

## America 250 Committee report

11 April 2026

Currently there are 3 main focuses for the committee:

1. Planning for the Freedom Fest at this year's Department Convention.
  - A. Motorcycle parade to kick off Freedom Fest
  - B. Possible mass enlistment/re-enlistment at Fest to be officiated by Department Commander.
  - C. Inclusion of Commanders In-State VCF run in the America 250 events.
2. Advertise and promote the Department push for involvement to all Divisions/Districts/Posts, Units, Squadrons, and Chapters.
  - A. Fill out Google Form on Department website. Department will track these and publish at Convention.
  - B. Add QR Code for the form to website.
  - C. Add view only link to website to allow all to view what is being done.
3. Continue working on and promoting fundraising for VCF through America 250.
  - A. ALR will be selling America 250 patches for \$10 each beginning next week. Also will hold raffle for America 250/ Motorcycle merchandise at Convention.

- B. Commanders In-State VCF run will leave Springfield Post 32 on July 5<sup>th</sup> and return to Springfield on July 8. More info and route will be available shortly.
- C. Though not a fundraiser, we are pushing for all American Legion Family elements to honor ALL first responders who are veterans or American Legion Family members, by submitting their names, branch of service (for Veterans) years of military service, and years of service as a First Responder. The Commander has designed a Certificate for these individuals. Please submit info to Shandi in the print shop.

Please ensure your Post, Unit, Squadron or Chapter is involved in The America/USA 250 event. We all do something, so share it.

Respectfully Submitted,

*John B. Reece Jr.*

## Greetings from Department NEC

In August 2025 , Dan Wiley was elected National Commander at the Tampa, Florida National Convention.

Fall meetings were held in Indianapolis October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. The committee reviewed 24 resolutions from various committees. The National 250 Program was endorsed and The Department of Colorado was reinstated .

In January our membership caravan was conducted successfully.

National Commander Wily attended our Lincoln Pilgrimage on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

I attended the 2026 Washington Conference as Liaison to the National Security Commission. While there The department presented leading candidate Jay Bowen with a check for his campaign expenses.

National Commander Wily is scheduled to travel with us during Armed Forces week.

I am looking forward to attending another great Department Convention and the next year serving as your Department of Illinois National Executive Committeeman.

For God and Country,

Ronald Hoffman

National Executive Committeeman – Department of Illinois



stress relief. The games bring the veterans together and build social connections, the camaraderie we often talk about among veterans that in many cases, civilians don't understand. PTS veterans tend to self isolate, the social connections in the gaming community aid in bringing those veterans out of their isolation into a sense of community. These interactions, though not face to face, give the veteran a place to connect, a purpose, and a focus.

For many service members, gaming was already part of their life before their military years. Many veterans were exposed to gaming machines prior to their enlistment, through consoles such as, Nintendo, Atari, Sega, Xbox, PlayStation and others. In many cases, while living in the barracks, gaming became a nightly routine, a way to decompress, and strengthen their social ties.

In addition to helping veterans cope outside of the military, an established eSports community in a post has the potential to aid in recruiting younger members. Each branch of the military has an eSports team and Universities have established eSports teams to compete internally and externally, as well tournament play. Several Departments have established or are in the process of establishing gaming committees. A group of Legionnaires in California formed an activity known as American Legion Gaming (ALG) and sponsor activities involving on line gaming.

There are some posts in Illinois that already have eSports activities, such as periodic game nights, and promote competition within their districts. We feel that this effort should grow within the state and posts should encourage game nights, to include family members and board games, as a periodic activity, to bring everyone together.

Committee members have shown methods of gaming that don't take up a lot of space. The game machine is in a Pelican style case, with a video monitor in the lid and the game console protected by foam in the bottom of the case. There are additional foam cutouts in the case to hold console controllers, power cords, additional games discs, headsets

and other accessories. All that is needed is a power outlet and internet connection.

Regardless of how the gaming machines are packaged, whether a stand alone console or personal computers, with their associated video monitors, there is no need for large amounts of space or huge expenditures. The Pelican case option is around \$1500 and can be locked in a closet or office when not in use. Personal computers (PCs) are a bit more expensive and take up a bit more room, but designating a corner for the eSports PC and monitor doesn't take up a lot of space. An internet connection with 3Mbs upload and 1Mbs download making the gaming experience more enjoyable. Posts may already have an internet connection and the recommendation is that consoles or PCs be connected via wireline, as opposed to wireless or wifi, to the network as opposed to using wifi to provide for a seamless internet gaming connection, and the gaming terminal isn't competing with other wireless devices for bandwidth.

It is the recommendation of the ad hoc committee for eSports that the department establish an eSports gaming and wellness committee in the department under the Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. To that end a resolution will be developed for presentation at the Department Convention in July.