

AdHoc eSports Committee Report  
for the  
Illinois Department Executive Committee (DEC)  
Meeting  
April 11, 2026

An ad hoc committee was created in 2024 for the study of establishing and promoting eSport video gaming in the Department.

The first meeting of the committee was in October 2024 with members representing each division. Department Adjutant Joshua Theilen was an advisor to the committee, and representatives from the Department of Illinois American Legion Auxiliary and Detachment of Illinois Sons of The American Legion were identified to participate.

Representing the divisions:

1st Division - Peter Koerner

2nd Division - Mark Smith (Replaced by Josh Deron)

3rd Division - Steve Hope

4th Division - Corey Norton

5th Division - Larry Miller

Larry Miller assumed the role of chairman of the committee. The term eSports was used to identify the subject gaming environment to differentiate and eliminate confusion between it and the video poker terminals found in many posts. It was determined in the committee that the effort should be a grass roots effort, built from the post up. As interest grows throughout the department, a committee could be formed to encourage intra- or even inter- departmental competition.

The E-Sports Committee was extended another year in September 2025, with one change to the committee members, for the 2nd Division, Joshua Deron replaced Mark Smith.

Outside professional studies show that eSports and video games have been proven to help veterans with recovery from physical and emotional trauma. Veterans find therapeutic value in the games and the games themselves provide a

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 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.