THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America

2026 Officer's Guide
and Manual of Ceremonies

legion.org

ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

One elected from each of the 55 departments, plus national commander, national vice commanders and past national commanders (voice without vote)

ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

Five delegates from each department, plus one for each 1,000 members, or major fraction thereof, NEC members and past national commanders

NATIONAL COMMANDER

Elected by national convention

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE
NATIONAL TREASURER
NATIONAL CHAPLAIN
NATIONAL HISTORIAN
NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Appointed by NEC

NATIONAL ADJUTANT

Appointed by NEC

FIVE NATIONAL VICE COMMANDERS

Elected by national convention

NATIONAL COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

(Standing) Appointed by NEC and functioning on a continuing basis

Americanism Commission
- American Legion Baseball Committee
- Citizens Flag Alliance Advisory Committee
- Committee on Children & Youth
- Committee on Youth Education
- Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee
- Americanism Council

Convention Commission

Finance Commission
- American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc. dba American Legion Child Well-Being Foundation
- The American Legion Endowment Fund Corp.
- Overseas Graves Decoration Trust

Internal Affairs Commission
- American Legion Riders Advisory Committee
- Constitution & By-Laws Committee
- Membership & Post Activities Committee
- Membership Study Committee
- National Convention Resolutions Assignments Committee
- Sons of The American Legion Commander's Advisory Committee
- Sons of The American Legion Resolution Screening Committee

Legislative Commission
- Legislative Council

Marketing Commission
- Marketing Commission Executive Committee

Emblem Committee

Media & Communications Commission
- Media & Communications Council

National Security Commission
- Aerospace Committee
- Conventional Armed Forces Committee
- Foreign Relations Committee
- Law and Order & Homeland Security Committee
- Military Benefits & Quality of Life Committee
- National Guard & Reserve Forces Committee
- Unconventional Forces & Intelligence Committee
- National Security Council

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
- Be The One Mental Wellness Committee
- Health Administration Committee
- National Cemetery Committee
- Veterans Benefits Committee
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Council
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Executive Committee

Veterans Employment & Education Commission
- Employment & Veterans Preference Committee
- Veterans, Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness Committee
- Veterans Employment & Education Council

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Full-time staff

National Headquarters

700 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN

Administrative Services
- Human Resources
- Library and Museum
- Purchasing/Document Processing
- Information Technology Network Operations

Americanism Division
Finance Division
Marketing Division
Office of Fund Development
Media & Communications Division
Internal Affairs & Membership Division
National Convention & Meetings Planning Division

John H. Geiger Operations Center

5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN
Customer Support Center
Emblem Sales Division
Print Production
Information Technology Division
Board of Veterans Appeals

Washington, D.C. Office

1608 K Street N.W., Washington, DC
Administrative Services
Legislative Division
National Security Division
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division
Veterans Employment & Education Division

Various Field Stations

Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation Division

CONVENTION COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

Composed of one delegate from each department serving during the life of convention only

Americanism
Constitutional Amendments
Credentials & Rules
Finance
Internal Affairs
Legislation
National Security
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Veterans Employment & Education

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DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

The American Legion *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies* ("guide") provides the reader with very general information about planning and conducting various programs. This guide is only intended to help assist volunteers and staff. With respect to information contained in this guide, neither The American Legion nor any of its officers, directors or employees make any warranty, express or implied, nor assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product or process implemented at the post or department level. This guide only constitutes general advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices. Information within the guide stating "shall or must" is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. All other items of information in this guide are general suggestions except for the National Constitution and By-Laws. This guide does not constitute any type of legal advice. If readers have any concerns about anything in this guide, they are strongly advised to contact their respective department and an attorney licensed in their state.

The American Legion is enshrined in the United States Code at **36 U.S.C. §21704**.

Powers.

The corporation may-

1) adopt a constitution, bylaws, and regulations to carry out the purposes of the corporation;
2) adopt and alter a corporate seal;
3) establish and maintain offices to conduct its activities;
4) establish State and territorial organizations and local chapter or post organizations;
5) provide guidance and leadership to organizations and local chapters established under paragraph (4), but may not control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of such organizations and local chapters;
6) acquire, own, lease, encumber, and transfer property as necessary to carry out the purposes of the corporation;
7) publish a magazine and other publications;
8) sue and be sued; and
9) do any other act necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of the corporation.

FOREWORD

The *Officer's Guide* is the principal handbook issued by National Headquarters to help American Legion officers fulfill their roles. It combines a guide to post offices, operations and procedures; the *Manual of Ceremonies*, which describes ceremonies prescribed by the National Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Subcommittee; and an appendix including eligibility requirements, parliamentary procedures, a suggested post constitution and by-laws, and more.

Publications on all major American Legion programs are available from the department and National Headquarters. See the complete list at **legion.org/publications**. Many can be downloaded for free; others are available at low cost at **emblem.legion.org**.

If questions arise on American Legion policies or procedures, contact the district officers or department headquarters.

We hope this handbook will help in the post's mission, and we encourage post officers to become familiar with its contents.

The responsibility given to the individual post is the source of our strength and ability to grow. The post is to a large degree autonomous, restricted only by the broad general guidelines contained in the national or department constitution and by-laws.

The question has been asked, *"Who determines who is a member of a particular post?"* In 1923, an *American Legion Weekly* article stated, "At the same time that Article IV, Section 1 of the National Constitution By-Laws were adopted, we established another principle having an important bearing on it. Another section specifies that each post shall be the judge of its own membership, subject to the restrictions of the Legion's Constitution and By-Laws. This means that a post shall also determine whom it will accept for membership .... The right of each post to determine its own membership is without restriction."

Regarding Article IV, Section 1, a 1937 ruling by National Judge Advocate Ralph B. Gregg stated, "In other words, a member may be eligible to join The American Legion, but this does not mean that he (or she) must be accepted for membership in a particular post. Eligibility is not synonymous with acceptability. If a member is eligible to join The American Legion, it is still the prerogative of the post to determine whether they will accept such a member in their post."

In summary, the post sits as judge of its members in disciplinary proceedings, and has the prerogative to accept, or not, whomever is eligible, **provided that the post does not refuse membership to an eligible member based upon a demographic characteristic protected by law (race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc.).**

The post's primary focus is to serve veterans, their families and the community. To accomplish this goal, the post needs to develop clear objectives. The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion outlines an ideal set of missions and principles that are ongoing efforts – never fully won or lost, only continually fought for. This serves as a guiding vision for the post's leadership to create a mission statement, which will help establish short-term and long-term goals. Starting on **page 14,** you will see five resolutions that relate to The American Legion's strategy for addressing the challenges of the 21st century. These resolutions can offer valuable guidance as you define the post's programs and overall vision.

By accepting an officer position at your post, you made the decision to serve and make a difference. Serve well, for our veterans are counting on you, not just our members.

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SECTION 1

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

The American Legion was founded March 15-17, 1919, by members of the American Expeditionary Forces still stationed in Europe and awaiting passage home. Their experiences in what was called the "war to end all wars" would shape an enduring agenda for the nation's largest organization of U.S. military veterans.

Many of the Legion's founders voluntarily drilled in civilian-military camps before the United States entered the first world war. Trained in the "Preparedness Movement," several future Legion founders were commissioned as officers when the United States entered the war and discovered firsthand the nation's deficiencies in defense, citizenship, and education. Soon after the war's end, they realized how poorly prepared the nation was to assist disabled and unemployed veterans who faced uncertain futures in their communities, states and the nation after discharge.

The American Legion's emergence and rise to prominence was based on a mission to strengthen the nation, veteran or not, through programs, services and advocacy that have helped millions for over a century.

The American Legion built its legacy with a vision to make the nation prouder, stronger, smarter and more respectful of those who have sacrificed some or all in defense of the nation.

THE PREAMBLE TO THE AMERICAN LEGION CONSTITUTION

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

To maintain law and order;

To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and goodwill on earth;

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

MEANING OF THE PREAMBLE

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY, WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES …

The American Legion recognizes the influence of Almighty God in all worthwhile endeavors and declares the allegiance of Legionnaires to both God and nation.

TO UPHOLD AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Constitution of the United States is the written bulwark of our free way of life and representative government. It is our guarantee of liberty, freedom, justice and democracy. Members of The American Legion bore arms and went to war to defend and uphold this document of freedom.

TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER

Without law and order, liberty would become license. Law and order protect our pursuit of happiness, one of our God-given rights. Members of The American Legion served in wars to uphold law and order among nations. It is just as important to maintain the due processes of law in our domestic affairs. It binds Legionnaires to obey the laws of the land and to support the constituted authorities in enforcing those laws.

TO FOSTER AND PERPETUATE A 100 PERCENT AMERICANISM

Americanism is the gist of the American ideals of freedom, justice, individual rights and unlimited opportunities. It embraces all the freedoms we cherish and all the rights that are guaranteed to us. It is the very opposite of hatred, bigotry and intolerance. Americanism is the creed that has blazed the world-wide trail for justice, fair play, decency, belief in God, private enterprise, universal education, and progress in all human endeavors. It puts a premium on the virtues of loyalty, patriotism, hard work and thrift.

TO PRESERVE THE MEMORIES AND INCIDENTS OF OUR ASSOCIATIONS IN ALL WARS

Service in defense of America is the greatest experience in the lifetimes of all veterans. Recalling the highlights of that service means more than flashbacks to tense moments of excitement and danger in battle: the grime of muddy trenches, the perils of sub-infested oceans and the combat in the wild blue yonder. It means also the inerasable recollection of the comradeships, the bravery of pals, the team work, the sacrifices, the miseries and hardships of military campaigns shared in common. It means the bond that binds all ex-servicemen and women together in mutual affection, respect and gratitude. It also means keeping green forever the memories of the supreme sacrifices of gallant American patriots, sacrifices necessary to the winnings of wars. It means faithful annual observance of Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

TO INCULCATE A SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION TO THE COMMUNITY, STATE AND NATION

Always interested in building a better nation, the founders of The American Legion believed that such building must start first with the individual in their own community. So they made it one of the cardinal principles of The American Legion to inculcate that sense of personal obligation to the community, state and nation into the individual citizen. That means educating the citizen – young, old and future – in his and her responsibility to be active in making the hometown a better place in which to live, in discharging the duty of voting in elections, in paying taxes promptly, in contributing to community chest funds and to blood banks. The word "inculcate" means "to impress by frequent admonitions" and "to enforce by frequent repetitions." Like the duties themselves, the reminders that they remain to be carried forward are never finished.

TO COMBAT THE AUTOCRACY OF BOTH THE CLASSES AND THE MASSES

This clause places the Legionnaire on the side of right in opposing autocracy by either class or mass when this threatens. In a democracy such as ours, composed as it is of all nationalities, races, creeds and economic groups, there are bound to be both classes and masses. Indeed, the masses are composed of classes – but all groups within the mass must feel assured that in this nation, reason and fairness will prevail in all human activities and relations.

TO MAKE RIGHT THE MASTER OF MIGHT

Many wars have been started by dictators who wanted their might to be the right. If human freedom is not to perish from the earth, right must always be master of might. The rights of small nations must be protected against the tyranny that powerful neighbors may seek to impose on them, just as the rights of minorities in our society must be protected and respected. Legionnaires are pledged by this clause always to stand with the right, protect the weak and preserve the liberties of the individual. This concept is the basis of The American Legion's continued advocacy of a strong national preparedness so as to achieve the ideal situation that right will be backed by adequate might.

TO PROMOTE PEACE AND GOOD WILL ON EARTH

Until the entire world becomes a good neighborhood, Legionnaires must continue the effort to promote peace and good will on earth. It is in pursuance of this founding ideal that The American Legion has supported from the beginning and seeks to strengthen the United Nations organization. Obliquely, The American Legion also contributes to this ideal by firmly supporting a strong national defense to discourage breaking of the peace by aggressors.

TO SAFEGUARD AND TRANSMIT TO POSTERITY THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

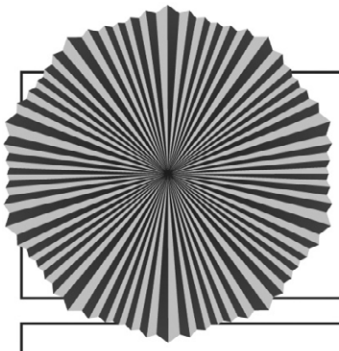
On this ideal of safeguarding and transmitting the principles of justice, freedom and democracy, all of the youth-training programs of The American Legion are built. All Americans can be proud that in our international relations we have tried to live by the golden rule, the mark of justice. We have granted to others, as we prize it ourselves, the great boon of freedom. Through the Monroe Doctrine, we called a halt to foreign imperialism in the western hemisphere. We gave freedom to the Philippines. These principles are part of the American heritage. Legionnaires are pledged to protect and preserve that heritage.

TO CONSECRATE AND SANCTIFY OUR COMRADESHIP BY OUR DEVOTION TO MUTUAL HELPFULNESS

This is the most important ideal expressed in our preamble. We can hail The American Legion today as an unparalleled force in these United States for social betterment. American Legion concepts and its ideal of devotion to mutual helpfulness warmed the entire social climate of America. Today America is extending its helpful hands all over the world through our assistance programs of foreign aid. This all came about because the veterans of World War I came home enriched with wonderful ties of friendship and gave those ties meaning by consecrating them to the ideal of mutual helpfulness.

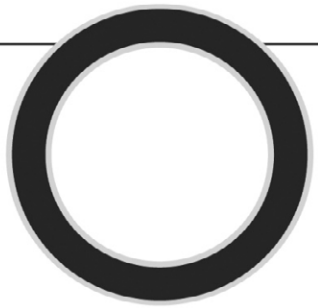
THE AMERICAN LEGION EMBLEM

Every part of the American Legion emblem has meaning. The emblem is laid upon the rays of the sun, giver of life, warmth and courage; foe of the cold, of the darkness, of fear, of apprehension. In turn, each of the emblem's parts signifies a meaning, which no American Legionnaire who wears the emblem should take lightly, and which he/she should know from the first moment it is put on. Why does the star signify constancy of purpose? Because the stars are fixed in the heavens. As the stars do not wander, so should The American Legion not wander from its fixed purposes. Further, the words "The American Legion" demand that the wearer "shall ever guard the sanctity of home and country and free institutions." There shines the emblem of The American Legion. It is your badge of pride and distinction, honor and service.



The rays of the sun

The rays of the sun form the background of the emblem and suggest the Legion's principles will dispel the darkness of violence and evil.



Outer rings

The larger of the two outer rings signifies the rehabilitation of our sick and disabled comrades. The smaller inside ring denotes the welfare of America's children.

The wreath

The wreath forms the center, in loving memory of those brave comrades who gave their lives in the service of the United States that liberty might endure.

The star

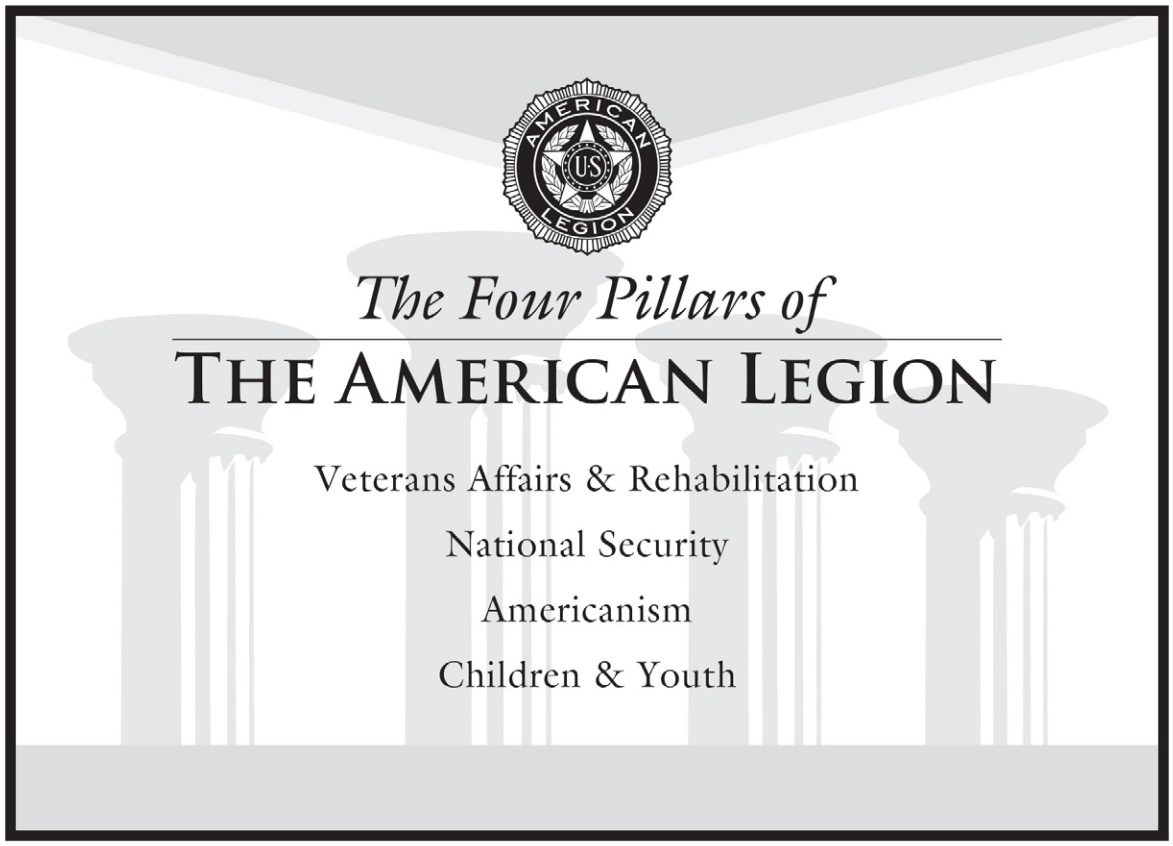
The star, victory symbol of World War I, symbolizes honor, glory and constancy. The letters "U.S." leave no doubt as to the brightest star in the Legion's constellation.

The words

The words "American Legion" tie the ring together for truth, remembrance, constancy, loyalty, honor, service, veterans affairs and rehabilitation, children and youth, national security and Americanism.

Inner rings

The smaller of two inner rings set upon the star represents service to our communities, states and nation. The larger outer ring pledges loyalty to Americanism.



THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

The American Legion's four pillars – **Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth** – are as relevant today as when our organization was founded in 1919.

All American Legion officers should be familiar with the programs offered under each pillar, along with how to conduct and publicize them, recruit participants and inspire community involvement.

In addition, all officers should know the Legion's legislative positions and be fully engaged in discussing with local, state and national elected officials how to support and achieve our legislative goals.

As an officer, strive to become a source of Legion history and knowledge. Be eager and prepared to answer all questions from a potential new member, and to speak with authority about The American Legion to other community groups.

Welcome new members into the Legion by assigning them a mentor who is familiar with our traditions, customs, policies and programs.

Finally, encourage members old and new to complete the **BASIC TRAINING** course, which is the best and most convenient way to gain basic knowledge of who we are and what we do. Many Legionnaires want to become stronger leaders and only need the opportunity, making continuous training and education programs necessary at every level – post, county, district and department. Register online at **register.legion.org/alei**.

USE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION BRAND MARK AND/OR EMBLEM(S)

Individuals Use of the brand mark and/or emblem(s) by an individual Legionnaire is limited to the wearing of the official insignia and to the possession of authorized jewelry or merchandise bearing the insignia.

Posts and departments Posts may only use the brand mark and/or emblem(s) or reproduction of the brand mark and/or emblem(s) on stationery, post publications, notices, posters or placards, or in matters of similar character in the ordinary routine and conduct of legitimate post business.

Any other use of the name "The American Legion," brand mark and/or emblem(s) shall be subject to the approval of the national adjutant, in accordance with Resolution No. 1.

Trademark law compliance All programs, associations and corporations using the name, brand mark and/or emblem(s) of The American Legion may only do so with permission, regardless of whether or not they are a separate legal entity. In addition, all programs, associations and corporations using the name, brand mark and/or emblem(s) of The American Legion must satisfy the "constant and continuous control requirement" of U.S. trademark law.

REQUEST FOR USE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION NAME, BRAND MARK AND/OR EMBLEM(S) ON MERCHANDISE

The name, brand mark and emblem(s) of The American Legion are registered with the U.S. Trademark Office and are protected by criminal and civil enforcement provisions of federal law (18 U.S.C. S 705 and 36 U.S.C. SS 21704 and 21705). By authority of Resolution No. 1, passed in May 2018, the national adjutant or designated representative (Emblem Sales director) may grant limited permission to use the name, brand mark and emblem(s) in accordance with Resolution No. 1, other resolutions and U.S. trademark law.

To gain permission for limited use of the name, brand mark and/or emblem(s), complete the form on **page 12** and send it to department headquarters, which will forward it to Emblem Sales.

Note: The member or post purchasing the merchandise must request permission, and permission is granted directly to U.S. manufacturers only.

Any permission granted is on a one-time basis for a given quantity. Additional orders will require new authority, and the manufacturer must not produce more items than ordered. Permission is given with the caveat that all material used will specifically identify the post. If the merchandise requested is available through Emblem Sales, you will receive a quote for the merchandise or a one-time limited permission. If the merchandise is not available through Emblem Sales, you will receive a one-time limited permission or denial of permission. You may purchase directly from approved American Legion licensees or their retail outlets. For a list of current approved licensees of The American Legion, visit **emblem.legion.org**.

