



S.A.L. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – January 4, 2017

The monthly Executive Committee meeting of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 347 was held Wednesday, January 4, 2017, at 5:30 PM. The following is a summary of the discussions and actions.

Officers present were, Bill Preston, Gary Bishop, George Worton, Deano Mosingo, Danny Adams, Jack Dirga, Bill Gray, Doug White, Mike Shebel, Richard Duncan, and Butch Stroud. Officer assistants Bob O'Neal and Ben Kiselica, and Legion Liaison Len Biederman, also attended. Absent was Corey Meloni. Sons' member Ed Finkle was present to give a discussion on potential bus trips.

Old Business: There was no old business to discuss.

New Business:

Commander Bill Preston introduced Sons' member Ed Finkle, who gave a presentation on potential bus trips the Sons' may consider offering. Ed is one of the owners of Yankee Trails, who recently opened an office in Lady Lake. Ed described a half dozen trip options that would not only be fun for our membership and others to attend, but would raise some money for the Sons' general fund as well. A full bus of 56 attendees would earn the Sons' \$250. It was decided to seriously consider a day-trip to St Augustine in early February, as well as a day-trip to a spring training baseball game in late March. Ed will draw up a specific itinerary with costs and present to the Commander and Adjutant next week. Also discussed was a multi-day trip to New Orleans with the primary purpose of visiting the World War II Museum. Target time for this potential trip would be in October/November, and Ed will draw up some itinerary and cost options for consideration.

Commander discussed the guest speakers for the next two General Membership meetings. Patti Fabiani of the Fisher House in Gainesville will speak at the January 18th meeting. We will also be presenting her our donation of \$2,500. Gary Bishop described the Fisher House organization and the Gainesville facility and the great work they do for our veterans and their families. Bill Gray discussed that way back during his administration it was decided to start donating to the Fisher House and he highly recommended continuing this important giving project.

For the February 15th meeting we will have a special presentation of colors by the Lake Weir High School Junior ROTC color guard. We will be presenting the JROTC Command Sergeant Major Michael Kelsen our donation of 9 parade swords (8 Cavalry and 1 Officer replica sword). We'll also be presenting a custom-made wooden carrying case for the swords that will be dedicated in the honor of Nicholas Watke, the JROTC cadet leader who was killed in a tragic accident in November.

Commander discussed Wreaths Across America, a national organization that coordinates the placement of 1.2 million remembrance wreaths at 1,228 cemeteries across the country. He attended a ceremony in December and related a personal story about randomly visiting one grave that turned out to be the soldier who was discussed later on during the ceremony. He felt that might be a sign that The Sons' should re-establish its prior tradition of placing wreaths and flags at our local Lady Lake cemetery and maybe others as well. Jack Dirga and Bill Gray discussed that this had been done for many years but was stopped when the local Boy Scouts were going to take over the duty. It is believed that the Scouts are no longer doing the wreath or flag placement and they both strongly support the proposal for The Sons' to resume the tradition. Butch Stroud has the contact information for the cemetery



operator. The Adjutant will put a call out to find a volunteer to organize this activity. More information can be found at <http://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org>.

Gary Blanchard reminded us that the flag restoration activity will be held on January 20th and 21st in the Hall. Volunteers are needed!

Commander asked Gary Blanchard for an update on donut donations at the Villages VA Clinic. Gary said this work is on-hold until the dispute between the operator of the canteen and the clinic volunteer coordinator can be resolved. The canteen operator has been complaining since they began service last year that the free donuts are taking away from her business. The result is there is no suitable location being allowed for the donut donation to occur. The last location was on a chair by the front door; not a good situation to say the least. Most of the organizations that were volunteering to do this work have stopped because of the conflict. Commander wants us to resume one day per month donut donation and is seeking a new volunteer to coordinate and run this activity. As for the on-going dispute, Commander will work with the clinic volunteer coordinator to find a suitable location for our work to be successful. Adjutant will put out a notice to our membership for a volunteer coordinator.

Commander says that a \$250 deposit is needed for the operator of the Crab Race. The Finance Officer will write the check tonight. Commander also reminded everyone on the upcoming Valentine's Day Dance being held February 10th from 7-9 PM (doors open at 6 PM). Tickets are \$15 and are on sale now at the lounge and front office. Tables can be reserved for either 8 or 10 persons. Bring your own snacks (NO Beverages can be brought in); a cash bar will be available.

Commander discussed the various issues with the existing walk-in freezer. Most concerning is that The Sons' items are always being stored underneath many other heavy boxes in the back of the freezer, making it very inconvenient and difficult to get our items out. This experience was corroborated by several other Officers. He proposes purchasing our own locked stand-alone freezer and installing it in the room outside the walk-in, next to the door to the Hall bar. He passed around a brochure with a couple models of freezer he is considering. A motion was made by Jack Dirga to allow the Commander to seek permission from the Post to install this freezer, and if permission is granted to purchase it for up to \$2,100; seconded by Richard Duncan. Motion was Approved.

There being no further business, the Chaplain said a closing prayer, the flag was saluted, and the meeting was adjourned by the Commander at 7:10 PM.

Yours in God and Country,
Doug White
Adjutant