFW Ritual. He appointed Comrade K. Mitchell Guard and Officer of the Day.

Distinguished Guests: Commander Oden introduced Senior Vice Commander in Chief, Richard DeNoyer; Inspector General Darrell Bencken; George Barlett, NCM District 16, Veterans of

Foreign Wars of the US; Past NCM Bob Zaher and Nick Nelson; MOC Supreme District 15 Councilman William Wichmann; H. Steve Mason, Past Supreme Commander, MOC. He asked them to speak later in the program under Good of the Order. He then introduced the following PDCs: Kraus, Zaher, Gasperson, Wichmann, Keeley, Teets, Schaefer, Webber and Lyons. Finally, he introduced the following PGCs: Wichmann, Prinz, Teets, Keeley, Swierzewski and Humfleet.

Rules of Order: Judge Advocate Wichmann informed the congregation that the Convention Rules of Order were published and distributed. Motion to accept was made, seconded and carried.

Roll Call of Officers: The Adjutant conducted the following Roll Call of Officers:

Commander	James E. Oden	Present
Senior-vice Commander	Barry Hirshbein	Present
Junior-vice Commander	Ashley D. Combs	Present
Quartermaster	Anthony C. Power	Present
Judge Advocate	William H. Wichmann	Present
Surgeon	Patrick Higgins	Present
Chaplain	Thomas Darkus	Present
Chief of Staff	Ronald Teets	Present
Inspector	Gerald Prinz	Present
Jr. PDC	James D. Malott	Excused
Commander, D1	Stanley Stewart	SVC Brandon
Commander, D2	Joseph Mortimer	Present
Commander, D3	Shawn Watson	Present
Commander, D4	Orville D. Humfleet	Present
Commander, D5	Alfred Serrato	Present
Commander, D6	Mariano Fajardo	Present
Commander, D7	James Correll	SVC Chesko
Adjutant	Richard A. Keeley	Present

The Roll Call of all Committee Chairpersons was also conducted.

Minutes: The Adjutant informed all that the minutes of the Mid-Term Council of Administration had been electronically distributed to the Council Members and that no corrections had been received. Adjutant Keeley moved to accept the minutes. Motion was seconded and approved.

Audit Committee Report: Chairman Schaefer read the Audit Committee's Report of the Department Quartermaster's books. He stated that all entries were found to be correct and in good order and he thanked the Quartermaster for having all records on hand and ready for audit. (Attachment A)

Quartermaster's Report: Quartermaster Power reported that the Department once again had a good year financially. Quarterly audits were very good though some were slow in arriving. All Post QMs were bonded and had purchased their required Buddy Poppies. (Attachment B)

Correspondence: Adjutant Keeley read the following:

a. Letter from the National Office appointing the following Comrades to National Committees:

William Bradford – Post 2917	General Resolutions Committee
Ronald Teets – Post 9612	General Resolutions Committee
Stephanie Herndon – Post 8180	Nat’l Women Veterans Committee
Kenneth Swierzewski – Post 10033	National Military Services Committee
William Wichmann – Post 727	National By-Laws/Manual of Procedures
Peter Scalzo – Post 2485	Veterans Service Resolutions
Robert Zaher – Post 2485	Veterans Service Resolutions
Richard Keeley – Post 9612	Finance & Internal Organization Committee
Laurence Lyons – Post 11016	Nat’l Security/Foreign Affairs Committee

b. All-State Commanders:

Division 1	Michael Glatz	Post 12074
Division 3	Frank Hilliard	Post 9892
Division 4	Oscar Helton	Post 9985
Division 5	Dennis Doty	Post 11447
Division 6	Robert Chesko	Post 2485

c. All-State Quartermasters

Division 1	Morris Sapp	Post 12074
Division 3	Peter Callaghan	Post 3457
Division 4	George Miller	Post 9876
Division 5	Thomas Burnett	Post 11447
Division 6	Paul Gasperson	Post 2485

d. All-State District Commanders

District V	Alfred Serrato
District VII	James Correll

e. Commander in Chief Coins were presented to:

Post Commanders Sablan (3457) and Helton (9985)
District III Commander Watson
District VII Commander Correll

Comrade or a Family Member of a Comrade in Distress:

Post 9951 – Comrade Dyste is doing much better.
PDC Milward is recovering from spinal operation.

National Home was Remembered.

Officer and Chairperson Reports: Officers, District Commanders and Chairpersons gave their reports as follows:

Senior-vice Commander/Membership Chairman: Senior-vice Commander Hirshbein reported that the Department is presently 800 members short of 100%. He recognized the Top Recruiters, 100% Posts and awarded \$150.00 stipends to Posts 10033, 9985 (2), 12074, 9951 and 11447. He also discussed the DPA fund raiser for the upcoming year. (Attachment C)

Junior-vice Commander/Programs Chairman: Junior-vice Commander Combs stated that program reporting for the year had been a great success. He stated that the Posts within the Department had been utilizing the online Community Service Reporting system developed by Webmaster Kenna. He then passed out National Citations of Recognition with the assistance of SVC in C DeNoyer and CDR Oden. (Attachment D)

Commander Oden presented National Certificates to JVC Combs for his outstanding job as Program Chairman for the Department.