EMBLEM SALES

Emblem Sales offers a variety of merchandise, including American Legion and Auxiliary caps, uniforms, gifts for outgoing officers, bookkeeping materials, flags, apparel and more. Catalogs go to every post commander, post adjutant and unit president, and additional copies are available at **emblem.legion.org** or by calling toll-free **(888) 453-4466**.

Additionally, Emblem Sales has been delegated, by the national adjutant, the task of administering use of the emblem and brand mark on manufactured goods. The name, brand mark and emblem(s) of The American Legion are registered service marks in the U.S. Trademark Office and are protected by criminal and civil enforcement provisions of federal law (18 U.S.C. S 705 and 36 U.S.C. SS 21704 and 21705). However, by authority of Resolution No. 1 passed in May 2018, the national organization may grant permission to use the name, brand mark and/or emblem(s) in accordance with Resolution No. 1, other resolutions and U.S. trademark law.

To obtain permission to use the emblem or brand mark of The American Legion or any American Legion program, a written request must be submitted through the department adjutant, who will then forward it to Emblem Sales. The request must include the following information:

1. The name and address of the requesting post
2. The name and address of the manufacturer
3. A description of the item to be manufactured
4. The quantity to be manufactured
5. The cost of each item
6. Assurance that the item is made in the United States
7. The intended purpose of the item (for post use only, not for resale)

Approval will be granted on a one-time basis only. Any additional orders will require a new request, and the manufacturer must not produce more items than those specified in the order.

AMERICAN LEGION NAME, EMBLEM AND BRAND MARK USE REQUEST FORM

The name, brand mark and emblem(s) of The American Legion are registered service marks in the U.S. Trademark Office and protected by criminal and civil provisions of federal law (18 U.S.C.S 705 and 36 U.S.C.SS 21704 and 21705). Under the authority of the National Executive Committee's May 2018 Resolution No. 1, the national adjutant or designated representative (currently only the director of American Legion Emblem Sales), may grant permission for a limited licensed use of the name, brand mark and/or emblem(s) of The American Legion for use in accordance with the NEC's May 2018 Resolution No. 1 and U.S. trademark law.

To request limited licensed use of the name, brand mark and/or emblem(s) of The American Legion, complete this form and forward it to your department adjutant. Your department adjutant will forward the completed form to The American Legion's Emblem Sales Division. Please note that the member or post requesting the name, brand mark and/or emblem(s) use must define the intended use and identify the specific post and quantity desired. The limited license, if granted, will apply only to the listed manufacturer.

Any name, brand mark and/or emblem(s) limited license granted is for one-time use for the specific quantity listed. Any additional quantity over this number will require a new request, as the manufacturer is strictly prohibited from producing more items than that being authorized. This limited license requires that all items be specifically manufactured as requested, and National Headquarters may request a sample item.

Please note that your request will be denied if this limited license request is for merchandise available through American Legion Emblem Sales. If the merchandise is not available through American Legion Emblem Sales, you may receive a limited license for the merchandise manufacture. Please note that if your request is denied, you may still be able to purchase merchandise directly from an approved American Legion licensee or their retail outlets. To view a list of currently approved American Legion licensees, go to **emblem.legion.org**. A request form can also be completed online at **legion.org/emblem/request**.

FILL OUT THIS FORM COMPLETELY AND EMAIL OR MAIL TO YOUR DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS.

PURCHASER INFORMATION		
Post number		
Address		
City	State	ZIP
Contact person		
Member ID #		
Telephone #	Evening #	
Email		
Product description		
Quantity	Price	
Purpose/use of item		
Signature		

MANUFACTURER INFORMATION		
Name of business		
Address		
City	State	ZIP
Contact person		
Telephone #		
Email		
Product in all parts made in U.S.A. *If not, please attach explanation.* ☐ Yes ☐ No		
Imprint instructions: Provide sketch or attach artwork.		

DEPARTMENT USE

☐ Recommend Approval
☐ Recommend Denial

Department Adjutant

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

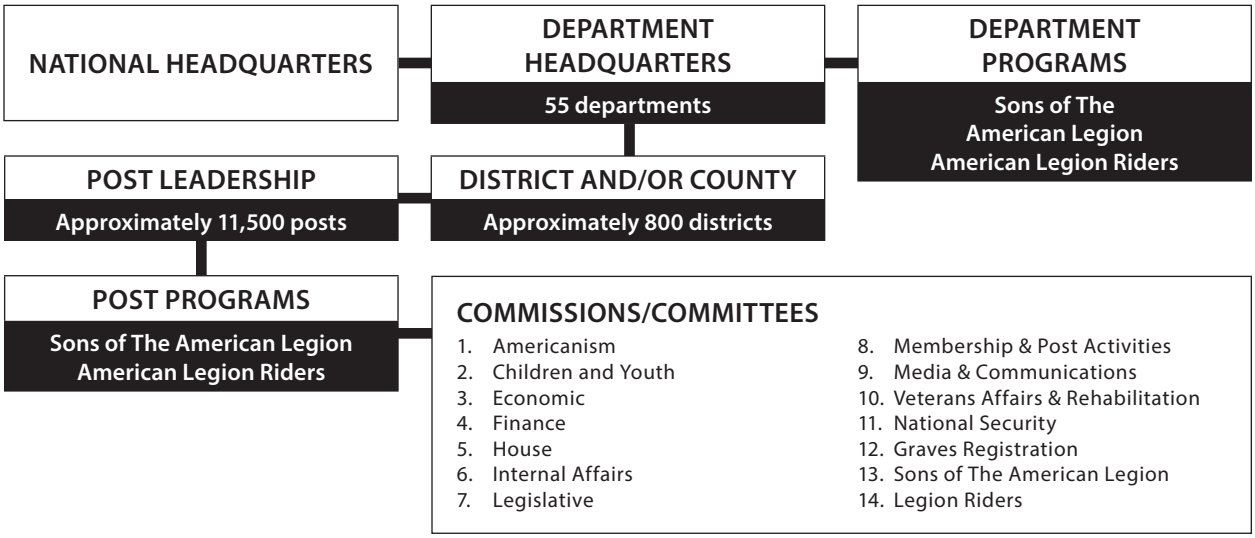
NATIONAL USE

☐ Approved
☐ Denied
☐ **SAMPLE REQUIRED TO BE SENT TO AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HQ**

National Adjutant or Designated Representative (Emblem Director)

The following chart explains the relationship between National Headquarters, department headquarters and local posts, with the district or county as a mediary between department and post. Programs such as Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and American Legion Riders (ALR) are under the autonomy of their sponsoring post and department, respectively. For the sake of brevity, post subcommittees are not included. A list of "standard" post committees and other non-traditional committees (depending on a post's programs and activities) begins on **page 29**.

AMERICAN LEGION LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION



PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER MATERIALS

National Headquarters produces dozens of handbooks, brochures and other publications. These are generally available free through your department headquarters or can be downloaded at **legion.org/publications**. In many cases, one copy of a publication can be provided per post without cost, but a modest charge may be required for additional copies. (See the Emblem Sales catalog for current prices of sale items.)

- *The American Legion Magazine* is mailed to all members; additional subscriptions are $6 per year for posts. A spoken version of the magazine is available, at no charge, for visually impaired and physically disabled members of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and SAL.
- *The American Legion Dispatch* is a free monthly e-newsletter providing post, district and department officers with news relevant to membership recruitment and retention, post activities and community support, American Legion programs, troop support, veterans benefits and more. The e-newsletter features headlines with clickable links to full stories at **legion.org/information-center**, under *Dispatch* Headlines. Subscribe at **legion.org/newsletters**.
- A copy of the *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies* is sent free to each post and available online at **legion.org/publications**. (Check the Emblem Sales catalog or go online to **emblem.legion.org** for the price of additional copies.)
- A booklet of the American Legion National Constitution and By-Laws is available for download online at **legion.org/publications**, under "Organization, Membership & Awards."

THE AMERICAN LEGION'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

For more information, refer to the full text of the resolutions approved by the National Executive Committee Meetings in Indianapolis on October 17-18, 2012. Only the "Resolved" clauses of each resolution follow:

RESOLUTION NO. 49: DISENFRANCHISING (21ST CENTURY)

RESOLVED, That the formation and revitalization of American Legion posts be a recommended priority which only the Department Commander or the Department Executive Committee controls in accordance with Article IX Section 1 of the National Constitution; and, be it further

RESOLVED, As long as all of the required obligations are met for the establishment of a post, no individual post, county, or district shall have the authority to deny any individual(s) the opportunity to start or revitalize a post, that the final decision on all post charter applications will be made by the Department Commander or Department Executive Committee; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That no post charter will be cancelled without the department attempting to revitalize the post in question and attempts made by the department to start a new post within the same calendar year for every post submitted for cancellation to the National Executive Committee; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That departments are urged to form new posts in communities where there exists a large veteran population in order to provide veterans an opportunity to choose which post they desire to belong as well as make it more convenient for the veteran; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 28, of the National Executive Committee, October 2006, titled "Disenfranchising" (21st Century), is hereby superseded and rescinded.

RESOLUTION NO. 50: TRAINING AND EDUCATION (21ST CENTURY)

RESOLVED, That all levels of The American Legion leadership are urged to develop a standard for its leadership to include a knowledge about programs, activities, goals and objectives of the organization in order to do their best and be more proactive towards the needs of those they serve; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That leadership at all levels (National through Post) are urged to recommend to all candidates for office to consider taking and successfully completing the on-line version of The American Legion Extension Institute course; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That every department of The American Legion be encouraged to start and staff a comprehensive training seminar/college (also known as Legion College) for the purpose of training its leaders; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the National Organization of The American Legion develop a training environment, seeking a better-trained cadre of leadership that may include the use of computer technology/communications, written materials, teleconferencing, other electronic media, workshops, conferences, and seminars; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all levels of The American Legion be strongly and resolutely urged to develop and execute a continuing education program pertaining to The American Legion programs for leadership and members; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 30, of the National Executive Committee, October 2006, titled "Training and Education" (21st Century), is hereby superseded and rescinded.

RESOLUTION NO. 51: VETERAN OUTREACH PROGRAM (21ST CENTURY)

RESOLVED, That all levels of The American Legion are urged to develop a comprehensive plan to educate and provide service to Active, Reserve Component and National Guard eligible military personnel currently in

uniform, recently retired, and separated about the value and benefits derived from membership in The American Legion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all levels of The American Legion are urged to develop a recruiting campaign targeted at eligible military personnel currently serving on Active Duty, in the Reserve Components and The National Guard, and, as well develop a working relationship with The Adjutant General of the state, reserve center commanders and active duty military installation commanders; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 29, of the National Executive Committee, October 2006, titled "Veteran Outreach Program" (21st Century), is hereby superseded and rescinded.

RESOLUTION NO. 52: THE AMERICAN LEGION POST OPERATIONS (21ST CENTURY)

RESOLVED, That all department, district, county and local American Legion leaders are urged to develop a leadership plan that stresses the need of mentoring and training of all post officials in such areas as:

1. Developing and executing post mission statements

2. Developing and executing a five-year plan to include description in each of the following areas: post activities, programs, budgets to include financial projections, membership and public relations/communications

3. Development of a constitution and by-laws to include proper charter filing, incorporation, report filing to include Consolidated Post Report, maintaining a proper check and balance system to include audit, risk management (liability, property and event insurance), and proper writing of resolutions

4. Formation and training of committees based on the size and mission of the post in the local community

5. Develop programs in conjunction with the Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion to welcome new veterans into the community with emphasis on welcoming our wounded warriors home through the "Operation Comfort Warriors" program to their communities

6. Reaching out to all veterans in the community and listening to their concerns; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That departments, districts, and counties are urged to develop an integrated coordinated assistance visit plan, or sometimes referred to as Post Responsibility Audit, so every post is visited by one level of leadership at least once a year to review the aforementioned areas with the post leadership; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Legion believes that each post is a community based wartime veterans organization known for helping all veterans, families and children in the community and where social programs will not supersede the reason The American Legion was founded in 1919 and where the image is associated with "Service First"; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That when referring to an American Legion post in all official documents, publications, signage, and advertising that the word "post" be used instead of club, hall or other term; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 31, of the National Executive Committee, October 2006, titled "The American Legion Post Operations" (21st Century), is hereby superseded and rescinded.

RESOLUTION NO. 53: COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY AND SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION (21ST CENTURY)

RESOLVED, That all department, district, county and local American Legion leaders are urged to develop a cooperative relationship with the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 32, of the National Executive Committee, October 2006, titled "Cooperation with The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion" (21st Century), is hereby superseded and rescinded.

THE AMERICAN LEGION AND AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY POPPY PROGRAM

The official flower of The American Legion is the poppy. As a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice, the poppy is worn to honor the men and women who served and died for their country in all wars. Every May, Legion, Auxiliary and SAL volunteers distribute millions of bright red crepe paper poppies for contributions to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans. As the oldest and most widely recognized American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary program, this campaign benefits veterans and their communities.

Resolution No. 20 (NEC, May 2013) outlines the proper use, manufacture and distribution of poppies and raised funds. All funds are to be used for honorably discharged U.S. veterans; for the welfare of veterans' families; for the rehabilitation of hospitalized military personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals; and for the welfare of veterans, active military personnel and their families where financial and medical need is evident. Priority is to be given to veterans first.

All American Legion posts and SAL squadrons are encouraged to establish a poppy program following the guidelines and procedures established by their respective departments.

Per Resolution No. 4 (NEC, October 2016), The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary advocate for the establishment of National Poppy Week, starting the Monday before and continuing through Memorial Day, to bring greater significance to the poppy as a symbol of veterans' sacrifices for freedom.

FOUR RULES OF AN AMERICAN LEGION PROGRAM

The American Legion's most prized possessions are its name, emblem and logo. Its century of existence has built an environment of respect around those three things. Protecting those prized possessions is necessary to ensure that the environment of respect remains in place.

The American Legion's work under the four pillars, particularly the work involving Americanism and Children and Youth, often involves outside organizations and almost always community partnerships. Protecting the three possessions requires that rules be put in place to ensure that protection continues.

Many programs exist to carry forward The American Legion's work. Some are strictly internal, such as Sons of the American Legion and Legion Riders; others are more external, such as American Legion Baseball and Boys State. All must obey the same set of rules, even though in some cases seemingly independent organizations are created to assist with the work of a particular program.

All programs, whether strictly internal or organized under a subsidiary corporation or entity, must obey the following four rules. Whether the program in question is chartered by a post, a county or district, a department or National Headquarters as the parent organization, this requirement is in place.

If one or more of these rules is violated, National Headquarters will need to enforce intellectual property rights against the organization that caused the violation.

Rule 1: ***Leadership*** – All elected and appointed leaders must be confirmed by the parent organization after each selection, or as needed.

Rule 2: ***Rules*** – All by-laws, amendments and/or standing rules must be presented to the parent organization for confirmation and approval prior to use.

Rule 3: ***Reports*** – The program will provide to the parent organization: (a) monthly activities reports, (b) quarterly financial reports, (c) an annual financial statement, and (d) any additional report(s) requested by the parent organization.

Rule 4: *Controls* – The parent organization may provide the program with the employer identification number (EIN) and the tax-exemption status with the necessary financial controls over their usage. All program financial accounts must have a minimum of two (2) signatories appointed by the parent organization.

SECTION 2

POST OPERATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

THE POST

The American Legion is incorporated by an Act of Congress and organized into local posts, which are grouped into departments for coordination and administration. The post serve as "boots on the ground" for The American Legion. The organization's success depends on posts' ability to uphold American Legion values, effectively communicate these values to others, and engage in selfless activities for the community, state and nation. The essence of The American Legion is embodied in the posts. Our responsibilities are clearly outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion. Membership is available only through a post. Programs are effective only to the extent that the posts adopt, implement and maintain them effectively. Mutual support os achieved through comradeship, social activities and service programs at the posts.

A post is only as effective as how it is perceived by the members, the public and your community. If the post leadership thinks the post is doing a good job but still isn't attracting and engaging new members, the post leadership and members should reevaluate its purpose and make changes to be more visible to the community.

Posts do not all have to operate alike, regardless of a tendency to think they do. Membership troubles can arise in a community when a group with a narrow perception of The American Legion becomes dominant and suppresses any group with a different perception. This can prevent the development of activities that produce new leaders and new members. They also help or hinder the establishment of new posts that attract and serve entirely new groups of veterans.

The post is responsible to the veterans and children of its community – and to the community itself. The American Legion exists only with the approval of a large segment of our society. The community judges each post based on how active or how much your post contributes or gives back to the community. Its success or failure depends on the community viewing it as a positive and active partner. A good post will encourage active participation by its members with other civic-minded committees and organizations whether or not The American Legion initiates the activity.

A good post will know the community's needs. The simple process of planned contacts by representative post members with city officials, educators, welfare workers, community leaders, and other civic and fraternal groups will provide this knowledge. Whether the project was post-sponsored or not, a Legionnaire who serves the community deserves recognition from the post.

Veterans activities alone do not establish the Legion as an asset in the eyes of the community. These are, however, of particular importance to an organization composed exclusively of veterans.

TYPES OF POSTS

Each Legionnaire sees The American Legion through personal experiences or desires. The organization is big and broad enough to accommodate everyone. However, the post will reflect the composite personality of its members. There are country club-type, rural, urban and community posts. There are also business and professional posts, company posts, and posts formed by fraternal groups. Some posts have several thousand members, while others are successful with fewer than a hundred. All are doing the work of The American Legion.

Post officers are responsible for helping a post outline its vision for service to the community and put it into action. The goal is for members to promote their mission in their community while having fun. Thus, post officers must be aware of the likes and dislikes of their members and the needs of the community.

DEVELOPING LEADERS

The American Legion requires a sizable amount of manpower. More than 11,500 new post commanders are needed each year, and this number nears 100,000 when other post officers are elected. While some members hold the same office year after year, that is not necessarily healthy for a post; in fact, it hinders the post more than it helps. There is always a need for fresh insight from new volunteer leaders, and the post leadership should develop a training plan of succession, which will ensure the post will succeed in the future.

If a post is productive and the present officers have been effective, there should be competition for elected post offices. Sometimes, someone may have to be encouraged to run for post commander or other offices. This is particularly true in small posts where many members have already served. Leadership succession should be anticipated and planned. The present officers and active members must be on the lookout for future leaders. Legionnaires showing ability and interest should seek opportunities to affect the organization positively.

ELECTIONS

The post constitution and by-laws (CBL) determine the dates for the nomination and election of officers. The post CBL should agree with the department's CBL; check with your departments to verify that no conflicts exist. Following election results, the post adjutant should report the new officers to the department adjutant to ensure timely communication.

INSTALLATION

The installation of a new group of officers marks the beginning of the new Legion year and is a significant ceremony, as well as one of the highlights on the post's calendar. If new officers are installed in a casual manner, they may view their responsibilities with a similar lack of seriousness. However, if the installation is accompanied by a formal banquet, visits from department and district officers, and entertainment that attracts a large audience, the event emphasizes the importance of the roles assumed by the new officers for everyone in attendance.

Impressive installation ceremonies can provide the framework for other activities. The *Manual of Ceremonies,* contained in Section 3 of this guide, covers the initiation of new members, dedication of halls, funeral services and other standard programs throughout The American Legion. Your district and department leadership can also provide ideas, training and assistance.

Some departments may have regulations regarding who the installing officers should be. Check with your district commander for these details.

DISTRICT/COUNTY

Departments have the authority to create intermediate bodies between the post and department to assist as liaisons between such organizations and promote the programs of The American Legion. The Department Executive Committee (DEC) or constitution defines the powers of such intermediate groups. In no event shall such powers invade the prerogatives vested in the post, department or national organization.

The most common division is the department's partition into districts. However, many departments provide for county organizations, inter-county councils, areas and other subdivisions below the district level. In some departments, county organizations substitute for districts.

Depending upon the powers delegated by the department, the district may have some supervisory powers over the posts comprising the district. However, the district's primary purpose is to train, promote, educate and coordinate programs so the posts and their members can be more effective.

The *District/County Commander's Guide* is published annually to assist newly elected district and county commanders. This guide is available online at **legion.org/publications**.

DEPARTMENT

The American Legion is organized into departments, which are further divided into posts. Each state and the District of Columbia has a department headquarters. Departments located in foreign territories – such as Puerto Rico, Latin America, the Philippines and France – are referred to as Foreign Outlying Departments and Posts of The American Legion (FODPAL). Each department has the authority to prescribe the constitution for its posts and oversees the posts within its jurisdiction, as well as those assigned to it by the National Executive Committee (NEC). In total, there are 55 department headquarters located in the United States and overseas.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

The top legislative body of The American Legion is the convention delegates at the annual national convention. The National Executive Committee (NEC) is vested with administrative authority between national conventions.

The American Legion's policies are clarified and directed through its national headquarters in Indianapolis and Washington, D.C. This ensures that the influence of more than 11,500 posts is coordinated within the framework of American Legion policy.

AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING

The **BASIC TRAINING** course provides a pillar-by-pillar understanding of American Legion services, programs and history. The mobile-friendly online training is available free for members of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

BASIC TRAINING is a five-part course offered under the American Legion training banner at **legion.org/information-center/training**. Core topics covered are History & Organization, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth. Each core topic includes suggestions on ways that American Legion Family members can influence and strengthen their local communities.

Course graduates can download and print a certificate of completion and order a pin from Emblem Sales.

POST OFFICERS

COMMANDER

The ability to lead is recognized by election by your post members to the office of post commander. You are now obligated to your members and to demonstrate sound judgment for the post to prosper.

