

## State of West Virginia

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### Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

#### **REDISTRICTING NOTES FROM THE COMMANDER NUMBER THREE 15 DECEMBER, 2014**

With Mid-Winter Conference fast approaching, I thought it appropriate to publish a background and statement of fact as related to the need for the proposed District realignment. It is anticipated that the COA will vote on this issue during Mid-Winter. Understandably, there is substantial apprehension among Posts associated with this significant organizational change. Contributing to this apprehension has been the failure to clarify with Posts the fact that there will be virtually no impact or change relative to a Posts day to day functioning. I ask that the following information be reviewed, giving serious consideration to the content and its relevance to past, present and future stability of the Department of West Virginia.

On 8 August a five member committee met at Clarksburg 573 for the purpose of producing a proposed District realignment plan. On 2 September, the proposed plan was distributed to Post and District Commanders so as to have their membership apprised of the proposed new District make up. A forty-five day comment period was provided, asking for membership comments to be returned to Headquarters by 15 October. The due date was established in order to provide time to prepare for committee discussion while at the Southern Conference. On 19 October, as Commander, I published an information paper on redistricting and again on 14 November. Both papers have been widely circulated and also published on the State web site. In addition to the writings, at each District meeting, both in the fall and winter the issue has been discussed with the State representative. Accordingly, there has been substantial effort to inform membership. To those who possibly do not as yet see the need for redistricting, I am providing the following information which I hope you will seriously review.

Please note the table reflecting a progressive loss of one District, 33 Posts and 6500 members over the last 10 membership years.

Some glaring items to be acknowledged are listed below:

1. In 2008/2009 District 7 was dissolved.
2. Over ten years 32 Posts have been lost.
3. This year we have lost one Post and additionally, have one currently suspended.
4. Over the ten years we have lost 6510 members, 1200 alone from last year.
5. Last year represented a loss of over \$18,000.00 in dues income.
6. Ten years ago the average District membership was over 2100 members with some in excess of 3000 members.
7. In 2004/2005 District 9 was composed of 22 Posts.

While I cannot determine actual lost membership revenue over this 10 year period, I estimate the accumulated dollars to certainly exceed \$100,000. What is happening is that we are slowly and almost invisibly migrating to a fragmented alignment and an organization attempting to live on a lavish life style with a welfare budget. Let's look at what has been done over the last three years to combat finance erosion.

1. The newspaper has gone from 4 issues to 3 issues to save \$8,000.00 per year.
2. COA meetings have been changed from 4 meetings per year to 3 meetings per year.

3. We went to e-mail/electronic distribution of General Orders to save mailing costs.
4. We have recently voted and approved to charge \$25.00 annually for those who want hard copy mailing of General Orders.
5. We have deleted the purchasing of hats for newly elected District Commanders.
6. We now have Post Commanders presenting Department awards to teachers in their school as opposed to bringing a teacher to the Convention for a presentation.

The cost associated with maintaining nine District Commanders as opposed to five District Commanders cannot be justified. National By-Laws require a new District to have no less than 750 members and 10 Posts to obtain a charter. We have two Districts with only 5 Posts each and District 10 has a membership of only 561 members. Lacking passage of the proposed plan, the Department is on track to have one District reduced to only 4 Posts. I want to emphasize that there will be no change related to how or where a District meeting will be held. The membership determines where meetings are to be held as is done today. If approved, the Department will go from 27 District meetings to 15 meetings per year. Lastly, don't be taken in by the one or two dooms dayers or nay sayers that always seem to surface. While I could say more, I will quit for now. Accordingly, I ask your support on this very important issue and look forward to seeing everyone at Mid-Winter.



Doug KNOTTS, COMMANDER  
DEPARTMENT OF WV

## THE BIG PICTURE

District	2004/2005		2013/2014	
	No. Post	Membership	No. Posts	Membership
1	10	2117	05	1415
3	11	2333	10	1567
4	12	3244	12	2356
5	13	2112	10	1586
6	11	3002	13	2438
7	09	894	2008/2009 Dissolved	
8	08	2941	05	1881
9	22	2498	14	1368
10	08	697	07	561
12	13	1469	09	871
*Total	117	21,619	85	15,109
*Includes 290 At Large			*Includes 1066 at Large	

NOTES: Actual Post count is 84 due to Wilkinson loss  
 Actual membership 10 yr. loss 6,510  
 Actual loss of membership dues for 2013/2014  
 \$18,000.00  
 Average District membership for 2004/2005 2161  
 members