District Commanders' Reports:

District I – Senior-vice Commander Brandon reported on Post's Community Service, and stated that all reports were submitted and inspections were successfully completed. He also reported on the April visit from CinC Eubanks and AG Kent. (Attachment E)

District II – CDR Mortimer reported on the Posts' Community Service involvement and the challenges that were posed in recruiting. He also reported on all the volunteer work following the Great Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami. (Attachment F)

District III – CDR Watson reported on community projects within District III and stated that the District currently stands at 78.77% in membership. (Attachment G)

District IV – CDR Humfleet gave a rousing report on the many community programs the Posts in Taiwan organized and took part in throughout the year. (Attachment H)

Grand Commander: Grand Commander Humfleet gave a report of the current state of the Grand of the Pacific. (Attachment H-1)

District V – CDR Serrato stated that District V currently stands at 110.47% in membership and elaborated on the many activities the Posts in Thailand participated in during the past year. (Attachment I)

District VI – Commander Fajardo reported that the Posts in District VI had done an outstanding job in the area of Community Service. (Attachment J)

District VII – SVC Chesko stated that District VII was 101.44% in membership. He went on to elaborate on some of the projects and accomplishments throughout the past year. (Attachment K)

Chaplain: Chaplain Darkus reported that a number of Comrades had passed away this past year. The Last Roll Call was conducted by Chaplain Darkus with Comrade Hunter giving a memorial rendition on the bagpipes. (Attachment L)

Surgeon: Surgeon Higgins presented a written report. (Attachment M)

Judge Advocate: Judge Advocate Wichmann moved to adopt B-1, B-2, B-3 and B-4 proposed revisions to the Department By-Laws (All By-Law revisions were approved). Also, moved to adopt M-1 as published – passed. It was moved/seconded that Resolution No. 1 “Support of Clark Cemetery” be continued as amended – passed.

Service Officer: DSO Scalzo presented a thorough oral report.

Chief of Staff: Chief of Staff Teets presented an oral and written report. (Attachment P)

Department Inspector: Department Inspector Prinz informed membership that all Posts and Districts in the Department had been successfully inspected. (Attachment Q)

Jr Past Department Commander: JPDC Malott presented a written report which was read by Adjutant Keeley. (Attachment R)

Blood Chairman: Chairman Provencher presented a written report. (Attachment S)

Buddy Poppy Chairman: Buddy Poppy Chairman Pearson presented no report.

Americanism/Loyalty Day Chairman: No report.

VOD/Patriot’s Pen/Teachers Award: Chairman Bradford announced the VOD winner and the Patriot’s Pen winner. He also announced the Teachers’ Awards. (Attachment T)

Commander Oden presented the National Teacher’s certificates to District Commander.

POW/MIA Chairman: Chairman Callaghan gave an oral and written report. (Attachment U)

National Home: No report.

Convention Book Chairman: Chairman Zaher presented an oral and written report praising the success of this year’s book due to Post, District and Pup Tents participation. (Attachment V)

Historian: Historian Johnson presented an oral and written report stating Post histories are not good due to lack of updating. (Attachment W)

Roving Ambassador: Roving Ambassador Mitchell gave an oral and written report. (Attachment X).

Clark Cemetery Chairman: Clark Cemetery Chairman Gilbert informed membership of donations received (\$5,565) and expenditures (\$8,962) for the upkeep of the cemetery. He also stated the Grave Digger membership currently stands at 968. Donations were accepted from Posts 10216 and 9892. (Attachment AA)

Webmaster: Webmaster Kenna was excused from attending, gave a detailed written report and announced that the Department website received 2nd place in the VFW National Competition. (Attachment Z)

Typhoon Editor: Typhoon Editor Malott presented a written report and reported that the Typhoon/Around the Pacific was awarded 1st place in the VFW Publications Contest. (Attachment AA)

National Military Service Chairman: Chairman Swierzewski gave an oral and written report on the National Military Service Program. (Attachment AB)

National Recruiter: CNR Mortimer gave an oral and written report. (Attachment AC)

Pacific Areas Pen Essay Writing Contest (PAP): Chairman Mortimer presented an oral and written report on the PAP. (Attachment AD)

Old Business: None

New Business: Judge Advocate Wichmann went over the rules for election of officers. Nomination of Officers was held with the following results:

Commander	Hirshbein
Senior Vice Commander	Combs
Junior Vice Commander	Watson
Quartermaster	Power
Surgeon	Mortimer
Chaplain	Darkus
Judge Advocate	Wichmann

END OF FIRST SESSION

BEGIN SECOND SESSION

Commander Oden called the meeting to order IAW VFW Ritual.