Being a post commander is broad and can be difficult. How you respond will determine, to a large degree, the standing of the American Legion post among associates and within the community. The support of district and department officers, the information in this guide, and help from post officers will together make performing the job possible. Look to the overall operation of the post and realize you have stepped to another level that requires different skill sets. At first it may seem the steps you took were too high, but as time goes by – following the suggestions and recommendations in this guide – the year as commander will be most rewarding.

PLANNING POST OPERATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR

New post officers generally take office with enthusiasm and a desire for a successful year. Upon taking the oath at the installation, the commander is entrusted with supervising the duties of all other post officers. Encourage them to take initiative and develop new ideas. Their effectiveness will determine the success of the post.

There are many ways to determine whether a post commander and its officers are having a successful year. Value judgments are made by the members, the community, and The American Legion itself. Like it or not, a gain or loss in membership is the most commonly used measure, as are members enthusiastic enough to run for a post officer position.

The membership record is a reliable indicator of a post's performance and growth from year to year. Active and proud post members who enjoy their time often recruit new members by word of mouth, encouraging their friends, neighbors, relatives, coworkers and business associates to join The American Legion.

Before salespeople can sell a product, they must 1) have a good product and 2) promote something people want and value. Programs, social activities and the post home can provide an opportunity to make new friends. When members feel a sense of pride, it is easy to sell what The American Legion offers.

POST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Running even a small post is more than a one-person job. Therefore, a post constitution should provide for a full group of post officers and an executive committee. Others are elected to fulfill specific roles. It's up to the commander to get them to work together for the post's success.

Start the year by having an organizational meeting of the post's officers and executive committee. This can happen even before installation, and the outgoing post commander and adjutant can be invited to attend.

RECORDS, MINUTES AND OTHER MATERIALS

The commander and adjutant should know what post records are used, where they are kept, and how to use them.

Members are proud of their record of continuous membership. Keep these and all other membership records up to date.

Maintenance of meeting minutes is extremely important. More than one legal case has turned on what an adjutant wrote in the minutes of a meeting conducted years ago.

Verify the financial accounts are in balance and accurate. Update current authorized post representatives with financial institutions.

Locate important post documents, such as the charter, constitution and by-laws, state articles of incorporation, licenses and insurance.

BUDGET AND FUNDRAISING

The post budget should be one of the first things reviewed by new post officers. Officers must know the history of profit and loss over the past year. Following these three general principles will help the post avoid money troubles:

- Ensure the annual dues cover the expenses related to administrative costs: postage, stationery, and department and national per capita payments. Every post must cover these costs to stay functional.
- If the community is to benefit from an American Legion project, create a proposal to seek funding from grants or the community – whether it's for an American Legion Baseball team, a community

playground or a swimming pool. Such projects will enhance the post's reputation, but it is essential to provide a complete public accounting of all funds received and how they are spent.

- Avoid soliciting donations from the public for charitable projects that primarily benefit Legionnaires. While businesses may choose to sponsor youths attending an American Legion program (i.e., Boys State, Junior Shooting Sports) or contribute to an American Legion charity (i.e., Veterans & Children Foundation), there are occasions when fundraising from external sources is necessary and available for initiatives that solely benefit the post and its members. In these instances, it is important to ensure the public receives full value for their contributions.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Elected officers will be responsible for some of the activities and projects, and appointed chairs will be in charge of others. Decide at the very beginning what is going to happen, when it will happen, and who will make it happen. Most of the assignments will be to carry on established programs or activities.

Handbooks, manuals and brochures exist for all of The American Legion's premier programs: Boys State, American Legion Baseball, scholarships and more. These have information and ideas that committee chairs need, and are available from department headquarters and online at **legion.org/publications**.

PROGRAMS NEW AND OLD

Post programs are essential for maintaining interest and, most importantly, for staying relevant to both post members and the community. Every new activity or program provides an opportunity to attract new members to the post. Additionally, engaging members in programs can help reactivate those who have become inactive.

Almost every post has service programs and social activities that have become traditions over time. However, running the same program in the same way year after year can make it feel stale. Conducting an annual planning session with post officers and program chairs and scheduling all post events for the year are essential for effective organization.

Successful programs require volunteers to bring them to life. Each program or activity needs someone in charge, typically a post officer or committee chair. The program is more likely to succeed when the post executive board appoints dedicated members to these roles.

FIRST POST MEETING

At the first post meeting, you can expect to be compared to previous commanders. This is a significant opportunity to set the tone for the entire year. If you plan to implement any changes, now is the time to start. The *Manual of Ceremonies* **(see page 62)** provides the basic framework for any post meeting. By adhering to the established customs and order of business, even someone who has never presided over a meeting can manage it adequately.

As a new commander, it's natural to feel self-conscious about running a formal meeting, especially in a post that strayed from the *Manual of Ceremonies*. The American Legion is a respected organization, and its meetings should reflect that with appropriate formality and impressiveness. Omitting parts of the custom does not save time. While meetings can and should have some variation, following the prescribed structure and order of business should allow you to complete the agenda in about an hour.

AGENDA

While the *Manual of Ceremonies* provides the structure or basic order for a meeting, the commander's agenda outlines the topics to discuss beforehand. The agenda is your aid to stay on topic and keep meetings organized and efficient. Not following the agenda or ineffectively applying parliamentary procedures in many ways invites chaos and unnecessary distractions to your meetings.

It is strongly recommended that the chair, declaring the meeting in session, ask for a motion to accept the meeting agenda. Once accepted, changes or additions to the agenda would require a two-thirds majority of the members to accept them.

The agenda should list all committees scheduled to report. Prior to putting a chairperson's name on the agenda, ask if that person is ready to report. Consistent reports are a good way to verify a chairperson is doing the job. If not, a little encouragement – along with a few suggestions or perhaps some prodding – might lead to action.

PROTOCOL

Although "protocol" is a term used primarily in setting the rules of etiquette that govern diplomatic functions, there is a certain amount of protocol applied to American Legion meetings and social functions, especially those with a dignitary present. This is the responsibility of the post commander, from the planning to the event itself. Utilize your executive board and key volunteers to assist.

For example, suppose your post is inviting the department commander to an event. A request should be forwarded with the event details to the department headquarters. In preliminary planning, it is advisable to have an alternate date if the department commander is already committed to the original date.

The invitation should list the date, time, place, whether dinner is included, the significance of the event and any other information. Will it be a joint American Legion Family function? Will non-Legionnaire dignitaries be present? Remember, this is the post "home," and you should be proud of it. Those you invite deserve all the courtesies and considerations accorded a distinguished guest.

At dinner events it is best to notify those who will be seated at the head table before they arrive. Escort them to their places to avoid confusion. The presiding or host officer is seated to the right of the lectern. The master of ceremonies is seated to the left of the lectern. Use place cards to identify those at the head table.

Introductions begin after the meal. The presiding officer stands at the center of the head table or podium and makes the introductions, beginning at the far left, continuing to the center of the table, and then starting at the far right and continuing to the center. The main speaker, the guest of honor, is the last person introduced.

Officers are introduced in the order by which they were installed: sergeant-at-arms, service officer, historian, judge advocate, chaplain, finance officer, adjutant, vice commanders and commander.

As with all rules, there are some exceptions. If the event is a function of both the Legion and the Auxiliary, the Auxiliary officers and dignitaries are introduced first. Members and alternate members of the National Executive Committee should be introduced immediately before the department commander.

WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Consider appointing a welcoming committee if one does not already exist for the post. Asking two or three members, including the sergeant-at-arms, to welcome new members, guests or even long-time members who may not be well acquainted can make a big difference. This committee can help newcomers feel at home and introduce them to others. Taking the time to identify new members and show them around fosters a friendly and inviting atmosphere. An active welcoming committee helps break down barriers and encourages a sense of community.

PAGEANTRY AND HONORS

The community looks to the American Legion post to conduct ceremonies, patriotic observances and funeral honors. A well-trained color guard, honor guard or funeral detail made up of American Legion Family members will help keep the local post visible within the community.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

A post's most valuable asset is its members. This value increases exponentially when those members plan and participate in community events. Wearing your American Legion cover or apparel is a great way to attract positive attention to your post. Attending public meetings and events demonstrates to the community that your post is a valuable asset. The commander should always take the time to publicly recognize key post volunteers when their efforts reflect positively on the post and say "thank you."

RESOLUTIONS

Improvements to The American Legion at any level begin with transforming an idea into a formal resolution. First, it should be passed by the local post and then by the district. All resolutions approved at the district level are forwarded to the department headquarters, where they will be routed and vetted by the appropriate commissions or committees. After proper vetting and support from the assigned committees, the resolution may be read on the convention floor for a vote.

During the department convention, the resolution's author should be available to offer their expertise when assigned committees vet the resolution. It is essential to be prepared to support the resolution on the floor of the department convention. Any resolutions related to the national organization that the department passes shall be forwarded to the national adjutant to be logged and assigned for vetting before going to the National Executive Committee (NEC) or the national convention. Further guidance on resolutions is found on **page 153**.

SOURCES OF HELP

A commander relies on a team of post officers and taps the potential of post members. Valuable assistance comes from past post commanders, district officers, department officers and, where necessary, National Headquarters staff.

- **Past commanders** Many posts have an active Past Commanders' Club. Sometimes its primary purpose is social – retention of good fellowship among those who have served as commanders. This group can be a wealth of knowledge and ability. Whether such a club is formally organized in the post or not, building a Commander's Advisory Committee with past commanders is helpful.
- **District officers** District commanders in most departments are elected representatives of a post within the district. The functions of a district can vary depending on the department, and these functions are defined in the department's constitution and by-laws. A key role of every district should be to provide advice and guidance to the posts in its area and to coordinate training for their members. District and county entities serve as communication links between the department and the posts. Therefore, district officers should be your first point of contact when you need information or advice on any simple or complex issues.

  The district commander holds a respected position within the organization. When visiting your post, it is important to make the occasion special by turning it into a social event that attracts a crowd. This display of dignity not only enhances the significance of the district commander's role but also elevates the importance of the post commander's office.
- **Department officers** A visit from a department commander or officer can be an opportunity for local media coverage and the type of American Legion function that attracts members and community leaders. Department officers are members from posts within your department who have served the organization and risen through the various offices (working the chairs) between the post and their current position. Not every post will receive annual visits from a department commander. If the invitation is accepted, or there is an occasion to visit the post, make the most of it.
- **Department headquarters** The department headquarters is the link between local posts and the national organization. The post will deal directly with the department adjutant. Routine business should be conducted through department headquarters. Questions of policy and organization should

also be referred to department headquarters. The post commander should closely follow department affairs, know what statewide activities are going on, and involve the post. Commanders should also study all instructions from department headquarters and pass them on to the appropriate officer or committee for action. Finally, the post's membership needs to be informed of any new activities initiated by the department.

- **National Headquarters** American Legion National Headquarters is the main source of information, from casual updates to official publications. At **legion.org**, members have access to a variety of resources, including e-newsletters, brochures, details about programs related to the organization's four pillars, public relations toolkits and training materials for all levels.

  The Digital Archive is an online repository of The American Legion's history, containing meeting and convention minutes, past issues of *The American Legion Magazine*, newsletters, and every active resolution within the organization. Explore this comprehensive collection at **archive.legion.org**.

AUXILIARY UNIT

The Auxiliary unit is an important part of the post's organization. Official contact with the unit is through the unit president. The unit can help only in proportion to its opportunity. A good commander will find opportunities for the Auxiliary unit to assist the post. The commander, or a designated representative, will keep in close touch with the unit and give its members plenty of inspiration, encouragement and support.

CONVENTIONS

While the post can operate independently from the district, department or national organization, its effectiveness is enhanced when it is part of a collaborative team. Attending conventions offers numerous opportunities for growth and expansion beyond the walls of the post. Decisions about American Legion policy occur at district, department and national conventions. Post delegates who attend these conventions ensure that the post's voice is represented in discussions and voting, helping to shape the future programs and direction of The American Legion.

PROGRAM REMINDERS

Planning post programs requires careful thought. As mentioned earlier in this guide, conducting an annual planning meeting with all leaders of the Legion family and key volunteers is an excellent opportunity for post members to be aware of the year's activities. This meeting also lets members know their expectations and commit to helping. In addition, the district and department may organize training sessions covering general operations and specific American Legion programs. It is important for the post to have a representative present at these training sessions. Attending training both enhances skills and fosters camaraderie within the post.

The following list is a month-by-month recommended event and program schedule:

JANUARY Initiation ceremonies are good membership stabilizers. Keep working on membership, especially by contacting those who became delinquent January 1. This month is a good time to present flags and copies of the flag code to local schools. Check dates for post, district/county and state Oratorical contests. March is Community Service Month, so now is the time to plan initiatives and projects. A community assessment can reveal areas where additional effort is most needed.

FEBRUARY (Americanism Month) Host a Four Chaplains Day program. Plan school awards with local educators. Sponsor religious emphasis activities. Start planning the upcoming American Legion Baseball season. Invite a local veteran employment representative to speak at a post meeting. Consider hosting observances of Abraham Lincoln's and George Washington's birthdays. Plan an American Legion birthday program for March.

MARCH (Community Service Month) Gather post members to conduct Buddy Checks on aging members or those who have renewed their membership for the year. The anniversary of The American Legion's founding, celebrated March 15-17, is an excellent opportunity for post officers and members to focus on enhancing the vision and image of the Legion within the community. The post needs to be an active stakeholder in the community, as it represents the national organization to local citizens. Paying renewed attention to appearance doesn't necessarily require a capital improvement project; rather, it calls for careful attention to detail and routine maintenance. This can range from improving signage to making enhancements both inside and outside the building. Consider forming a committee to organize an open house between January and March to engage the community further.

APRIL (Children & Youth Month) Coordinate Children & Youth activities and recognition with the post's SAL squadron, Legion Riders chapter and Auxiliary unit. Obtain the *Children & Youth Guide* from department headquarters. Plan the election of new officers and organize youth-related activities for spring and summer. Make sure to include American Legion Child Well-Being Foundation Week on the post calendar.

MAY This month marks the anniversary of the St. Louis Caucus, where the organization of The American Legion was completed in 1919. National Poppy Week, Memorial Day, Armed Forces Day and Mother's Day form the basis for good post programs and outreach to U.S. military personnel in communities nationwide. Consider honoring them with a Blue Star Salute. Place flags at veterans' graves. Present school awards at the end of the semester. Kick off American Legion Baseball and summer athletic programs. Ask school officials to approve American Legion activities and put them on the calendar for next year: Oratorical Contest, Boys State, school awards and American Education Week, to name a few.

JUNE Begin planning a membership drive for July and develop a strategy to engage more veterans. Since June 14 is Flag Day, consider handing out flags to the community to display and show their patriotism. A program about the history of Old Glory would make an excellent post meeting topic. Additionally, summer youth programs will need support and attendance from members.

JULY Host a community Fourth of July celebration and an early bird membership drive. Offer members who renew early a discount on dues, a free meal or something else that might interest them. An officer installation ceremony makes an impressive ceremony at a post meeting. Certify the new post officers with department headquarters. Be sure to continue efforts on behalf of summer youth programs.

AUGUST By now the post has received next year's membership cards from department headquarters. In many communities, school starts at the beginning or middle of the month. Begin planning a community Veterans Day observance.

SEPTEMBER (National Disaster Preparedness Month) Encourage the community to recognize Patriot Day, Sept. 11. Celebrate the anniversary of Congress' charter of The American Legion on Sept. 16, perhaps with an event including civic leaders. Sept. 17 is Constitution Day, an ideal time for a citizenship program. The third Friday of the month is National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

OCTOBER Launch the membership campaign. Remember, dues for the following year are payable by Oct. 20. Organize and participate in Halloween safety programs.

NOVEMBER Continue full speed ahead on the membership campaign. Get them in before Dec. 31. Lead the community in another round of Buddy Checks while observing Veterans Day and American Education Week.

DECEMBER Acknowledge Pearl Harbor Day on Dec. 7. As the holiday season begins, encourage and support activities that bring Christmas cheer to underprivileged families in the community. Keep plugging for renewals and new members. Visit veterans who are ill or in assisted living facilities.

ADJUTANT

The adjutant is the primary administrative officer for the post. A key to a successful post is retaining a good adjutant who provides continuity year after year. While the commander's duties are largely inspirational and executive, an adjutant's duties are administrative and functional. The commander navigates the ship, while the adjutant is the engineer who sees that the ship's machinery is working and maintained.

The adjutant is the administrative officer and personal point of contact for individual post members. This person works very closely with the post officers and committees, and with the commander in planning the monthly meeting and setting the agenda. The adjutant may maintain membership records and minutes of meetings, publish official orders, make announcements and communicate with post members.

All post records should be maintained and accessible by the adjutant in a comprehensive filing system.

The office involves a great deal of work and attention to detail. An effective adjutant is an essential component of a successful post. It is suggested that some degree of compensation should be paid to the adjutant, particularly in large posts, due to the commitment required by the role.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEW ADJUTANT

The only essential qualifications for the role of adjutant are honesty and a willingness to serve. A new adjutant should review all post records at the earliest opportunity. Make sure the articles of incorporation are current with your state and department headquarters. Develop your own organizational system to easily access information. The constitution, meeting minutes, and reports from officers and committees will provide valuable insight into the post's policies and traditions. It's crucial to stay informed about updates from national and department headquarters, to ensure that the adjutant is prepared for any changes.

The *Post Adjutant's Guide* has detailed instructions on handling membership cards, per capita payments and other duties. Every adjutant should have a copy. Request one from department headquarters or download it at **legion.org/publications**.

FIRST VICE COMMANDER

Depending on size, posts may have one, two or up to three vice commanders. The primary function of the first vice commander is membership and retention.

Upon being elected, the first vice commander should have a solid membership plan for the upcoming membership year. The membership campaign should cover certain fundamentals, such as a time of year, or perhaps focused around a post event or activity. Look at past methods and develop new procedures to improve recruiting and retention methods for membership where needed.

In a successful post, a new commander will contact the post officers and committee chairs immediately after election to schedule a meeting where they can lay out a general plan of operation for the entire year. This is when the membership plan should be decided.

It is recommended that a vice commander execute a plan to conduct a Buddy Check twice a year at a minimum. The first one should be planned in March for The American Legion's birthday, and the second in November around Veterans Day.

As you are setting your membership goals and laying out the steps to complete those goals, ask yourself the questions below. Develop your answers and plan accordingly.

- Mailed dues notices will bring in about 80% of current member renewals. Who is going to contact the remaining 20% who do not respond?
- How is the post going to contact and recruit prospective members? Who's going to contact them? How will new recruits be assimilated into the post?

- Who can be counted on to work at membership and how will they be organized?
- What awards or special recognition will be given?
- What special events can be tied in with membership, such as Veterans Day, team competition, contests with other posts, The American Legion's birthday, etc.?

OTHER DUTIES

The primary role of a first vice commander is to oversee membership, but this position entails many other responsibilities throughout the year. The vice commander should be well-versed in ceremonial protocols for regular meetings and may need to conduct one or more meetings in the absence of the post commander. Developing an agenda, running a meeting and adhering to proper protocols are essential skills for this role. The vice commander should be not only prepared but also confident in stepping in for the commander at a moment's notice.

SECOND VICE COMMANDER

The second vice commander is typically responsible for building an atmosphere in which Legionnaires have fun while accomplishing the mission of their American Legion post.

The commander depends on the second vice commander to help run operations to spice up meetings and attract members to the post. The social calendar should be filled months in advance with activities designed to engage members and enhance operations and programs that assist the first vice commander with membership retention.

Contact other veterans and civic groups in your community to explore opportunities to participate in patriotic or public events that both can mutually celebrate.

FINANCE OFFICER

The finance officer should be honest and have experience in handling financial affairs. The post depends on fiduciary integrity and should acquire expert advice in formulating and administering its financial policy.

The finance officer usually serves as the chair of the finance committee and is in charge of all receiving and disbursing of post funds. The post adjutant, in all matters relating to finance, should carry on the work in close correlation with the finance officer. Post accounting forms assist in meeting the requirements of American Legion posts in maintaining a correct and permanent membership and finance record. No special knowledge of bookkeeping or accounting is required. However, knowledge of simple finances, budgeting, and filing of tax form 990 is suggested. For post operations with other sources of income – a canteen, restaurant, legal gambling, rentals, etc. – it is highly recommended to hire a certified public accountant who can maintain post finances in accordance with local, state and federal laws.

The finance officer will prepare a finance report each month to present at the post's general meeting. The members at a general meeting must approve the finance report, and the adjutant will record it in the minutes. The finance officer must also create and present an annual budget to be ratified by the membership at a post meeting.

Be prompt in remitting national and department per capita fees and cards to department headquarters. It is essential the finance officer maintain accurate financial records for all post operations and activities.

POST SERVICE OFFICER

The value of a post service officer increases with the length of service. As the service officer's reputation grows, so will the organization's value in the veteran community. The job requires a competent, dedicated and organized person, which is not just a requirement but a necessity. The post service officer is responsible for bringing awareness to all veterans and their dependents of their rights and benefits. Knowledge of

American Legion programs such as the National Emergency Fund (NEF) or Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) can benefit your members in need.

The post service officer also must know how to access and utilize the expert services available through The American Legion, state and federal government agencies, and local community agencies. The job requires the timely submission of information to full-time professionals so that veterans and their dependents are adequately represented. The service officer's report should be a standard part of every meeting.

Department service officers are certified and can provide the necessary claims forms. Our extensive resources include department publications, National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation bulletins, memorandums and VA pamphlets. Many departments offer training for post service officers to enhance their knowledge and build contacts. All departments have trained and certified service officers in VA regional offices and hospitals.

With most of today's veteran population composed of those who served during the Vietnam War era and after, the work of the post service officer continues to be vital. These former servicemembers are likely to not be fully versed in veterans benefits and programs. Meanwhile, older veterans need advice on how to integrate possible benefits into their retirement plans. Dependents should be contacted as soon as feasible after a veteran's death.

Every Congress considers legislative matters of importance to veterans and to The American Legion. Working in cooperation with the post legislative committee, the post service officer can aid the national organization's legislative efforts.

CHAPLAIN

The chaplain, while not always a member of the clergy, serves as a leader of moral and intellectual integrity, bringing dignity and respect to the role. The chaplain's close contact with the commander and other post officers, as well as attendance at all post executive committee meetings, is crucial. The chaplain involved in leading many post activities, and when the right person is in this position, the post's value to the community increases significantly.

The *Manual of Ceremonies* (**see page 62**) emphasizes the chaplain's important role in conducting meetings, observing patriotic occasions, conducting funeral services and leading dedication ceremonies. At all these events, the chaplain is the moral leader.The chaplain should work with post members to coordinate Memorial Day honors and the Four Chaplains Day ceremony. This person also officiates or participates in funeral and memorial services for members and veterans who have gone on to Post Everlasting, and provides support and comfort to their families.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

The sergeant-at-arms, a key figure in the post, arranges the meeting hall and assists the post commander and adjutant in preliminary meeting arrangements. This person leads the color detail during presentation and retirement ceremonies, showcasing the post's respect and dignity. The sergeant-at-arms is also the flag etiquette expert, leading in the post color guard, burial detail and other pageantry.

The sergeant-at-arms is the logical person to chair a welcoming committee, which can tremendously influence the post's image, membership and relationship with members. Their influence is crucial in shaping the post's identity and fostering a sense of belonging among Legionnaires. Every Legionnaire wants to feel part of the group, particularly new Legionnaires as they attend their first few meetings. The sergeant-at-arms must ensure new members are welcomed, introduced, and made to feel they are important to the post. The sergeant-at-arms encourages members to attend meetings and advises the commander on who should be acknowledged.

HISTORIAN

The work of post historian is cumulative. It is wise to leave the responsibility to one person if handled well.

There should be close cooperation between the post adjutant and the historian. The former works with records on matters of current interest, the latter on matters of historical interest. The post historian should also keep in touch with the department historian and be prompt in answering inquiries. An annual report should be made to the department historian prior to the department convention.

Copies of printed material regarding the post should be deposited in local and state libraries, as well as in the post and department archives. This will prevent complete loss of records through fire or other catastrophe, as well as provide source material for those looking for information about The American Legion.

The post historian should attend department conventions and make a point of knowing what historians of nearby posts are doing. The department historian can advise post historians on department and national post history contests, historians associations, and materials to assist in maintaining best practices.

JUDGE ADVOCATE

The judge advocate (JA) plays a vital role in advising the post commander, executive board and various committees during post business. The JA has several responsibilities, including maintaining close relationships with local officials to develop strong alliances and addressing any issues that may arise.

Additional duties of the JA may include interpreting matters related to the constitution and by-laws or overseeing parliamentary procedures. The JA may also be responsible for conducting investigations into post incidents, presiding over disciplinary trials for members, officiating post elections and conducting audits in collaboration with the finance committee.

If an American Legion post does not have a licensed attorney as a member for the state in which the post is located and incorporated, the post may wish to consider a parliamentarian instead of a judge advocate as an officer of the post. The post should obtain legal advice from a licensed attorney in the state where the post is located as to what is considered the practice of law.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The executive committee, serving as the post's board of directors, is entrusted with the governance and management of post business operations. The board should meet regularly or as often as the commander deems necessary. In some cases, the committee is further charged with operational tasks such as assisting or approving the hiring of employees and authorizing and approving non-budgeted expenditures. This reiteration of their responsibilities should instill a sense of security and confidence in committee members' decision-making abilities. They also hear reports of post committee chairpersons and provide business oversight regarding post affairs.

Delegating these functions to the executive committee is in no way intended to usurp the membership's powers through regular post meetings. Instead, this allows the post's routine business affairs to be handled outside post meetings. Committee reports, un-budgeted expenditures and items of general interest to members should be handled and ratified during post meetings. The key to effective post meetings is using the executive committee correctly. The post meeting that becomes bogged down in arguments on petty details is interesting only to those engaged in the conflict.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Listed below are examples of a few committees commonly found in most American Legion posts. The post constitution and/or department constitution may require additional committees or may have other names for some committees, so the committees listed are not mandatory or all-encompassing for every post.

New programs are often needed, while old programs should be changed, revitalized or, in some cases, eliminated. Officers should review the post's long-standing programs and activities for relevance to

members and the local community. Determine which committees are necessary. Make a list of potential committee heads and members. Each committee chair needs to know how the work of the committee fits into the overall program of the post, what is expected and when.

Americanism Seeks to inspire love of country and good citizenship through patriotic observances, flag etiquette, civic instruction in schools, the Americanization of immigrants, community service, and youth activities such as Boys State, Oratorical Contest, School Award Medals and American Legion Baseball.

Children & Youth Ensures children of veterans in need of care and protection receive proper and timely services and aid, extends connections to verified organizations and facilities providing services for children and youth, and maintains programs that meet the needs of youth in the local community.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Assists veterans in pursuing claims, understanding their rights and obtaining their benefits. Committee members also visit veterans who are sick, disabled or residing in assisted living facilities, and provide comfort to members' families in illness and bereavement.

National Security Engages in community emergency preparedness, promotes public safety, and supports local and national civilian defense projects.

Public Relations Elevates awareness in the veterans community and the community of American Legion advocacy of veterans issues, national security, Americanism and youth. The American Legion is defined in the public eye by the values it demonstrates. The committee accomplishes this in two ways: placing radio and TV advertisements and public service announcements produced by National Headquarters where they can be seen and heard, and developing relationships with editors and journalists in the post's community so they cover programs supporting the Legion's four pillars. For example, the High School Oratorical Contest is the reporter's news peg, but the Legion's support for a "one hundred percent Americanism" is the story. Why and how veterans strengthen America is the question the post's public relations committee should answer in the media. Public relations is a membership multiplier.

Legislative Promotes The American Legion's official legislative mandates, disseminates legislative updates, organizes and promotes proactive grassroots lobbying activities, and liaisons with elected officials and their staffs. All activities must be in compliance with Section 2, Article II of the Constitution of The American Legion, which forbids the dissemination of partisan principles and the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office. However, voter education is critical to the electoral process, and posts are permitted to host town hall meetings and "meet the candidate" nights, and to allow candidates to address post meetings, district conferences or state conventions. Candidates may participate as long as invitations are extended to all candidates, affording them equal opportunity to participate. The American Legion cannot endorse or oppose any candidate, even if the candidate is a Legionnaire and post member. A post home should be free of any political materials that would appear to be an endorsement of a particular candidate. Every effort must be made to remain nonpartisan. If in doubt, contact the department for clarification before proceeding.

Finance Supervises the receiving, disbursement and accounting of all post funds, prepares annual budget recommendations, and advises the post on all financial policies.

Economic Assists veterans in meeting and overcoming problems such as employment, veterans preference, housing, civil service appeals, and employment of handicapped and older workers.

House Supervises the operation of the post's physical facilities, such as a clubroom, American Legion center, meeting room, etc. Responsibilities include administration, equipment, and the hiring and direction of employees (as authorized by the post executive committee), and general rules applicable to the conduct of members while on the post's premises.

Service Key to every successful post, assisting returning veterans in their transition to civilian life. Other concerns include employment, on-the-job training, and educating veterans on their rights and benefits. The committee should maintain contact with members of the armed forces from the post's community.

OTHER COMMITTEES

Your post may need additional committees, depending on the programs and activities offered, including:

Sons of The American Legion (SAL) Supervises the Sons of The American Legion squadron in its organization, activities and programs.

American Legion Riders (ALR) Supervises the American Legion Riders chapter in its organization, activities and programs.

Graves Registration and Memorials Records, marks and decorates graves of deceased veterans, renders service and comfort to bereaved families, and provides American Legion military funeral honors when requested.

Uniformed Groups Organizes, trains, promotes and supervises uniformed groups, such as a burial detail, color guard, chorus or firing squad.

Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE, formerly known as Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services, or VAVS) Gives comfort and assistance to members and their families during illness or bereavement, and visits veterans who are hospitalized or in assisted-living facilities.

UNIFORMED GROUPS

The American Legion pioneered the modern drum corps through post-level amateur musical drill units, and has been adding to the beauty, excitement and precision of the modern parade since 1921.

Uniformed groups are The American Legion's "display cases," so to speak. At parades, funerals and special events, they advertise the Legion's size, scope and substance to the public at large; they are one of the finest opportunities for post public relations. They afford those involved a sense of accomplishment, and a great deal of satisfaction and enjoyment.

Any post wanting to offer uniformed group activities is encouraged to do so. There are many options from which to choose: an ensemble or band, a color guard or firing squad, a chorus or quartet.

Every year, the national convention puts on color guard and band contests, in the following classes:

Color Guard
Military
Military Open
Open
Advancing and Retiring Colors

Band
Concert Band
Exhibition Concert Band

For details and rules concerning band and color guard competition at the national convention, contact the Convention & Meetings Division at **(317) 630-1313** or go online to **legion.org/convention**.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Someone once described The American Legion as an organization that came to play but stayed to work. That describes Legionnaires, too. Most members join because of real or expected comradeship, fun and social activities. A good post recognizes this, giving as much attention to planning a social event as it does to any other project. A post must determine the type of social activities that will appeal to the greatest number of members, but each activity should be evaluated as to its affect on the community and potentially eligible veterans.

AMERICAN LEGION BUILDINGS

Every American Legion post is different and should reflect the community in which it is located. Not all posts have their own building. Some are located in country clubs; others are in community centers. Some have clubrooms; others are simply meeting halls. Some are newly built; others haven't been renovated or changed since before World War II. Some appeal to a particular type of veteran; others try to appeal to a wide spectrum of service. Some are landscaped and painted, while others are inside high-rise buildings.

ANALYSIS OF POST OPERATIONS

President Abraham Lincoln said, "A man's legs need to be long enough to reach the ground." In the same way, a post's membership needs to be large or small enough to carry on the work of the post.

A post's activities cannot exceed what members can support. Before discussing how big the post should be, consider these questions:

- What is the value of membership, and why would a veteran want to join our post?
- Does the post have a vision for the future? If so, what are the short- and long-term goals?
- What activities could the post reasonably expect to offer?
- How many members can the post handle?
- Is it satisfied with its current membership?
- Does our membership growth make up for member attrition (members who died, transferred out or did not renew)?
- What is the post's member retention rate?
- Is there room for membership growth?
- What kind of post is it and what type of post does it want to be?
- What is the reason for the post's existence in the community?

The responses to these questions for each post will differ. However, the answers to these questions must be true and honest. This transparency is key to indicating whether the post can sustain membership growth and further demonstrate the need to enhance and modernize certain areas like post programs and building improvements.

In any given post, there is a reliable group of members who do most of the work. Nearly all posts build their programs around this manpower pool. Even so, this percentage of active members does not need to hover at the same mark.

STEPS TO A BETTER POST

Many times, new post officers are eager to do a job but lack the background or organization skills to complete their year. The following outline is a proven plan that can help organize a post, useful at all levels:

Step I Verify that post records such as the Articles of Incorporation with your state are up to date, tax form 990 was filed, the 501(c)(19) tax-exemption status is up to date, and the post and executive board insurance policies are in place and up to date. It's also important to obtain the latest communications and updates from national and department headquarters, as this keeps the organization informed and prepared.

Step II Call an early meeting of your newly elected officers. Invite the outgoing commander and adjutant and other influential Legionnaires to meet with you.

A suggested agenda should include:

a. Budget

1. Old, and possibly new, sources of income

2. Most recent profit and loss statement and annual budget

3. Possible methods of financing selected programs with outside funds

b. Assignments and outline of duties of elected officers

c. Discussion of individual programs and committees to determine the following:

1. Qualifications and suggestions for committee chairs and members

2. Established programs

3. Possible new programs (use available handbooks and department material as guides)

4. Program schedule

d. Discussion programs unique to the post

e. Initiate study of the post and community for new programs, conduct post analysis

Step III Activate committees.

a. Select a chairperson and members.

b. Make personal contact with each chair to determine his or her willingness to serve.

c. Arrange a meeting of committees to formulate a program.

d. Instruct chairmen on programs, available materials, post reports and more.

e. Build a timetable for each committee to fit into the overall post calendar.

Step IV Coordinate with the post's Auxiliary unit. Many programs depend on Auxiliary support to be successful.

Step V Conduct a post meeting.

a. The first post meeting tends to set a pattern for the entire year. Use this opportunity to confirm when the general meetings will take place (i.e., first Monday of the month).

b. Work closely with the adjutant, officers and committee heads.

c. Run a formal meeting, following the ritual in the *Manual of Ceremonies*.

d. Post business should be attended to as briefly as possible.

e. Know department and national material in advance and report items of interest to the membership.

f. Committee reports should be brief and to the point.

g. Consider qualified speakers at some or all meetings for briefings on some phase of American Legion programs. Have committee chairs submit a written report to the adjutant before the meeting.

h. Don't neglect the social side.

i. Announce the main business of the next meeting.

j. Have the welcome committee established.

Step VI Conduct a Public Relations Committee meeting.

a. Discuss ways and means.

b. Formulate instruction to post officers and committee chairs on standard procedure for keeping the Public Relations chair and editor of the newspaper or bulletin informed.

Step VII Plan for a more informed membership.

a. Include talks at post meetings.

b. Give everyone a job.

c. Encourage enrollment and completion of the American Legion Basic Training course online.

d. Pass on information.

e. Publish a monthly post newspaper or bulletin.

f. Acquaint active members with veteran benefits.

Step VIII Appoint a coordinating committee for patriotic observances.

a. Work with standing committees, including younger members.

b. Work with the entire community to recognize local active military personnel and all veterans.

c. Include uniformed groups if available.

Step IX Give proper credit.

a. Awards and citations

b. Thank-you notes

c. Recognition at meetings

Step X The voice of the Legionnaire and the post is only heard by active participation in meetings, whether district, department or national.

a. Plan election of delegates as part of the post timetable.

b. Attend district, department and national conventions and conferences.

c. Present sound resolutions of concern to The American Legion.

d. Report back to the post.

Step XI Follow standard procedures and schedule all year round. Plan post meetings three months ahead, and social activities six months ahead.

Step XII It is never too early to evaluate possible post officers for next year.

POST CHARTERS

Before applying for a temporary post charter, it is recommended that you contact your department headquarters for instructions and a sample copy of your department's recommended post constitution and bylaws. Section 7, Article IX, of The American Legion Constitution provides that each department may prescribe the constitution of its posts. Consequently, posts should ascertain whether the department

has adopted a uniform constitution for all posts in that department. If such has been approved by the department, it should be followed.

Application forms for chartering a new American Legion post may be obtained from department headquarters. A temporary charter is issued first, and when the post's founders have demonstrated their ability to maintain a post over a period of no fewer than 90 days and have developed an efficient organization for furthering The American Legion's work and ideals, they are eligible to receive a permanent post charter.

A post name must be adopted before a new post is issued a charter. Many posts choose to adopt the name of an individual as a fitting memorial. If members do not wish to decide on a permanent name at the time the post is organized, it is recommended that a temporary name be adopted (for instance, the name of the town or county). This can be changed by resolution of the post membership when applying for permanent charter.

A copy of the resolution, attested by the post commander and the post adjutant, should be attached to each copy of the application for permanent charter.

When a post with a permanent charter adopts a new name, a new permanent charter bearing the new name may be obtained upon written request through department headquarters. Such requests should be accompanied by duly attested copies of the resolution adopting the new name and by surrender of the old charter.

If a post loses its permanent charter through fire or other damage, a new one may be obtained by a written request to the department headquarters. The request should include an explanation of the loss, signed by the post commander and attested by the post adjutant.

CHARTERS FOR INCORPORATED POSTS

Posts and departments that have incorporated since receiving their original charters need to obtain supplemental charters in their corporate capacity upon application to National Headquarters. This brings the legal incorporated status of the post into conformity with its charter status so the incorporated post may avoid confusion when dealing with the Internal Revenue Service.

FORMATIONAL MEETING

A tentative draft should be made of a post constitution before the formational meeting (**see pages 133-134**). The person best fitted for the purpose among the organizers should call the meeting to order, outline its purposes, and point out the following facts:

- This meeting is called to form a local post of The American Legion.
- The American Legion has posts in most U.S. counties and many countries throughout the world.
- The American Legion includes veterans of all the nation's wars and conflicts since World War II.
- Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who served honorably between December 7, 1941, and the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S. government, and men and women whose service began during one of those periods and remain in service, are eligible to be admitted as post members.
- Fifteen members are commonly required for the formal application for a charter; however, the actual minimum number is set by each department.
- Annual membership dues should be established to cover anticipated administrative expenses. Dues are collected annually and include national, department and, on occasion, district assessments.

The organizer should then call for nominations for a temporary chairman and secretary. Once elected, these officers will take charge of proceedings.

The suggested constitution should be discussed and the approved form adopted. Then the temporary chair should name a committee to consider a name for the post. (No post may be named in honor of a living person.) It is customary, but not necessary, to adopt the name of a local person who died in one of the nation's wars or conflicts. The name of a deceased veteran can also be used.

A list should be compiled of those in attendance, including full name, local address, contact information, branch and conflict, and other information maintained on the national database. This information should be kept for the person elected adjutant.

The committee charged with finding a name for the post should then report and a name be adopted. The temporary chair should then ask for nominations for the following officers:

Post commander	Post finance officer
Post vice commander	Post historian
Post adjutant	Post chaplain
Post service officer	Post sergeant-at-arms

The newly elected officers should then assume their duties, and the new commander should immediately name the standing committees. The membership committee should be instructed to canvas for new members and secure blank applications. All original and new members should complete these as soon as they are available. Standard membership applications can be secured from the department.

The original (white sheet) of the charter application should then be signed by the minimum required by the department constitution. These forms may be secured from department headquarters. It is preferable to have the post officers sign first, in the order named above. When completed, the newly elected adjutant should record the same names and addresses on the remaining two copies. All three copies should then be signed by the post commander, attested by the adjutant, and – together with the per capita payment for all names appearing on the application – be sent to department headquarters.

NEW POSTS

When the department-prescribed minimum number of eligible veterans has decided to form a new post, and they have the go-ahead from the county or district and department officers, set a time and place for a formational meeting. Spread the word via local newspapers, email, websites, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Establishing a new post or reviving a dormant one is not difficult if a group follows certain steps. Determine first that there are sufficient veterans in a particular community or neighborhood to support an active and growing post. Someone of stature from the district or the department must visit the area and assess the community's and veterans' needs. This may take the form of a survey, asking where The American Legion might serve in connection with local schools and school programs, drug abuse and suicide prevention, Scouting, care for disabled or aging veterans, or the community's need for volunteer groups such as the American Legion Auxiliary. Such a survey should certainly take into account the community's recreational and social facilities.

Often, even while such a survey is in progress, the post can go a long way toward recruiting eligible veterans who have the ability and willingness to be the core group around which an American Legion post can be built. The local school superintendent or principal might suggest some names of those who would be interested. Federal employees are often eligible members. The local Scouting executive may also know some veterans who would see a new Legion post as a way to expand the Scouting program. Adults active in Little League or other youth baseball programs are usually interested in ensuring that there is an American Legion Baseball team and can be instrumental in assisting in the search for the necessary number of veterans to start a post. Other organizations, such as Lions or Kiwanis, may need the cooperation of an

American Legion service officer to round out a program. Banks and other businesses are often interested in being represented in such a venture, particularly if the bank or business is headed by a Legionnaire from another post but has many employees living in the desired area. Also, National Headquarters can assist in identifying names and addresses of Legionnaires belonging to department administrative posts or posts in other communities or other states who live within the boundaries where a new post is to be located.

Another way to generate interest is to visit banks, insurance and real-estate offices, school principals, local military recruiting centers, and local government offices. Explain what you're attempting and why you believe an American Legion post will be an asset to the neighborhood or community. Request the names of any veterans who might be interested in getting in on the ground floor of a new American Legion post. Oftentimes, this method will produce one, two or three key people who can take the lead, locally, in forming the post. In a chain reaction of sorts, their friends and acquaintances will likely be a source of additional members.

If the right people are recruited, only a small number are required to ensure the success of a new post. These people will do most of the recruiting among their friends, business associates and acquaintances. In fact, the job of finding the "nucleus" of a new post is simplified by drawing upon friends of Legionnaires in adjacent posts or district officers.

Two important reasons to organize a post are 1) to assist veterans and local families, and 2) to make the community or neighborhood a better place to live. However, these reasons should be spelled out in terms of programs with meaning to area residents.

The work of dedicated Legionnaires who unselfishly devote time and effort to ensuring the success of a new post should not go unrecognized. For this purpose, the National Membership & Post Activities (M&PA) Committee issues "Pioneer Award" citations, which a new post can award at the time it receives a permanent charter to the individuals or posts most instrumental in its success. The department and districts should also give awards to those most active in establishing new posts.