1. The first order of business was the final nominations and Election of Officer for the upcoming year. The following Officers were duly elected for the 2011-2012 year:

Commander	Hirshbein
Senior Vice Commander	Combs
Junior Vice Commander	Watson
Quartermaster	Power
Surgeon	Mortimer
Chaplain	Darkus
Judge Advocate	Wichmann

Good of the Order: The following was discussed under Good of the Order:

1. District VI Commander Fajardo presented Commander Oden with a crystal latte stone from the Posts in District VI.
2. Commander Oden presented Post 9723 a certificate for their outstanding participation in the Buddy Poppy program.
3. Commander Oden presented Post 9951 a certificate for the outstanding convention they hosted.
4. District V Commander Serrato discussed continuing problems with the VA in Pittsburg. He stated that the DAV will assist us, but they too won't readily respond to phone calls. The American Legion Department Service Officer called Pittsburg and the Legion in Pittsburg will try to assist. SVCinC DeNoyer will look into assigning an individual part-time to assist Pacific veterans and dependents.
5. District V Commander Serrato spoke on the perceived All-State selection problems.
6. Comrades Kraus and Lyons announced that they will be running for the District 16 council member position.
7. District VII SVC Chesko spoke praise of Comrade Gilbert as the newly assigned Clark Cemetery Chairman.
8. Post 9892 presented a \$400 check to the Clark Cemetery.
9. Commander Elect Hirshbein announced that the Sports Bar would be open after the installation ceremony.
4. Distinguished guests:
 - a. Past Supreme Commander Mason thanked all and hopes to return to finish his book.
 - b. Inspector General Bencken thanked all and hopes to return again. He also spoke of the many friendships and the camaraderie he has in the Pacific Areas.
 - c. District 16 National Council Member Barlett thanked all for the invitation and spoke praise on the success of this Department. He also stressed the need to continue recruiting of annual members.
 - d. SVCinC DeNoyer spoke briefly on the National Organization and informed National Convention attendees that if they plan on attending the reception at the conclusion of the convention, they will need to get a ticket at the end of the installation ceremony.
 - c. Commander Oden thanked Convention Committee and praised them for the outstanding job they did in organizing the convention. He then adjourned the meeting until 1800 hours in the Banquet Room for the Awards/Installation Banquet.

END SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

BEGIN AWARDS/INSTALLATION CEREMONY

Commander Oden reconvened the assembly according to VFW Ritual at 1800 hours. Chaplain Darkus said grace before the dinner was served and Commander Oden invited all to partake of the excellent cuisine.

After dinner, Master of Ceremonies Keeley introduced the Head Table and VIPs present and called Commander Oden and Senior-vice Commander (E) Combs forward for the presentation of the following awards:

1. Outstanding Post – Post 10216
2. Outstanding Post Commander – Patrick “Doc” Higgins, Post 10216
3. Outstanding Post Adjutant – Kenneth Swierzewski, Post 10033
4. Outstanding Post Quartermaster – Ronald D. Teets, Post 9612
5. Outstanding Member – Joseph Mortimer, Post 9612
6. Outstanding Post Service Officer – Jack Terwiel, Post 10216
7. Outstanding Contributor – Business – Peregrine Development Internation, Post 2485
8. Outstanding Contributor – Individual – James Benedetto, Post 3457

Commander Oden gave a heart-felt outgoing speech thanking all the DPA Comrades and especially the District and Post Commanders for their outstanding support during the 2010-2011 term. He asked them to support incoming Commander Hirshbein with the same effort and enthusiasm. He then called SVCinC Richard DeNoyer forward to convene over the Installation of Officers for the upcoming year.

Commander Hirshbein gave a stirring acceptance speech and conducted the closing ceremonies IAW VFW Ritual. The next Department Convention will be held in Barrio Barretto, Philippines at a time to be announced.

By order of:

RICHARD A. KEELEY
Adjutant
Department of Pacific Areas

JAMES E. ODEN
Commander
Department of Pacific Areas

Attachments (on file w/Adjutant)

- A. Audit Committee Report
- B. Quartermaster’s Report
- C. Senior-vice Commander’s Report
- D. Junior-vice Commander’s Report
- E. District I Commander’s Report
- F. District II Commander’s Report
- G. District III Commander’s Report
- H. District IV Commander’s Report

- I. District V Commander's Report
- J. District VI Commander's Report
- K. District VII Commander's Report
- L. Chaplain's Report
- M. Surgeon's Report
- N. Judge Advocate's Report
- O. Service Officer's Report
- P. Chief of Staff's Report
- Q. Inspector's Report
- R. JPDC Report
- S. Buddy Poppy Chairman's Report
- T. VOD/PP/Teachers' Award Chairman's Report
- U. POW/MIA Chairman's Report
- V. Convention Book Chairman's Report
- W. Historian's Report
- X. Roving Ambassador's Report
- Y. Clark Cemetery Chairman's Report
- Z. Webmaster's Report
- AA. Typhoon Editor's Report
- AB. National Military Service Chairman's Report
- AC. Certified National Recruiter's Report
- AD. Pacific Areas Essay Contest Chairman's Report
- AE. National Convention Chairman's Report

Distribution:

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National Adjutant General (w/o attachments)