Although the majority of posts are community-oriented, drawing their membership from a cross-section of the local population and carrying on such standard American Legion activities as they are capable of, there is room within the broader American Legion for a variety of specialized posts. Some posts limit their membership to employees of a particular business or industry. There are doctors' posts, nurses' posts, and posts made up entirely of church members or federal employees. Some posts cater to veterans of a particular military outfit or those who were stationed in a particular country. Any area of interest or activity with which a group of veterans identifies itself can provide the reason for an American Legion post as well as the means of organizing it.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURES

When establishing a new American Legion post, a positive attitude is essential. Remember, the post is providing a genuine service to the community and its veterans. The following steps can serve as a guide:

1. Determine the city, town, neighborhood or other identifiable area where veteran needs are unmet by an existing post.
2. Decide a new post will be established to serve the selected area.
3. Communicate with the department headquarters.
4. Find out the minimum number of members required by the department for a post charter.
5. Ask the department for an application for temporary charter, a copy of the Post Adjutant's Manual and membership applications.
6. Select two or three projects the new post can conduct to meet local needs and goals.

7. Contact community stakeholders and get "buy-in" for a new post and suggestions for eligible veterans to become possible leaders and members.
8. Pick a key individual who can serve as the presiding person during organization. Look for leadership, talent, enthusiasm and stature in the community.
9. Ask the department headquarters to assign a number to the post.
10. Open a bank account for the post.
11. Start signing members. (Be familiar with eligibility requirements.)
12. Set a time and place for a formational meeting.
13. Publicize the post's formational meeting.
14. Check to make sure you have signatures of all members on the charter application and that the form is fully completed with necessary copies.
15. Do not overwhelm members and prospective officers with literature or too much information.

INITIATION AND INSTALLATION

This is a first-class social event that should be carefully planned with top department and district officers to properly initiate and install new members and officers.

1. Publicize the organizational meeting.
2. Temporary officers should preside (if it is a revitalization).
3. Key Legionnaires responsible for the post should be present.
4. Initiate new members.
5. Install officers.

DIRECT RENEWAL NOTICES

Beginning in July, National Headquarters mails direct dues renewal notices to current members. The member pays dues directly to the post. Each year, department headquarters mails a post data card to the post asking for the post's dues amount and the address to which the member is to mail dues. As much as possible, posts should use a permanent mailing address – either a post office box or the address of the post home.

Some posts have members who should not receive renewal notices. In these cases, send a letter to department headquarters listing those members' names, addresses and card numbers, signed by a post official and giving the post number, and they will not receive another renewal notice. Only one amount for post dues can be printed for each post. For example, National Headquarters cannot print "$30 until January 1, $35 after January 1."

Posts not participating in the department program may be included in the next billing by filling out a post data card and sending it to department headquarters. Through department participation, additional notices are available. Scheduled renewal mailings are usually at no cost to departments or posts. Delinquent members will receive renewal notices in March; if still delinquent in May, an additional renewal may be sent.

ONLINE RENEWALS

Legionnaires can renew their membership online at **legion.org/renew** or through their **MyLegion.org** member account. Upon renewal, members can print a replacement membership card. Posts using **MyLegion.org** can also see which post members have paid directly to National Headquarters. Otherwise, posts will be notified through their departments so that they can send membership cards.

PAID-UP-FOR-LIFE (PUFL) MEMBERSHIP

Members pay a one-time fee or can utilize a time payment plan option to gain lifetime membership in The American Legion. Rates and forms are available at **MyLegion.org** for either electronic submission or printing for mailing. Members can also purchase a PUFL through their MyLegion member account. There is a quick link to the application at **MyLegion.org** for posts and departments. Members can contact National Headquarters Customer Service at **(833) 253-9995** with any questions.

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORTS (CPR)

Post adjutants are the key to how well The American Legion reports to the American people its actual accomplishments for the past year.

Each post receives a three-part, snap-out Consolidated Post Report (CPR) form as the reporting year comes to a close. The first two copies go to department headquarters, and the third copy is to be retained by the post. All reports from a district's posts should be sent to department headquarters on or before the June 15 deadline, or sooner if the department has set an earlier date.

The CPR form covers participation in the Legion's programs under Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Public Relations, Ceremonial Honors for Veterans, Veteran Employment & Education, Americanism, Children & Youth, and Internal Affairs & Membership. Don't be discouraged if the post doesn't have something to report in every blank on the CPR. Few posts participate in every American Legion program. Many outstanding posts devote their energies and resources to just two or three programs or activities. However, a form submitted with no entries will not be counted as submitted.

Information from CPR forms is frequently shared with members of Congress, giving them a snapshot of the valuable community service provided by American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members.

A CPR can also be submitted online through the administrator's **MyLegion.org** account.

INCLUDE DETAILS IN NARRATIVE

Posts should confine answers to the allotted spaces. If the post wishes to add details, include such information in a descriptive narrative attached to the report. This can cover a post's accomplishments in program areas, including photos. Department Americanism and Children & Youth committees consider the work of a post in determining its qualification for national recognition.

By mid-August, National Headquarters expects to have a completed tabulation of all reports broken down and printed by department. The statistical totals will provide the foundation for The American Legion's annual report to Congress, required by the Legion's federal charter.

Once the post has completed the CPR, it may be surprising how much the post has accomplished. In addition to being the basis for good local news releases, the CPR also helps in the preparation of membership promotional material. And there's always the possibility a post's reports will result in national recognition for one or more of its outstanding programs.

DELINQUENCY, RESIGNATION AND TRANSFER

Members are ineligible to transfer out of their home post when the member has been properly served with administrative charges or is pending a post trial.

American Legion membership is annual, the Legion year being from January 1 to December 31. Dues are payable October 20 in advance. If dues are not paid by January 1 of each calendar year, the member becomes delinquent. If dues have not been paid by February 1, the member is suspended, but nevertheless a member with no privilege except that of reinstatement by post vote and payment of dues. Dues not being paid, such membership continues for five months, to June 30, at which time the member is dropped from the roll by constitutional mandate and membership forfeited.

A member may resign from the post at any time while dues are paid and can thereafter join another post as a new member, in which event the continuity of membership is broken, and upon resignation the post is not required to rebate any part or portion of the member's dues.

A post member in good standing may not move the membership to another post and retain continuous membership without the formality of a transfer. Being a member of more than one post at one time is a violation of the constitution. The right to transfer does not carry the right to be accepted by any post. On transfer there shall be no transfer of funds derived from dues, etc. The accepting post shall recognize that dues have been paid to the post from which the transfer is effected and shall make no charge therefore, excepting only if the dues of the post accepting the member are in excess of those from which the transfer is sought; then the accepting post may collect from the transferring member the excess dues pro-rated from the date of acceptance to the end of the current year. In all instances where a member during a current year transfers from one post to another after payment of the current year's dues, the transferring post shall retain said dues and shall have credit for such membership during the remainder of such year for which said dues were collected, but said transferred member shall be entitled to all of the benefits and assume all of the responsibilities of membership in the post to which transfer is made, after such transfer is affected.

ELIGIBILITY

National policy requires that eligibility inquiries be submitted through the department. There is only one class of membership; honorary memberships are not authorized. In all doubtful cases, consult the judge advocate.

CONSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All who served in the Armed Forces of the United States are eligible only if they have the following constitutional requirements: "Any person shall be eligible for membership in The American Legion who was a member of the Armed Forces of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and December 7, 1941, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States; all dates inclusive ... provided, however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably after any of said periods; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service."

The language "or continued honorably after any of said periods" refers to those remaining in service after the date terminal at which time eligibility may be established by all veterans having honorable active service during such periods, regardless of whether they have been discharged or stay on in the service.

CONSTITUTION REQUIREMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO ALLIED ARMIES

"Any person shall be eligible for membership in The American Legion … who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during any said periods … provided, however, such service shall have

been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably after any of said periods; provided, further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service." The word "citizen" requires full citizenship, and one who had only made application for citizenship and had what is commonly known as "first papers" was not admitted to full citizenship at the time of entry into the service and therefore is not eligible. Only full citizenship prior to service with an allied army entitles one to membership. The attainment of U.S. citizenship subsequent to such service does not fulfill the requirement.

DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE

When a veteran has proper wartime service, with honorable dischargebut received a discharge other than honorable by reason of a subsequent enlistment, if the later enlistment was outside of the ending dates of eligibility set forth in Article IV of the National Constitution of The American Legion, the person in question would be eligible, based on the first period of service which met the constitutional requirement. (The question of his acceptability being a matter of the post under Section 1, Article IV, National By-Laws.)

If the subsequent enlistment was during a period of eligibility set forth in Article IV of the National Constitution of The American Legion and ended on other than an honorable discharge, it would permeate the entire service for that period and would not be eligible for membership based on service for that period.

DISCHARGE DATA (NOVEMBER 1951)

FORMS FOR ARMY, NAVY, MARINE CORPS AND AIR FORCE

DD 256 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) (White) Honorable ..... Eligible*

DD 257 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) (White) General ..... Eligible*

DD 258 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) (White) Undesirable ..... Not Eligible

DD 259 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) (Yellow) Bad Conduct ..... Not Eligible

DD 260 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) (Yellow) Dishonorable ..... Not Eligible

DD 214 Report of Separation from the Armed Forces of the United States

(if released to a civilian status, although still in the reserve) ..... Eligible*

DD 217 Certificate of Service (reserve) ..... Eligible*

DD 156A Honorable Discharge Armed Forces USA (Reserve) (unless active duty) ..... Not Eligible

*Honorable service during periods of eligibility

DISCHARGE DATA (VIETNAM WAR AND LATER PERIODS)

FORMS FOR ARMY, NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AIR FORCE AND COAST GUARD

DD 256 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) or (CG) (White) Honorable ..... Eligible*

DD 257 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) or (CG) (White) Under Honorable Conditions ..... Eligible*

DD 258 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) or (CG) (White) Under Other than Honorable Conditions ..... Not Eligible

DD 259 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) or (CG) (Yellow) Bad Conduct ..... Not Eligible

DD 260 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) or (CG) (Yellow) Dishonorable ..... Not Eligible

DD 217 (AF) Certificate of Service ..... Eligible*

DD 214 (A) or (N) or (MC) or (AF) Report of Transfer of Discharge from the Armed Forces

(if released to a civilian status, although still in the reserves) ..... Eligible*

*Honorable service during periods of eligibility

DIGEST OF ELIGIBILITY OPINIONS

SERVICE	OPINION
Acceptability (See Membership)	Discretionary
Active duty (honorable discharge, constitutional period)	Eligible
Air Force Academy	Eligible
Aliens (honorable active duty)	Eligible
Allies, service with (U.S. citizen at time of entry)	Eligible
Allies, service with (if U.S. citizenship acquired subsequent to service)	Ineligible
American Field Service (civilian)	Ineligible
American Volunteer Group, Chinese Air Forces (civilian)	Ineligible
Army Reserve (unless active duty)	Ineligible
Army Specialist Corps (uniformed civilians, abolished)	Ineligible
Army Transport Service (unless granted veteran status)	Ineligible
Masters and crews, civilian employees	Ineligible
Administrative group comprised of military personnel on active duty for purpose of administering troops being carried thereon	Eligible
Army (honorable active duty)	Eligible
Associate membership (See Membership)	Prohibited
Aviation cadet (active duty)	Eligible
Bad conduct discharge	Ineligible
Canadian Forces, service with (active duty, honorable termination, constitutional period and U.S. citizenship time of entry)	Eligible
Certificate of Service, Army (Form No. 280)	Eligible
Chinese Air Forces, **American Volunteer Group** (civilian status)	Ineligible
Civil Air Patrol (civilian status)	Ineligible
Civilian Technical Corps (civilian status)	Ineligible
Coast Guard (active duty, honorable termination, constitutional period)	Eligible
Coast Guard Academy (cadets)	Eligible
Coast Guard Auxiliary (unless full-time active duty with pay)	Ineligible

SERVICE	OPINION
Coast Guard Beach Patrol (active duty)	Eligible
Coast Guard, Industrial Guards (reserve temporary)	Ineligible
Coast Guard Reserve (unless active duty)	Ineligible
Coast Guard Reserve (temporary, unless full-time active duty with pay)	Ineligible
Coast Guard Reserve, Volunteer Port Security Force	Ineligible
Coast Guard, Women's Reserve (SPARs) (active duty)	Eligible
Conscientious objectors	Ineligible
Constitutional period, service without	Ineligible
Continuous service, subsequent cessation hostilities	Eligible
Disability, discharged (active duty, honorable termination)	Eligible
Discharge, bad conduct	Ineligible
Certificate of Service, Army, disability (if honorable)	Eligible
Dishonorable	Ineligible
Employment, discharged to accept	Eligible
Enlisted reserve (unless active duty)	Ineligible
General	Eligible
Good	Eligible
Honorable (active duty, constitutional period)	Eligible
Inaptitude (honorable conditions)	Eligible
Indifferent	Eligible
Ordinary (under honorable conditions	Eligible
Other than honorable (OTH)	Ineligible
Over age	Eligible
Special Order (under honorable conditions)	Eligible
Transfer to enlisted reserve	Eligible
Undesirable	Ineligible
Unfavorable	Ineligible
Unsuitability (under honorable conditions)	Eligible

SERVICE	OPINION
Enemy nations	Ineligible
Honorary membership	Prohibited
Indifferent discharge	Eligible
Industrial Guards	Ineligible
Length of service (not a prerequisite)	Eligible
Marine Corps	Eligible
Marine Corps Reserve (unless active duty)	Ineligible
Marine Corps, Women's Reserve (active duty)	Eligible
Marine Officers' Training School	Eligible
Maritime Service (non-military)	Ineligible
MEMBERSHIP	
Acceptability	Discretionary
Associate, Honorary, Posthumous	Prohibited
Merchant Marine (unless granted veteran status)	Ineligible
If service between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, with discharge from the Coast Guard, Navy or Army showing honorable service within the delimiting dates	Eligible
Merchant Marine Reserve (USNR) (unless active duty naval service)	Ineligible
Military Academy cadets	Eligible
National Guard (unless active duty)	Ineligible
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps (NOAA Corps)	Ineligible
Naval Academy midshipmen	Eligible
Naval Reserve, U.S. (unless active duty)	Ineligible
Naval Transportation Service (unless granted veteran status)	Ineligible
Navy (active duty)	Eligible
Navy Armed Guard (naval personnel manning defensive ordinance, merchant vessels)	Eligible
Nurses, Army and Navy	Eligible
Officers' Candidate Schools (member of armed forces)	Eligible
Officers' Reserve Corps (unless active duty)	Ineligible
Ordinary discharge (honorable conditions, active duty)	Eligible

SERVICE	OPINION
Over age, discharged for	Eligible
Philippine Scouts	Eligible
Police, Auxiliary Military (civilian status)	Ineligible
Posthumous membership	Prohibited
Public Health Service, U.S. (civilian)	Ineligible
If assigned active duty in armed forces	Eligible
Reserve Corps, enlisted (unless active duty)	Ineligible
Reserve officers (unless active duty)	Ineligible
Seabees (active duty)	Eligible
Separation, honorable (active duty)	Eligible
Service academies (Air Force, Coast Guard, Naval and West Point cadets)	Eligible
Shipyard workers (civilian status)	Ineligible
SPARs, Coast Guard Women's Reserve (active duty)	Eligible
Space Force	Eligible
Special order discharge (under honorable conditions, if active duty)	Eligible
Transfer (discharge for, to enlisted reserve)	Eligible
Undesirable discharge	Ineligible
Unfavorable discharge	Ineligible
Unsuitability discharge (issued under honorable conditions, active duty	Eligible
WAAC (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, civilian status, abolished)	Ineligible
Served on or after May 1942	Eligible
WAC (Women Army Corps, active duty)	Eligible
WASP (Women Air Force Service Pilots, service between Sept. 10, 1942, and Dec. 20, 1944)	Eligible
WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, Naval Reserve, active duty)	Eligible
West Point	Eligible

MERCHANT MARINE

A January 19, 1988, decision of the Secretary of the Air Force granted veteran status, not just veterans benefits, to its members of the Merchant Marine and certain employees of the Army and Navy during the period of December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946. The federal government considers such service to be "active-duty" service. Affected individuals must apply for a discharge or certificate of release. A DD 214 record of service will be issued showing service in the Army, Navy or Coast Guard, depending on the individual's service. In this case, the individuals would be eligible and no action is needed by The American Legion. Often, these DD 214s will also show the Merchant Marine as a component of one of the armed forces (e.g. Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Army Air Corps or Marines). Since The American Legion has never looked beyond active duty in one of the armed forces, the particular component does not affect membership eligibility.

ACTIVE DUTY FOR TRAINING (ACDUTRA)

The situation regarding personnel who enter "active duty for training" – the so-called "six-month enlistees" – is outlined in a letter from Col. A.S. Sadove, Commanding Officer, U.S. Army Reserve Components Personnel Center, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, to National Judge Advocate B.G. Davis, dated November 14, 1966:

"At the present time individuals with no prior service may be enlisted to fill unit vacancies in the United States Reserve. These enlistments are accomplished under the Reserve Enlistment Program announced in 1963 (Public Law 88-110). The enlistment must be for a period of six years. Reservists enlisted under this program are required to perform an initial period of active duty for training with the active Army during which time they receive basic combat training and occupational specialty training… commonly referred to as ACDUTRA. As a minimum, each Reservist must perform at least four months on active duty for training. The maximum period of active duty for training depends upon the time required to fully qualify the Reservist to perform the occupational specialty and may exceed six months. The period during which a Reservist performs active duty for training is creditable as active Federal service in the same manner as for other soldiers …"

The matter of American Legion membership eligibility for the individual who has completed a period of "active duty for training" and been issued a DD 214 to show honorable separation from service revolves around the question of whether the "active duty," as used in Section 1 of Article IV of the National Constitution of The American Legion, included "active duty for training."

Title 10, U.S. Code Annotated Section 101, Subparagraph (22) states, *"'Active duty' means full-time duty in the active military service of the United States. It includes … full-time training duty … In clause (22), the definition of 'active duty' is based on the definition of 'active duty for Federal service' in the source statute, since it is believed to be closer to general usage than in the definition in 50 U.S.CA.901(b)."*

In a general information memorandum dated September 9, 1966, explaining the eligibility changes resulting from the action of the 48th National Convention, The American Legion's national adjutant stated, *"Upon the conclusion of the period of training, the six-month enlistees are normally transferred to the Active Reserve and at that time will normally receive a Form DD 214 (Report of Separation from the Army of the United States). This form, if showing the termination of any period of honorable service on or after August 5, 1964 (now February 28, 1961), may be accepted as evidence of eligibility for membership."*

The weight of evidence indicates that, for purposes of eligibility for membership in The American Legion, the term "active duty," as used in the National Constitution of The American Legion, includes "active duty for training" as performed under Public Law 88-110, and in each case referred to National Judge Advocate B.G. Davis, the September 9, 1966, announcement by the national adjutant has been found valid.

TWO-WEEK NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING

Training periods in the National Guard – usually of two weeks' duration – or other periods of service with the National Guard do not meet eligibility requirements unless the Guard unit was federalized and the individual's separation papers record a period of active duty in the military forces of the United States.

PLACE OF SERVICE NOT A CONSIDERATION

Place of service is not a consideration in the determination of eligibility. For example, although reference is frequently made to the Vietnam veteran, service in Vietnam is not a requirement of membership.

ACTIVE DUTY REQUIRED

Since language used in changing the Legion's charter and national constitution is exactly the same as used in the past, the basic requirement as a condition of eligibility has not changed in any respect since World War I: active duty in the military forces during a defined period of hostilities. This requirement was stated succinctly by National Judge Advocate R.A. Adams in a letter dated March 20, 1925: "... service is the test, subject to the fact that the ex-serviceman was not dishonorably discharged."

This statement was made in connection with a ruling made by the judge advocate at that time that those enrolled in the U.S. military academies during World War I were eligible for American Legion membership without regard to whether any other service was performed, or even whether the individual completed training at the academy. In the specific case in which this ruling was made, the individual had terminated training at the military academy by a letter of resignation. The judge advocate's was supported by a statement made by the Army's judge advocate general three years earlier that "service at the military academy is service in the Army." The Army's judge advocate general had cited as his authority the case of *U.S. v. Morton*, 112 U.S. 1 (1884). Thus, from the birth of The American Legion, the test of eligibility has been whether the individual was actually in military service on active duty during defined periods and whether that service was either terminated honorably or continued after the period of hostilities had ended.

LENGTH OF SERVICE NOT A REQUIREMENT

There is no requirement as to length of service. National Judge Advocate B.G. Davis, in a letter dated October 26, 1966, wrote, *"... there is no limitation placed on the length of the individual's service. If the individual served one day on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces on or after August 5, 1964"* – now February 28, 1961 – *"and has received an Honorable Discharge or separation; or served on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces during any of the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1 of the National Constitution, and is still on active duty, he is eligible for membership in The American Legion."*

A minimum of 90 days' service is necessary to qualify for some veterans benefits, and 181 days for others. However, eligibility for veterans benefits is not a criterion of eligibility for American Legion membership.

NATIONAL GUARD, RESERVE ELIGIBILITY

Veterans of the National Guard and reserves must meet the same eligibility requirements as full-time federal active veterans. To be eligible, they must have served at least one day on federal active duty during any of the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution of The American Legion, and have an honorable discharge or currently be serving in the Guard, reserve or on federal active duty.

The key to determining if a Guardsman or reservist has been on or currently serving on federal active duty is the "authority line" on his or her activation orders. In both cases, Title 10, Subsection 672 or 12301 are orders from the Secretary of Defense and are federal orders.

The authority a governor uses to activate the National Guard as an individual or unit is Title 32 orders, i.e. weekend drills and annual training. These are not federal orders. The reserves have similar reserve orders,

which are Title 10, Subsection 270. This authority code gives the reserve component the authority to activate the reserves for weekend drills and annual training.

Use Military Law Chapter 39 when determining eligibility for National Guardsmen and reservists.

	ELIGIBLE	NON-ELIGIBLE
National Guard	Title 10 Subsection 672 or 12301*	Title 32
Reserves	Title 10 Subsection 672 or 12301*	Title 10 Subsection 270

*This subsection was created to replace 672 following Operation Desert Storm.

Note: A DD 214 will be issued for the time on federal active duty, or a DA-1059 for completion of a school will be issued with a character type of discharge. All reserve components send their members to basic training using Title 10, Subsection 672/12301 orders.

CLEMENCY DISCHARGES

In response to a recommendation submitted by the National Conference of Department Commanders and Adjutants in 1974, National Judge Advocate B.G. Davis issued the following opinion: "After having reviewed the Proclamation of the President of the United States released on September 16, 1974, it is my opinion that a clemency discharge will not satisfy the eligibility criteria for membership in The American Legion. Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution requires that the individual seeking membership in The American Legion must, inter alia, have an honorable discharge or honorable separation from military service or his service must have continued honorably after any of the delimiting periods set forth in the above cited article and section. A clemency discharge does not meet this criteria."

TEMPORARY DUTY

During the Vietnam War, it was the Air Force's practice to call members of the Air National Guard to duty for temporary periods, frequently for no more than 10 days. The call was made with the consent of the individual and of the state's governor. The duty usually involved flying Air Force cargo from the United States to Southeast Asia. Correspondence with the chief of the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., established that duty of the type outlined herein is included in the term "active duty," in the sense that it was full-time duty in the active military service of the United States. Upon the completion of such duty, as evidenced by the issuance of a DD 214 or other evidence of honorable separation, the individual is eligible for membership in The American Legion, provided, of course, that any part of the duty occurred between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975.

U.S. MILITARY ACADEMIES

National Judge Advocate B.G. Davis ruled on March 6, 1978, that cadets who served at the U.S. Military, Naval, Air Force or Coast Guard academies "during any of the delimiting periods set forth under Article IV, Section 1 of the National Constitution and whose service has been honorably terminated … are eligible for membership in The American Legion." Chapter 1, Section 101 (21), Title 38, U.S. Code provides that the term "active duty" means service as a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy or U.S. Coast Guard Academy, or as a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy.

ELIGIBILITY MATTERS NOT COVERED

Post commanders should refer questions of eligibility not covered in this guide to the department adjutant or department judge advocate. Should the department adjutant or department judge advocate be in doubt, an opinion and ruling may be requested from the national judge advocate.

DISCHARGES NOT INFALLIBLE

Discharges are not infallible as a test for membership, for many discharges were erroneously issued, and if clearly so, may be corrected on application to the appropriate department in Washington. If the discharge has been lost, an abstract of service may be procured from the appropriate department.

THE LEGION ACT

On July 30, 2019, President Donald Trump signed a bill declaring that the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941. The American Legion sought the declaration as a way to honor approximately 1,600 U.S. servicemembers who were killed or wounded during previously undeclared periods of war.

The Let Everyone Get Involved In Opportunities for National Service (LEGION) Act opened the door for approximately 6 million veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible.

The American Legion's eligibility criteria immediately changed from seven war eras to two: April 6, 1917, to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941 to a time later determined by the federal government. No other restrictions to American Legion membership changed.

MYLEGION.ORG

Access to **MyLegion.org** is available for all members. As of April 1, 2021, all MyLegion accounts are member accounts only. Adjutants and commanders have access to post and squadron membership information through their MyLegion accounts in an area called My Groups. My Groups is the administrative side of MyLegion and is designated by the office recorded on file at National Headquarters.

To register, a member should use the email address on his or her membership record. Do not use the post or squadron email address, and do not list the same email on multiple records. Registered members can view membership information, print membership cards and manage membership on their My Account page.

Through My Groups, administrative officers can do the following:

MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT

- View member information for post and squadron members.
- Edit member information for post and squadron members. **Post and squadron only.**
- Print a current membership card for members.
- Global search – Using an ID number, search members not in your post.

REPORTS AND LABELS

- Submit a Consolidated Post Report (CPR) electronically. **Post and squadron only.**
- Generate rosters for current, expired and deceased members.
- Identify members whose addresses are flagged "undeliverable."
- View members renewing directly to National Headquarters.
- Monitor all roster updates, including members transferring in and out.
- Create a list of all paid members.
- View members' dues history from 2001 to present.
- Generate renewal letters and labels.

- Find headquarters members near you to help grow the post.
- Create 3x10 mailing labels.
- Project Stay Alive listing – See who has recently moved into your area.

MANUALS AND BROCHURES

- Download the *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies, Post Adjutant's Guide* and other publications essential to day-to-day operations at **legion.org/publications**.
- Promote The American Legion in the community using brochures explaining Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA), Family Support Network (FSN), National Family Week and other programs.
- Take advantage of suggested speeches prepared by National Headquarters for Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Flag Day, Pearl Harbor Day, 9/11 and The American Legion's birthday.
- Online help for officers and members is available in the Resources section at MyLegion.org.

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP PROCESSING

To process membership and transmittals, American Legion post and SAL squadron adjutants and commanders must sign in to **MyLegion.org** and access My Groups.

The following is a brief overview of how to process membership and transmittals:

RENEW MEMBERS

- Click "Process Membership" in the lefthand menu.
- Click "Add/Modify Transmittal" to open the post transmittal window.
- Search the member's name and check the box to the left of the name to renew. If no results are found, the member is already paid or is in a pending batch. Results in this search provide only the names of members eligible for renewal. The member is added to the transmittal batch and summary recalculates. Click "Save."
- Repeat this process for each member to renew. Select "Save" with each member added.
- Review the post transmittal summary, which will also update the amount due. If the dues are not correct in the summary, contact department headquarters.

ADD A NEW MEMBER

- Click "Process Membership" in the lefthand menu.
- Click "Add/Modify Transmittal" to open the post transmittal window.
- Click "Add/Transfer Member" to view add/transfer scenario. A member information window will appear where you can add as much information as possible and save. Saving adds the member to the batch.

TRANSFER A MEMBER

- Click "Process Membership" in the lefthand menu.
- Click "Add/Modify Transmittal" to open the post transmittal window.
- Click "Add/Transfer Member."
- Enter member ID number and last name (required). Click "Continue."
- Verify member information, make any updates and save.

FINALIZE THE TRANSMITTAL

The "Save" button allows the transmittal to be saved and finalized on a later date. Transmittals are to be finalized within 14 days from the date opened **or the batch will be deleted**.

Selecting "Finalize" displays members in the batch for a final review. Click "Finalize" a second time to reach the payment information window. To view members in the transmittal batch at any time, click "List Selected."

Add payment information or select "Saved Bank Account" and "Pay Now." You must check the "Authorization" checkboxes. Then click "Pay Now." A transmittal receipt will appear for you to print or save.

Bank information can be updated when finalizing a batch. On the transmittal payment window, select "Update Account Information."

TRANSMITTAL REVIEW

Review transmittal history from Group profile. Go to "Transmittal History" on the lefthand menu. A table will display a summary of transmittals. Select the transmittal number to view members in the batch.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ONLINE MEMBERSHIP PROCESSING

- Online processing is paid with e-check. Foreign departments have the option of using a U.S. credit card for payment. Posts in the United States are required to use e-check.
- After finalizing the first transmittal, a hold will prevent a second submission until the first transmittal completes. This hold is to ensure payment information is stored correctly and to prevent multiple declines in the event the first transmittal is declined. Finalizing a transmittal prior to the first one's completion will result in an error message.
- Current processing time can take up to seven business days. **MyLegion.org** will update transmittals once approved by the financial institution.
- There is a $10,000 batch limit per transmittal. Higher amounts should be broken down to separate transmittals that meet the limit.
- Transmittals are to be finalized within 14 days. Members pay their dues with the expectation that they will be removed from future renewal notices, and that they will receive their membership cards in a timely manner along with their monthly *American Legion Magazine*. When posts do not transmit in the allotted time frame, they run the risk of upsetting their members and making them not want to belong. Open transmittals not submitted in 14 days will receive a reminder to submit and are deleted if no action is taken. All members in the transmittal will have to be re-entered.
- Finalized batches cannot be changed. Review your transmittal carefully prior to selecting "Pay Now." To remove members from the transmittal, prior to finalizing, uncheck the box next to the name and "Save." To delete the whole transmittal, select "Delete Transmittal."
- Renewing a member for the wrong membership year or any other incorrect transmissions are to be reported to the department. Once a transmittal is in process, it must be completed before any adjustments can be made.
- Declined transmittal will require new bank information to be entered prior to submitting the next batch. This results in a new hold from submitting other batches until it completes.
- Transmittals declined are removed from "Transmittal History." Contact the MyLegion Support Staff at **1-833-253-9995** with questions regarding missing transmittals.
- Online assistance is available in MyLegion.org > Find Help.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION (SAL)

All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, along with male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I or between Dec. 7, 1941, and a date set forth in Article IV, Section I, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, are eligible for SAL membership.

New members should be initiated with full ceremony. A member's first impression is often the most lasting.

Distribute copies of the SAL Squadron Handbook when initiating new candidates. Two copies per squadron – one for the squadron commander, one for the squadron adjutant – are available from the department. Purchase additional copies from Emblem Sales at **(888) 453-4466** or online at **emblem.legion.org**.

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

Membership in the Legion Riders is open to all active members of The American Legion, The Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. Legion Rider members must own and ride motorcycles and maintain active membership within The American Legion Family. For more information, go to **www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs**.

CHARTERING AN AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS CHAPTER

The formation of a new ALR chapter relies first and foremost on keeping a positive attitude. Remember, you will be rendering a service to the post, the community, and it's veterans. These steps serve as a suggested guideline: Charters are provided by the post or department. National does not provide charters for ALR chapters.

1. The post commander (with the approval of the members) should appoint a committee of at least three members to organize a riders chapter within the post.
2. Survey the post membership to ascertain the number of legion family members (Legionnaires, SAL, Auxiliary) eligible for membership in the ALR chapter under resolution 19.
3. The committee should obtain information and guidance from the district or department ALR chairman or your department headquarters.
4. The post should call a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a chapter. Invite a speaker from another chapter, someone who is involved in The American Legion Riders, to discuss the organization and its activities.
5. The organizing committee should ask the post to name a director and or chairman and at least two other interested members to head up the chapter.
6. The committee should develop a program covering at least six months and establish a regular meeting day and time. The chapter should meet in the post home, and all meetings may be conducted by the guidelines in The American Legion officers guide and "Robert's Rules of Order."
7. At the ALR chapter's first meeting, the committee should select a temporary staff of officers that will serve for a three-month period, after which a regular election can be scheduled.
8. The charter should make decisions pertaining to annual membership dues. Consult with your department leadership to determine if there is a department per capita that will have to be included in your chapter dues.
9. An initiation of the members and installation of the chapter officers should be conducted by the post officers or by some American Legion ceremonial group.
10. The post committee and the chapter officers should plan meetings and chapter programs for at least the next year.

11. The post committee should prepare a report for each post-meeting, outlining the accomplishments and goals of the chapter.
12. Encourage chapter members to participate in all post functions, organize rides and fundraisers to support the post and bring awareness.
13. The post should notify the chapter of all upcoming events such as parades, memorial services, and other functions in which they could take part. The chapter should make itself useful in assisting the post as much as possible.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

The mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of veterans, the military, and their families, both at home and abroad. Through various programs, the Auxiliary also educates citizens, mentors youth, and promotes patriotism, citizenship, peace and security.

Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to:

1. Grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion; and,
2. Grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and after December 7, 1941, who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility period and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and
3. Grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the U.S. Armed Forces during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and after December 7, 1941, who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during either eligibility period and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and
4. Those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.*
5. A person who is eligible for American Legion membership is eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary regardless of whether or not they are a member of The American Legion. However, eligibility of the relatives (sister, mother, direct descendants) and/or spouse depends upon her membership in The American Legion.
6. If an applicant is joining on their own service record, the Auxiliary unit to which they are applying for membership will be responsible for verification of eligibility for membership.
7. If an applicant is joining on the basis of her relationship to a member of The American Legion, an officer of the post to which that relative belongs must certify the Legionnaire's membership in that post.
8. If an applicant wishes to join a unit or a post other than the one to which their Legionnaire relative belongs, the unit to which that person is applying for membership should check the eligibility with the post of that relative.
9. Under no circumstances, when eligibility is to be based on relationship to a deceased veteran, should an adjutant certify an application for membership without checking the veteran's discharge papers to determine that the dates of service fall within the Legion's eligibility time periods. The deceased veteran need not have been a Legionnaire for the applicant to qualify for Auxiliary membership.

* A person who is eligible for American Legion membership is eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary regardless of whether or not they are a member of The American Legion. However, eligibility of the relatives (sister, mother, direct descendants) and/or spouse depends upon her membership in The American Legion.

The following documents are acceptable to verify membership eligibility in the American Legion Auxiliary:

- DD 214 discharge papers (not issued until after the Korean War)
- Official military orders
- Official military service citations/awards
- Letters related to the veteran's military service (must be on official government letterhead).
- Certificate from the VA records center in St. Louis
- Data from the back of older discharges

Key elements to review on any documentation, whether discharge papers or military orders, are dates of service and the character of the service (i.e., honorable, or dishonorable). The American Legion does not do research to verify the details behind a DD 214 unless it appears to be falsified. Any falsified DD 214 or military orders should be referred to the FBI. If the discharge is listed as "non-characterized," refer it to the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters executive director, who will ask the counsel general to review the coding listed.

Information on a veteran's service record can be obtained by contacting the National Archives and Records Administration at **1-866-272-6272** or **www.archives.gov/veterans**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELL-BEING FOUNDATION (CWF)

Created in 1954, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (CWF) – now doing business as the American Legion Child Well-being Foundation – contributes to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth by aiding progress in the field of child welfare through dissemination of knowledge about research, studies, surveys, projects, or by supporting programs and activities benefiting the welfare of children and youth.

CWF's primary source of revenue is members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and Eight and Forty. It also receives support from all levels of the organization – local, state and national.

To provide an incentive for giving on an annual basis, CWF has the Cornerstone Gift Club, which offers awards to individuals for cumulative donations made during the current contribution year (June 1-May 31):

	Cumulative donations	**Award**
Century Club	$250	Gold pin with amethyst
Foundation Partner	$500	Gold pin with blue sapphire
President's Circle	$1,000	Gold pin with one diamond
Foundation Ambassadors	$1,500	Gold pin with five diamonds

The "Children First" Gift Club recognizes posts for their cumulative donations:

Caretaker	$750	Bronze plaque
Advocate	$1,000	Silver plaque
Guardian	$1,500	Gold plaque

CONTRIBUTIONS

- All contributions are tax-deductible. Every check or money order ($5 or more) received is acknowledged by official receipt, which should be held for tax purposes.
- All contributions go directly into CWF. All overhead expenses are covered by separate funding.
- All cash contributions are acknowledged regardless of amount. Do not send cash by mail.

- Contributions can be made directly to CWF. They do not have to go through department headquarters.
- Accurate records are kept of states, organizations and individuals sending in contributions. Correspondence is kept on file for one year, but computer records are maintained.
- The department gets credit for the post's support on CWF's national report to Congress.

SUGGESTIONS

- When a post or unit member passes away, suggest contributions be sent to CWF in their memory.
- Make CWF a regular part of annual post activities by conducting a fundraiser.
- Mention CWF at post and unit meetings to make others aware of what it is and how it helps children.
- Start a collection of plaques to display in the post home.

TEMPORARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (TFA)

Since its establishment in 1925, The American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program has awarded cash grants to minor children of current active-duty military personnel and American Legion members. These grants help families in need meet the cost of shelter, food, utilities and health expenses, thereby keeping the child or children in a more stable environment.

Who is eligible for a grant?

The minor child must not be older than 17, or 20 if still enrolled in high school or is physically handicapped. The minor child must be the biological child, stepchild, or in the legal custody of, a qualifying veteran. A qualifying veteran is defined as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces serving on federal orders current under Title 10 of the U.S. Code, inclusive of all components, or any veteran possessing an up-to-date membership in The American Legion. Active-duty applicants can be considered without being a member of The American Legion. A single onetime non-repayable TFA grant of up to $2,500 will be permitted for the minor child(ren) of a qualifying veteran.

No child is considered eligible for TFA until a complete investigation is conducted at the post or department level, a legitimate family need is determined, and all other available assistance resources have been utilized or exhausted. Additionally, the TFA application must originate and be filled out by someone at the local level.

How to apply

Contact the local American Legion post or department (state) headquarters.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND (NEF)

The National Emergency Fund (NEF) program is one of the best examples of veterans helping veterans through The American Legion. Since the NEF was re-established in 1989, the no-strings-attached disaster relief program has provided more than $11 million in direct financial assistance to thousands of Legionnaires and their families recovering from declared natural disasters.

Every post officer should understand how to prepare for disasters so that the post can provide immediate and responsive care to members affected.

NEF ELIGIBILITY

There are no premiums to pay into the NEF program. Rather, grants are made to Legionnaires and posts in need. The only requirements on their behalf are:

- Must be a current-year paid member of The American Legion

- Must be a member in good standing with their post
- Must have been a current member prior to the date of disaster

Only one grant per household can be considered. The NEF does not cover damages to automobiles, outbuildings (such as sheds and barns), and apartments or businesses. Nor are NEF grants to take the place of, or supplement, insurance compensation. They are intended solely to assist members if they lose, or are displaced from, their primary homes due to a declared natural disaster. Subsequently, incidents stemming from accidental fires in the home or faulty structural damages do not fall within the confines of the NEF.

Posts are eligible to receive grants from this fund, if damaged by declared natural disaster. The application must be supported by substantiating documentation that the post will cease to perform programs and activities in the community due to losses sustained.

HOW TO APPLY

NEF grant applications may be obtained from department headquarters or National Headquarters at **(317) 630-1327**, or online at **legion.org/emergency**. The turnaround time for a grant depends on how soon the completed application is received at National Headquarters in Indianapolis.

At the very minimum, the NEF application should include:

- Copies of lodging, food, gas, clothing receipts
- Copies of estimates of damage
- Photographs of the damage
- Description of loss
- List of out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of displacement from primary residence

Failure to include this information could delay the grant. Supporting documentation cannot be returned.

Once the grant application is completed, it must be forwarded to department headquarters, where it is reviewed and damages are assessed. The department commander or adjutant determines the grant amount, which is not to exceed $3,000 for individuals and $10,000 for posts. They sign the application and forward it to National Headquarters, which makes final approval. National Headquarters issues a check to the member or post and forwards it to department headquarters for distribution.

All contributions made to the NEF are distributed directly to the Legionnaire in need. There are no administrative or fulfillment costs. To learn how to donate, visit **legion.org/emergency**.

SERVICE ANIMALS AND POSTS

Post-traumatic stress is the "signature wound" of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and VA estimates that up to 20 percent of U.S. veterans suffer from it. As a result, there has been a dearth of new therapies and treatments to assist veterans from all service eras in coping with PTSD.

In 2010, The American Legion created the TBI/PTSD Committee to explore emerging treatments for mental health conditions and recommend those treatments to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD). Among them is the use of service dogs. Many Legionnaires have said that a trained service dog has had a positive effect on their lives, and emerging research backs up those claims; thus, in 2016, during the 98th National Convention in Cincinnati, The American Legion passed Resolution No. 134, "Service Dogs for Injured Service Personnel and Veterans with Mental Health Conditions."

Veterans with PTSD use service animals to mitigate specific symptoms, such as recurring nightmares or anxiety attacks. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed into law in 1990, is a federal prohibition

on discrimination against disabled individuals. According to the ADA, this includes those who utilize service dogs for a disability.

Most American Legion posts have been exemplary in their adherence to local, state and federal disability laws, but a select few have not. Some local posts have failed to adequately recognize the value of service dogs for PTSD and been in non-compliance regarding public access under the ADA. Care of disabled veterans is one of the Legion's priorities, and through Resolution No. 357 – passed to make American Legion facilities accessible to and usable by disabled veterans and their families – we continue that long tradition of supporting those who need it most.

The law requires the animal to be under the control of the handler at all times by harness, leash or voice control. In complying with the ADA, American Legion posts should understand that service dogs are protected under the ADA and no veteran with one should be denied access to a local post, even if it has a "no pets" policy. The only exception is if the dog is not under control of the veteran and is a direct threat to others.

If an individual enters an American Legion post with a service animal, the person cannot be asked about the nature or extent of disability. Only two questions may be asked:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?

2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

These questions should not be asked if the animal's service tasks are obvious, such as guiding an individual who is blind or has low vision, pulling a wheelchair or providing stability. Furthermore, an "emotional support" or "comfort" animal is not protected by the ADA, but state laws may differ. Post leadership should review all house rules and its constitution and by-laws to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws per service dogs, and Legionnaires should be briefed.

Answers to frequently asked questions about service animals and the ADA are online at **ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.pdf**.

MILITARY EQUIPMENT

Be advised that all requests for surplus military equipment must first go through your department headquarters to verify the legitimacy of the post making the request and then to The American Legion's Washington office (Director, National Security Division, American Legion National Headquarters, 1608 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20006).

Regulations, procedures and prices for obtaining blank ammunition, surplus rifles and other military equipment available for donation are subject to change without notice. Currently, TACOM only issues M-1 Garand rifles. Request for M-16 variant rifles will not be filled. Department adjutants will be notified should this change.

The U.S. Army TACOM website, **tacom.army.mil/ilsc/donations**, is a good source for questions on the military weapons and equipment program. It has a "frequently asked questions" section for reference purposes.

The department and the Washington office may only handle requests from chartered American Legion posts in good standing that have accountability and storage procedures for firearms and munitions which are in accordance with local and state laws. Posts will make requests through their department headquarters. Contact the department headquarters for the Request for Ceremonial Rifle(s) and/or Ammunition form. A copy of the request form is also found in the *Department Adjutant's Administrative Manual*. The post must attach the form to post letterhead stationery with the post commander's or adjutant's signature. This should be sent to department headquarters for submission to the Washington office.

Departments must verify the eligibility of the post and validate current weapons and munitions accountability and storage procedures. Once verification by the department is complete, the request is forwarded to the Washington office, which forwards it to the appropriate agencies for processing. When requests are made to congressional offices or other military departments without proper verification and endorsement, the acquisition process slows. Separate letters must be sent for each type of equipment requested. If both rifles and ammunition are needed, separate requests should be forwarded to the department and then to the Washington office, as two different government agencies – the Joint Munitions Command in Rock Island, Ill., and U.S. Army TACOM (Life Cycle Management Command) in Warren, Mich. – will be handling the items.

These requirements are set forth in new policies and procedures established by the Army. Any correspondence lacking any of these items will be returned to the post and cause a delay in processing. Posts are reminded that equipment donated by the Department of the Army to American Legion posts remains the property of the U.S. Army. Transfer of any equipment obtained through the Ceremonial Rifle and Static Display Program is unauthorized without the written permission of TACOM.

Once TACOM receives the properly endorsed request (forwarded to it by The American Legion's Washington office), processing will begin and an eligibility package will be sent to the post. The package will include the checklist and forms required for completion by the post commander or adjutant. Return the original forms to TACOM. At this time, it takes approximately 90 days for rifles to be shipped after receipt of the eligibility requirements from the post.

Forms in the eligibility package are also explained and found on TACOM's website, **tacom.army.mil/ilsc/donations.**

- **Conditional Deed of Gift –** This deed is a contract between the post and the Army, outlining responsibilities concerning the retention, maintenance and conditions for the rifles. The ranking post official is required to sign the deed, have it notarized and send the original to the Army Donations Program Office. The deed also is proof that the requesting post is authorized to be the custodian for the ceremonial use of the U.S. Army-owned rifles. This document is required prior to the shipment of ceremonial rifles or prior to the issue of blank ammunition.
- **Ceremonial Rifle Inventory Form –** It is a requirement to record the model, manufacturer and serial number of each and every weapon received within 30 days of receipt. This allows for an accurate record and catalog of the U.S. Army rifles in your possession. In the unlikely event of a theft or loss of a weapon, the inventory aids in the accurate reporting of the missing weapon(s) to the local law enforcement agency for investigation. **NOTE: It is a requirement to report the loss of any weapon to the appropriate local authorities and to the Army Donations Program Office within 24 hours of discovery.**

The Ceremonial Rifle Inventory Form is also used as the required reporting document. The inventory confirms the membership of the post has possession of the U.S. Army rifles, they wish to retain them, and they are properly caring for them. If at any time the post wishes to return the rifles, the form may be used for that purpose. **The form should be resubmitted every three years based upon the agreement date of the Conditional Deed of Gift.**

The Army Donations Program Office may require additional documentation to qualify the organization to receive or to retain U.S. Army rifles, which is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Posts receiving surplus equipment, rifles, static display items, etc., can expect periodic inspections to assure accuracy of donor information and compliance with the terms of this Conditional Deed of Gift, the proper storage and handling of such items, etc. **Ceremonial rifle inventories are conducted at the time of issue (submit Conditional Deed of Gift) and then every three years or as requested on a Ceremonial Rifle Inventory Form; static displays are conducted at the time of issue and every year or as requested.**

This program is at no cost to the government, and even though posts have paid for handling, shipping, packaging, crating, etc., the items are on "conditional loan" from the Department of the Army.

Posts being considered for cancellation – The department must verify that the post has no military equipment (static, rifles or munitions) on loan from the government. If so, proper procedures must be followed for return prior to recommendation of the cancellation.

RIFLES

Under the provisions of Public Law 1028, Title 10, U.S. Code (USC) 4683, the Secretary of the Army, under regulations prescribed, may conditionally lend or donate excess M-1 rifles (not more than 15 per organization), slings and cartridge belts to any eligible organization for use by that organization for funeral ceremonies of a member or former member of the U.S. Armed Forces, and for other ceremonial purposes. The American Legion is authorized to handle requests only from chartered American Legion posts in good standing. The Army Donations Program Office in Warren, Mich., is responsible for issuing and the management of rifle distribution for ceremonial use. Title 10, USC 4683 allows conditions to be imposed on the use of the rifles as may be necessary to ensure security, safety and accountability. The Secretary of the Army may impose such other conditions as considered appropriate.

A post with more than 15 ceremonial rifles is required to return to the Army the balance of the rifles to be in compliance with federal law. In such cases, the post will request disposition instructions from the Army Donations Program Office. No further ceremonial rifles or ammunition will be issued until the post is compliant.

A post wishing to obtain rifles for ceremonial use must forward its request through its department headquarters to The American Legion's Washington office. The request form found in the current edition of the *Department Adjutant's Administrative Manual*, requires a physical address (not a P.O. Box number), a telephone number, a contact person, the number of active members, and the post commander's or adjutant's signature. The recipient must be a person, not a place of business. State the number of rifles desired, up to a maximum of 15. Failure to include any requirement will result in the letter of request being returned to the post. The request is endorsed by the department adjutant and The American Legion's Washington office of the National Security Division director, stating that the post is chartered and in good standing and eligible to participate in the ceremonial rifle program. It is forwarded to **U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command, Attn: AMSTA-LCL-IWD, M/S: 419D, 6501 East 11 Mile Road, Warren, MI 48397-5000** for processing. Emails are sent to **usarmy.detroit.tacom.mbx.ilsc-donations@mail.mil** and the Army Donations Program general office telephone line is **(586) 282-9861**.You are required to leave one voicemail message. Your call is returned in the order of receipt within three business days. Email requests cannot be processed, as the signed original document must be forwarded. For more information, go to the Army Donations Program website at **tacom.army.mil/ilsc/donations/index.html?p=rifle**.

Currently, surplus M1 Garand rifles are available for ceremonial use on a conditional basis. These rifles are shipped from the Civilian Marksmanship Program. Normal overnight FedEx Ground delivery is between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. **Ceremonial rifles remain the property of the U.S. government. The rifles cannot be loaned, sold, transferred or given to anyone else without the written approval of the Army Donations Program office.**

If for any reason the post no longer requires the use of the conditionally loaned rifles, submit a written request to **U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command, Attn: AMSTA-LCL-IWD, M/S: 419D, 6501 East 11 Mile Road, Warren, MI 48397-5000**. NEVER return any weapons to TACOM.

In most cases, the Army Donations Program Office will request prepaid shipping labels, which are sent to the requester from the Civilian Marksmanship Program to assist with the return of rifles. After the rifles are returned, provide a copy of the receipt to TACOM for validation of the return. In turn, it will send a letter to absolve the post of responsibility and accountability for the returned rifles.

If rifles are no longer in the possession of the post, it is a requirement to state what happened to them. Either a police and/or fire department report or notarized statement signed by the commander describing the circumstances surrounding their loss and the action(s) taken to recover the rifles is required. Send this information to TACOM for review. After review, a determination is made as to the liability for the missing/lost/stolen rifles. The post will be notified if reimbursement costs are required. An inventory is required every three years from the date of issue or upon request. All care and maintenance of the conditionally loaned rifles is the post's responsibility.

Slings are not provided through the Army Donations Program Office. The post may order them from Amherst Arms or Fulton Armory. Contact Amherst Arms at **(941) 475-2020** or **amherst-depot.com**, or Fulton Armory at **(301) 490-9485** or **fulton-armory.com**. The Army does not endorse any specific commercial source for rifle accoutrements.

STORAGE AND SECURITY OF CEREMONIAL RIFLES

Storage of the ceremonial rifles is at the discretion of the post as long as it complies with local, state and federal regulations. The organization lists the storage location on a completed Certificate of Arms Storage form submitted and on file at TACOM. If there is a change, notify TACOM in writing.

DAMAGED OR UNSERVICEABLE M1 RIFLES

IF M1 GARAND RIFLES ARE NO LONGER FUNCTIONING, THE POST IS REQUIRED TO HAVE A LICENSED GUN DEALER OR AN ARMORER CERTIFY THE SERVICEABILITY OF EACH WEAPON IN QUESTION. THE POST MUST PROVIDE A REPORT BY MODEL, MANUFACTURER AND SERIAL NUMBER DETAILING WHAT IS WRONG WITH EACH RIFLE AND HOW MUCH IT COSTS TO FIX IT WITH RESPECT TO SHOOTING BLANK AMMUNITION. TACOM WILL DETERMINE IF THE COST TO REPAIR EXCEEDS THE COST TO REFURBISH AND SHIP REPLACEMENT RIFLES TO THE POST. IF IT DOES NOT, THE POST IS REQUIRED TO PAY FOR THE REPAIR COSTS.

BLANK AMMUNITION

American Legion posts needing blank ammunition for ceremonial purposes can be assured of the best possible service on requests, if they comply with the following instructions:

10. Direct a "Request for Ceremonial Rifle(s) and Ammunition" form through department headquarters to the Washington office as outlined above.

11. Ammunition is now provided free of charge. Do not send checks or money orders.

12. It is preferred the ammunition be shipped to a residential address (not necessarily the commander or the adjutant's address) and not to the post. Provide a home delivery address (a P.O. box is not acceptable) in your written request along with a phone number for that residence or current cell phone number. Indicate the amount of ammunition you wish to order (one case of 1,240, two cases of 2,480). If you do not specify, you will receive only one case. If you order 8-rd clips, specify the quantity required. Clips are shipped in multiples of 25 (minimum) up to 100. If you order clips and do not specify the quantity, you will receive 25.

13. Currently, the only storage facility handling blank ammunition is in Missouri; orders will be shipped from there. You should receive a letter indicating your order has been processed along with a tentative ship date. Orders are usually received within five working days after shipment. FedEx Ground will not call you to let you know it is on the way to deliver. A signature is required upon delivery. No orders should be left at the door without a signature. If your post also requested 8-rd clips, be advised that the clips ship from a different location than the blank ammunition.

14. Upon receipt of the above information from a post and verification by the department, The American Legion's Washington office will endorse the request, stating it is a chartered post in good standing and

eligible to participate in the program. The request, with endorsement, will be forwarded to Rock Island, Ill., for processing. No further correspondence should be necessary.

Do not make multiple requests (ammunition, rifles and static display equipment) in the same letter, as each request must be sent to a different agency. You can request clips through Rock Island, Ill., with your ammunition request. State this in the request. Clips are also provided free of charge.

ISSUE OF CARTRIDGE CALIBER .30 BLANK AND CLIPS

Only authorized organizations that have been issued weapons through the Ceremonial Rifle Program at U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command in Warren, Mich., are authorized to order and receive blank ammunition and/or clips. If you have privately owned weapons or borrow weapons from another organization, your organization is not eligible to receive blank ammunition and/or clips through this program.

The use of ammunition obtained from sources other than the Joint Munitions Command is prohibited, as it may result in damage to the rifle. More importantly, it could cause harm or serious injury to the user.

NOTE: The Rock Island, Ill., office will respond only to requests for caliber .30 blank ammunition or clips from an officer of the post.

Your request for forms to order blank ammunition and/or clips can be by letter, fax, phone call or email. Request forms must provide a home mailing address, the officer's phone number, the post number, the post's city and state, and an email address (optional). Forms are sent to the officer's residence, not to the post. A new form must be requested each time you need to order blank ammunition and/or clips. It prefers to ship ammunition to a residential address, not to the post.

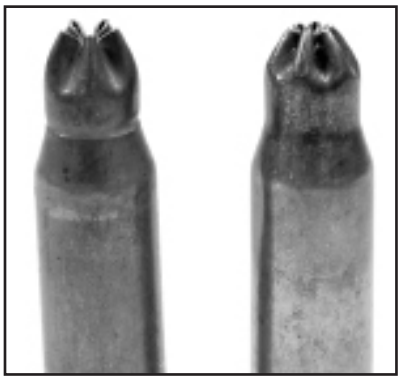
- Ammunition sent is 1,240 rounds (two metal cans in a wooden box).
- Quantity is limited to two boxes (2,480 rounds) of ammunition.

Address your request for issue of AMSJM Form 725-2 to **Commander Joint Munitions Command, Attn: D Folland / MMD, 2695 Rolland Ave., Rock Island, IL 61299-6000**, call **(309) 782-4608** or toll free (**877) 233-2515**, fax **(309) 782-7292**, or email **Dawn.L.Folland.civ@mail.mil**.

Do not send money or checks. Ammunition and clips are provided free of charge (no shipping and handling). All ammunition will be shipped via FedEx Ground from Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in Independence, Mo., per direction from Rock Island Arsenal. Normal delivery is between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. A signature is always required upon delivery.

AMMUNITION SAFETY

IN MAY 2013, TWO M1 GARAND RIFLES BLEW APART DURING THE RENDERING OF FUNERAL HONORS AT THE OHIO WESTERN RESERVE NATIONAL CEMETERY. AS A RESULT, TWO AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERS RECEIVED SERIOUS INJURIES. THIS MISHAP WAS CAUSED BY THE INADVERTENT USE OF .30 CALIBER GRENADE CARTRIDGES INSTEAD OF .30 CALIBER BLANK CARTRIDGES. THE SIGNIFICANT PHYSICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO IS THAT BLANK CARTRIDGES HAVE SIX CRIMPS AND GRENADE CARTRIDGES HAVE FIVE CRIMPS.



grenade cartridge (5 crimps) | blank cartridge (6 crimps)

grenade cartridge (5 crimps) | blank cartridge (6 crimps)

- **Do not fire .30 caliber grenade cartridges in the M1 Garand rifle.**
- **Only .30 caliber blank ammunition received from U.S. Army Joint Munitions Command should be fired.**
- **If an organization's ammunition pedigree is unknown, that ammunition should be inspected for the presence of grenade cartridges.**

Direct questions pertaining to this issue to Robert Weissman, U.S. Army Armament Center (ARDEC), Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., at **(973) 724-3056** or **robert.j.weissman.civ@mail.mil**.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR ACQUISITION OF COMBAT EQUIPMENT FOR DISPLAY AND MONUMENTAL PURPOSES

The Army Donations Program Office may also conditionally provide obsolete or condemned Army combat equipment, such as decommissioned tanks, vehicles and artillery pieces, under the provisions of Public Law 100-456, Title 10 USC 2572. Equipment is for static display only and items are not issued in working condition. This program does not have jeeps or vans for driving. Jeeps are currently no longer available to the public. The Army Donations Program Office website is **tacom.army.mil/ilsc/donations/index.html?p=static**.

All requests for tanks, field artillery pieces, mortars, etc., should be directed to your department headquarters for verification of a post in good standing and then to **Director, National Security Division, The American Legion, 1608 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20006**. This office is only authorized to process requests from American Legion posts approved and verified as posts in good standing by their department. Requests are to be made on post letterhead and list the post name and number, physical address (not a P.O. Box number), telephone number, name of contact person, number of active members in the post, and the signature of the post commander or adjutant.

Conditional donations of obsolete, condemned combat equipment for display are made at no expense to the government. The costs for construction of a display site, limited demilitarization, removal of radiological material (when applicable), release and transportation must be paid by the requesting organization. **For a display site, do not prepare a pad until notified in writing by the donations office.** Once the Washington office receives the request for a piece of equipment, it will be endorsed, stating the post is chartered, in good standing and eligible to participate in the program. The request is forwarded to the Army Donations Program Office at TACOM in Warren, Mich. The Washington office does not have any forms or information as to what is available.

Once TACOM receives a request, it prepares an official packet and sends it to the post. The post then reviews all rules, regulations and requirements, and makes a final decision if the equipment is still desired. Unfortunately, at this time, Army equipment is not readily obtainable for use as a conditional static

donation. It is recommended a post submit its initial eligibility requirements to the donations office to remain in an open status for a period of three years. If an asset does not become available within three years, the request is canceled and your post will have to reapply.

The post is responsible for maintaining and displaying the Army asset in a way that honors and upholds the image of the United States, its military and veterans. The post is required to submit an annual certificate and a photograph of the displayed item on the anniversary date of the conditional issue. In the event your organization no longer has a requirement to display the item, you are required to contact the Army Donations Program Office for turn-in procedures. Posts are not authorized to loan, sell, transfer, move, abandon or give the asset to any other individual or organization.

SECTION 3

Manual of Ceremonies

Adopted by The American Legion in 1921

BASIC RULES AND TRADITIONS

Much of the information provided in the *Manual of Ceremonies* has its roots in long-time tradition and usage. The practices adopted by The American Legion are intended to be performed for official ceremonies by its officers and members. The American Legion has the authority only to dictate official ceremonial procedures within the organization. Outside organizations and individuals may perform variations of these ceremonies at their discretion.

1. The ceremonial services of The American Legion must be conducted with the solemnity befitting the dignity of this organization.
2. No one shall be admitted during opening, initiation or closing ceremonies of a meeting.
3. A member entering the hall after the meeting has begun shall advance to the center of the room, salute the colors and be seated.
4. Any member desiring to be excused from the hall while the meeting is in progress – except during a prayer, the obligation or period of silence – shall advance to the center of the room, salute the colors and leave.
5. All officers are instructed to memorize their parts between the dates of their election and installation. It shall be the duty of each officer to memorize that portion of the ceremony assigned to that particular office, and the printed ceremony should not be read.
6. The national colors and post flag, when in position, should be in position at either side and just in advance of the commander's station. The national colors are on the right of the commander and the post colors on the left when facing the audience, even though the commander is on a platform and the flags are posted on the ground level.
7. Each officer shall be equipped with the official cap and proper official badge of the respective office. Badges and official caps may be purchased in sets by the post or by the individual officer through Emblem Sales.
8. Legionnaires standing in silent tribute in memory of departed individuals during meetings or ceremonies will face the U.S. flag. According to Resolution No. 33, passed by the National Executive Committee in May 1971, The American Legion "shall, at functions within Legion buildings and at all levels, cease all activities whatsoever" for a period of 60 seconds as a tribute to individuals who have passed on and in honor of those now serving. The minute of silence shall be preceded by an appropriate announcement and message, if desired.
9. This *Manual of Ceremonies* is designed with the idea of flexibility and may be adapted to conform to requirements covering all divisions of The American Legion. Therefore, whenever necessary, the words "post," "county," "area," "district," "division," "department" or "national" may be inserted to fit a specific occasion.
10. Per Resolution No. 8, passed by the National Executive Committee in October 2016, every department, district/county and post is strongly urged to conduct official meetings in English – not only because it is The American Legion's position that English should be the official language of the United States of America, but also to ensure that every Legionnaire and veteran is afforded the opportunity to understand, participate in and be informed about every subject that arises in an American Legion meeting or is part of any official correspondence or published media.

WEARING THE AMERICAN LEGION CAP, UNIFORM AND REGALIA

1. The American Legion cap is the only required item for the official Legion uniform. The cap may be worn both indoor and outdoor, but never while eating during an official American legion or civic meal or event. Departments may make additional requirements to the uniform for members in attendance for any official occasion. For example, an official American Legion cap, dark blue or black civilian dress coat, dark trousers, white shirt with four-in-hand tie or dress blouse, black shoes and socks are typical uniform standards adopted for certain occasions at many levels of the organization. The American Legion cap, uniform, or regalia should be worn by its members only when in attendance at official Legion meetings or ceremonies, as official guests at patriotic or other civil functions, or when officially representing The American Legion on public occasions.
2. Legionnaires not in formation will uncover upon entering the place of worship, remain uncovered during the entire service and re-cover after leaving the place of worship. Only members who are attending as the guard of honor, color guard and commander of the same while in marching order or standing guard are permitted to continue wear the Legion cap.
3. Posts marching in formation into a place of worship should uncover at the door, hold the cap with the right hand over the heart until arriving in the pews and commanded to take seats, and remain uncovered during the entire service. At the close of the service, upon command, the post shall rise, hold the cap with right hand over the hearts, march out of the place of worship, and recover after marching through the door. Note: The cap should be held over the heart when approaching the casket and is not at any time worn in a place of worship except by the guard of honor, color guard or commander of same while in marching order or standing guard.
4. At the graveside, the cap should be held in the right hand over the heart during the entire service. In cold and inclement weather, the cap should not be removed.
5. In meetings, the cap should be worn except during the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer and while standing in silent reverence in memory of departed individuals, when it should be held with the right hand over the heart.
6. A Legionnaire wearing a cap should behave in proper accordance as to salutes, etc., the same as if wearing a military uniform. If not wearing a cap, observe ordinary rules of etiquette for civilian dress.
7. Female Legionnaires should wear their caps in the manner prescribed for women in the armed forces. This is suitable for most situations, but taste and common sense should prevail. By American Legion tradition, a female Legionnaire may leave her cap on during the Pledge of Allegiance, the national anthem, prayer and meals.
8. Legionnaires wishing to attach decorations and/or other official insignia to their caps are advised of a National Executive Committee resolution on the subject, excerpted below.

OFFICIAL AMERICAN LEGION CAPS

The following regulations standardize the use of lettering, insignia, etc., on the official American Legion cap, as based on Resolution No. 58, adopted by the National Executive Committee, April 30-May 1, 1964.

Post caps (members and officers) – All blue, piped in gold and lettered in gold with optional basic lettering (Style 1 or Style 2), and additional lettering and restrictions as indicated below:

(a) Style 1 – Post numerals at right front between piping and front crease. Department name in full on left side beneath emblem. Lettering on emblem side to be in straight line. Example: "20" (at right front) – "Maryland" (on left side beneath emblem).

(b) Style 2 – Post numerals at right front between piping and front crease. Town name in full and department abbreviated on left side beneath emblem. Lettering on emblem side to be in straight line. Example: "20" (at right front) – "Dallas, TX" (on left side beneath emblem).

(c) Style 2 – Shall not be used when the post town is not physically located within the recognized geographic and/or postal boundaries of the department of which the post is a member. Example: Stuttgart, Germany, a part of the Department of France. Such a post may place its location and country on the right side of the cap, if desired. Example: "8" (at right front) – "France" (on left side beneath emblem) – if desired, "Munich, Germany" (on right side).

(d) Where additional lettering is desired, it must be on the right side of the cap. Lettering restricted to name of post, such as "J.S. Jones," or officer title, such as "Commander" or "Past Adjutant." Where present or past officer cap insignia or badges are used in place of embroidered titles, these must be on right side of cap.

(e) Consecutive membership insignia, membership stars and/or decorations (authorized American Legion or military services) must be attached to the right side of cap. Fraternal or civil organization insignia cannot be used on American Legion caps.

(f) Names or nicknames of individual members cannot be used on caps.

(g) An individual member placing an order directly with Emblem Sales must provide the member ID number.

RESTRICTIONS

(a) The left side (emblem side) of any American Legion cap cannot contain other than the official American Legion emblem and lettering as set forth previously in this resolution for post, county, district, department or national caps.

(b) No member of any organization, such as drum and bugle corps, bands and so forth, sponsored by any post or intermediate organizations between the department and post levels, or by any department, shall wear the official caps having the color, or combination of colors, authorized for the sole use of county, district, department or national officers, when the members of uniformed groups are not appearing in the full uniform of their group.

OFFICIAL BADGES

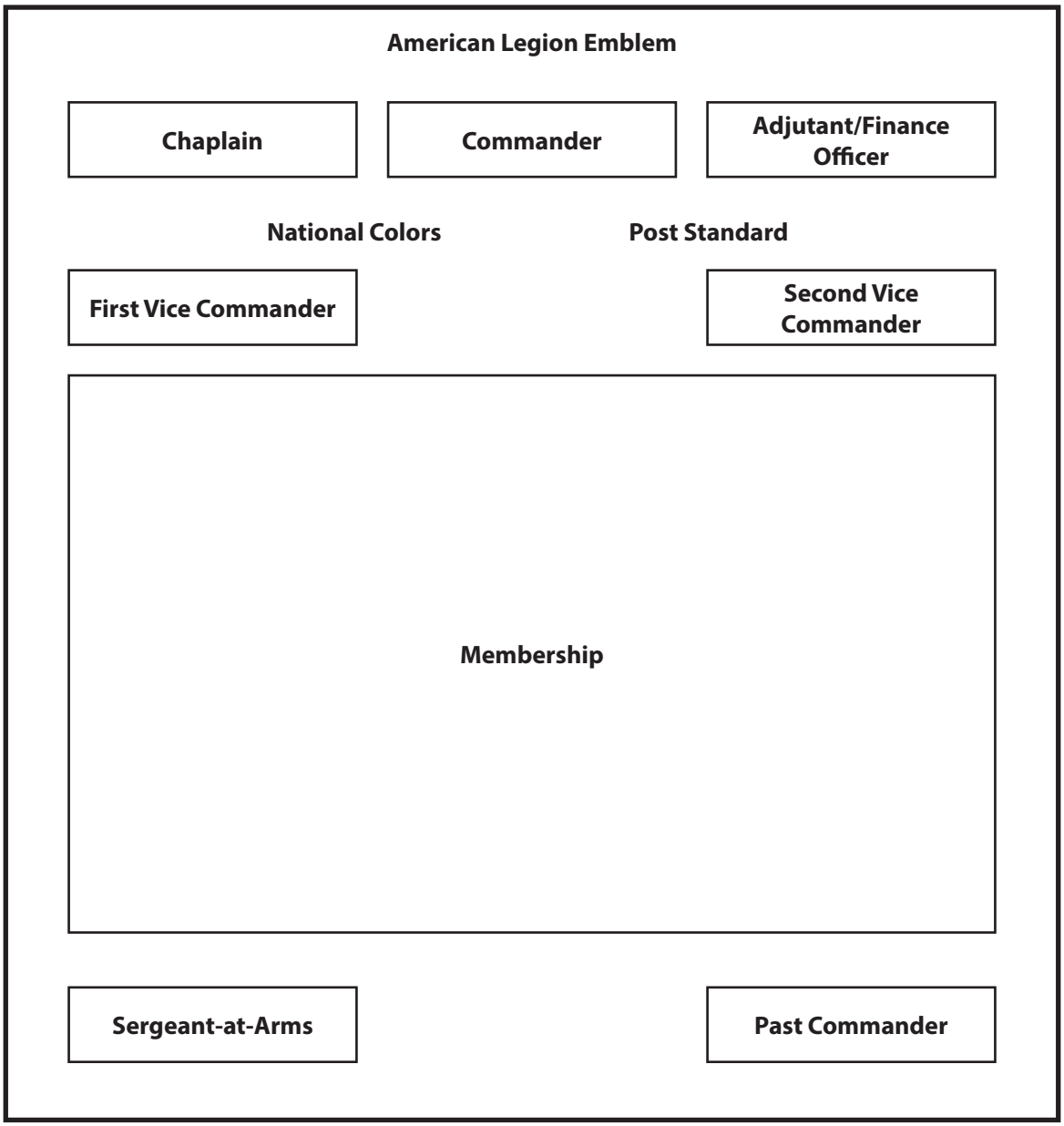
Campaign ribbons, medals and official American Legion badges shall be worn three inches below the point of the shoulder and above the left breast pocket, centered. However, medals and ribbons are not to be worn together. Badges of other fraternal organizations are not to be worn on uniforms except when attending functions of such organizations. No other badges or insignia are to be worn.

Official badges consist of the Legion emblem suspended by an American Legion ribbon from a bar naming the office held: commander, past commander, vice commander, chaplain, adjutant, finance officer, sergeant-at-arms, judge advocate, service officer, athletic officer, historian and executive committee. The metal ornaments for the ribbons should be pinback so they can be passed from officer to officer at installation.

MEETING SPACES

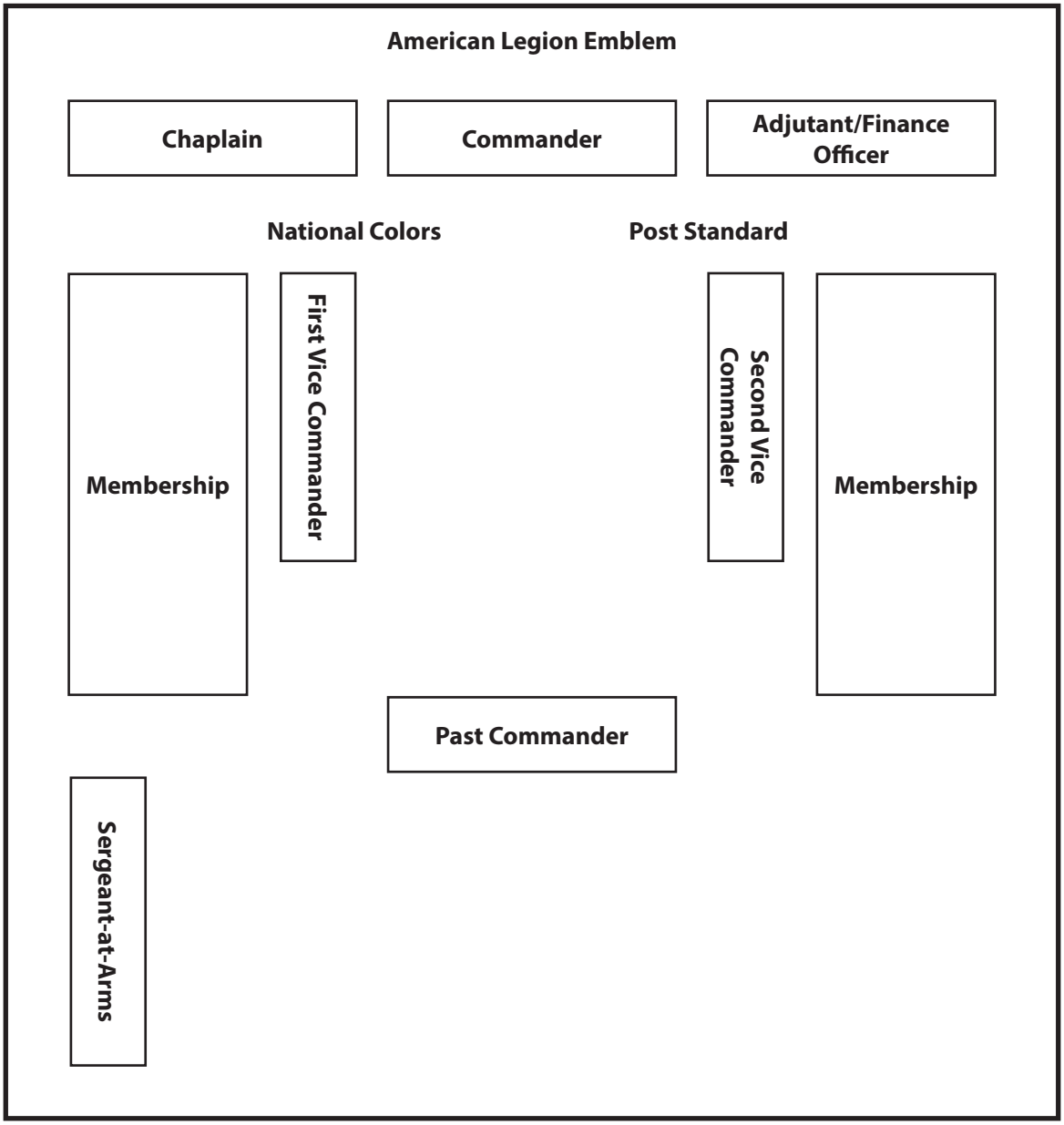
PLAN OF POST MEETING ROOM

This arrangement of a post meeting room is practical for the conduct of regular post meetings, permitting the post a great deal of flexibility in arrangement to its particular needs and/or physical limitations.



PLAN OF POST MEETING ROOM FOR SPECIAL CEREMONIES

For initiation of new members or installation of post officers, it is suggested that the post meeting room be arranged as shown above. The American Legion emblem should be in colors and about 20 inches in diameter. If made of glass, it should be illuminated from within, or by a light set above it if made of wood, cardboard or metal. The emblem should be illuminated at all times during all meetings. Emblems may be purchased through Emblem Sales.



CEREMONIAL TEAMS

HOW TO ORGANIZE A CEREMONIAL TEAM

STEP 1 The post commander appoints a captain to organize a team. It will be the captain's duty to recruit, train and assume complete responsibility for organizing and training the team. Discretion should be used in selecting team members. They should make the *Manual of Ceremonies* their American Legion bible. Much of the team's success depends upon selection of a competent captain and sergeant-at-arms. The team will look to these officers for leadership. The team captain and members should be of commanding appearance and personality, and able to impress upon candidates and audience the importance and solemnity of the ceremony.

STEP 2 Permanent parts should be assigned and members instructed to memorize these parts. Six members will be required for the initiation team. In calling a tryout or audition meeting, the best qualified should be selected. Each candidate should read part of the manual to denote clarity of voice, enunciation, expression and meaning. Additional candidates should be assigned roles as substitutes or stand-ins for regular members.

STEP 3 Train the team through practice. Teams should practice an entire ceremony at each meeting, including marching into the hall, military movements on the floor, presentation and introduction of the team, the posting of members to their respective stations, and proper handling of initiation candidates for initiation.

STEP 4 The team's first appearance should be on home grounds. Actual initiation of new members will usually give the new team confidence to present their work at other local posts.

COLOR GUARD PROCEDURE

ADVANCING COLORS

A color guard of at least four forms at the rear of the meeting room in a rank or file, whichever best suit the occasion, facing the commander's station.

In forming a rank, the national colors are to the right of the post colors and the two guards are on the respective flanks. In forming a file, the national colors are second in file, preceded by the rifle guard and followed respectively by the post colors and rifle guard.

To properly form the guard, the following sequence of commands may be used: "Fall in – dress right dress – ready front" – "right (or left) shoulder arms" – color bearers should assume the position of carry or any other suitable position at this command – "forward march." These commands put the guard in a forward motion.

Upon arriving at a position from two to 12 feet in front of the commander's station, the following commands should be issued: "Guard halt – post colors." The bearer of the nation's colors steps in the direction of the flag receptacle to the right of the commander's station, halting and facing front upon arriving in front of same. The bearer of the post's colors steps in the direction of the flag receptacle to the left of the commander's station. The rifle guards assume the position of "port arms," which is a position of readiness. The next command should be "place colors." Colors are placed by stepping forward with one foot and placing the colors in their receptacles, making sure the top ornament on each respective flag is facing the assemblage. The color bearers then return to the position of attention. The next command should be "present arms." Rifle guards should render the prescribed salute with their pieces, and color bearers should render a right-hand salute. (The post's color bearer should either face the national colors or turn his or her head toward the U.S. flag while saluting.)

The next command sequence should be "right shoulder arms" (color bearers recovering from hand salute on same) and "assemble march" (color bearers may face the center and step off respectively in the direction

from which they came and assume their positions in the formation facing the rear of the meeting room). Rifle guards may execute an about-face on command and be prepared to move out on the next command with guard intact.

The next command should be "forward march," and upon arriving at the starting point, the guard should be halted with the command of "guard halt." Then the guard may be commanded to "fall out."

RETRIEVING COLORS

Retrieving the colors may be executed in nearly the same manner except substituting the command "retrieve colors" for "post colors," and giving the command "present arms" upon the color bearers' arrival in front of their respective colors (color bearers will salute at that time).

The next commands are "right shoulder arms" (color bearers assume the position of attention) and "take colors" (color bearers put one foot forward to take the colors and assume the position of attention, after securing the same). The next command should be "assemble, march" (color bearers execute the same march as in returning from posting). Rifle guards will execute an about-face after the colors have arrived at their respective positions. The guard may be retired in the same manner as in posting, with the exception of the last command, "Dismissed." The above commands may be used in either rank or file formation.

Consider adding more color and ceremony to the posting and retiring of the colors by including a bugler. In posting, "To the Colors" may be sounded immediately after the color guard commander orders "present arms." In retrieving, "Retreat" may be sounded immediately after the command "present arms."

REGULAR MEETING CEREMONIES

OPENING CEREMONY

All officers should be in uniform, each wearing an official Legion cap and the official badge of office. The commander shall announce the meeting is about to open. Officers shall take their stations. The commander shall seat those present with one rap of the gavel, and the sergeant-at-arms shall close the doors of the meeting hall. The commander shall then give three raps of the gavel, and all who are present shall stand at attention.

Post commander: "The color bearers will advance the colors."

As the color bearers start to advance, the commander gives the command to salute.

Post commander: "Hand salute."

If a bugler is available, sound "To the Colors." At its conclusion, the commander gives the command, "Two."

If no bugler is present, the command "Two" is given immediately after the colors have been posted.

Post commander: "The chaplain will offer prayer."

Post commander: "All members/guests in attendance shall remain standing with their cap removed and placed over the heart from the opening prayer, through the POW/MIA ceremony, and concluding with the Pledge of Allegiance."

In place of the following prayer, the chaplain may deliver one appropriate for the setting.

Chaplain: "Almighty God, Father of all mankind and Judge over nations, we pray Thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. Send Thy peace to our nation and to all nations. Hasten the fulfillment of Thy promise of peace that shall have no end.

"We pray for those who serve the people and guard the public welfare, that by Thy blessing they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We pray that by Thy help they may observe the strictest justice, keep alight the fires of freedom, strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy, and preserve untarnished our loyalty to our country and to Thee. Finally, O God of mercy, we ask Thy blessing and comfort for those who are suffering mental and physical disability. Cheer them and bring them the blessings of health and happiness. Amen."

POW/MIA EMPTY CHAIR

This ceremony is a suggested outline that can be followed when an American Legion organization wants to call attention to Americans still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts. Resolution No. 288, adopted at the Legion's 67th National Convention, calls for designating an empty chair at all official American Legion meetings as a continual physical symbol of POW/MIAs and the cause for which we stand, namely their return or full accounting.

Post commander: "A POW/MIA empty chair is placed at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of many American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. This is a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves to this vital endeavor!"

Post commander: "Place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair."

The first and second vice commanders, or other designated individuals, approach the empty chair carrying a folded POW/MIA flag. Upon reaching the chair, they reverently unfold the flag and drape it over the chair with the crest facing the membership. After the meeting is concluded, the POW/MIA flag should be refolded and stored for future use.

The commander (or appropriate official) leads the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Legionnaires will remove their caps. The commander may also direct the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Regular meeting opening resumes after the Pledge of Allegiance.

Post commander: "Everyone will re-cover."

The commander and membership recite the preamble of the Constitution of The American Legion slowly and in unison, as follows:

"For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

"To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

"To maintain law and order;

"To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

"To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;

"To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

"To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

"To make right the master of might;

"To promote peace and good will on earth;

"To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

"To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

The commander seats members with one rap of the gavel.

Post commander: "I now declare _____ Post No. _____, Department of _____, regularly convened."

The order of business for post meetings shall be:

a. Roll call to determine if quorum is present

b. Reading of minutes of previous meeting

c. Introduction of guests and prospective and new members

d. Committee reports

e. Balloting on applications

f. Sick call, relief and employment

g. Post service officer's report

h. Unfinished business

i. Initiation of candidates

j. New business and correspondence

k. Memorial to a departed post member

l. The good of The American Legion

The membership shall be permitted to make suggestions of any kind, character or description, save religion or partisan politics.

CLOSING CEREMONY

Post commander: "Is there any further business to come before the meeting? If not, the chaplain will lead us in memorial service."

The commander gives three raps of the gavel, and the membership rises, uncovers and stands in silence.

Chaplain: "Our Heavenly Father, we deem this a fitting time to pay our respects to our departed comrades. As we stand with bowed heads in reverence to them, let us remember the good deeds they accomplished. Let us revere them as good soldiers who fought the good fight in a just cause. Let us silently pray for peace, the peace that passes all understanding. And let us in mind and soul consecrate our hearts and lives to the real America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, the America worth fighting for. As we stand in silence to our departed comrades, may we sincerely say, 'May their souls rest in peace.' Let us also remember the POWs and the MIAs still unaccounted for from the wars and conflicts. Amen."

Post commander: "Cover."

Sounding taps will add greatly to the solemnity of the ritual. The first stanza of "America," "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" or another patriotic selection may be sung by the audience.

Post commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, recover the POW/MIA flag."

The sergeant-at-arms steps forward, picks up the POW-MIA flag off the chair, folds the flag, steps back and places the POW-MIA flag on the table in front of the commander.

"Till we meet again let us remember our obligation to our country can be fulfilled only by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of The American Legion and its members. Let us be ever watchful of the honor of our country, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom and Democracy. The color bearers will retire the flag of our country."

As the color bearers retrieve the colors, the commander shall give the command to salute.

Post commander: "Hand salute."

As the color bearers reach the rear of the meeting hall, the commander says, "Two."

Post commander: "I now declare this meeting of _____ Post No._____, The American Legion, Department of _____ adjourned."

The commander gives one rap of the gavel.

SPECIAL MEETING CEREMONIES

INITIATION OF NEW MEMBERS - REGULAR FORM

Initiation of new members is an important post function. They need to be shown, officially and formally, that they're indeed a part of The American Legion. They deserve the courtesy of being introduced to the post that has accepted their membership applications and dues payments.

Whether conducted by the post officers or an established ritual team, an initiation ceremony should happen at least once a year. Each officer should learn his or her part of the ceremony to be able to deliver it without reference to the printed text. Each initiation officer should wear the regulation American Legion cap and badge of office **(see pages 63-64**).

The sergeant-at-arms is responsible for preparing the hall or meeting room for the initiation, and should see to it that the following items, which are presented to new members during the ceremony, are on hand in sufficient quantity: small U.S. flags, American Legion lapel pins and flag etiquette booklets. All are available through Emblem Sales online at **emblem.legion.org**. In addition, the sergeant-at-arms, depending on the format your post chooses for this ceremony, may set up the following items: poppies (real or imitation) in a neat arrangement in a vase at either the station of the second vice commander or near the podium identifying the station of the commander; a gavel bell at the station of the past commander or near the podium of the commander; and a miniature stand with the U.S. flag and the Legion colors at the station of the first vice commander or near the podium.

This ceremony is designed to conform to the floor plan of a post meeting room as illustrated on page 39. New members are escorted by the sergeant-at-arms to the various officers' stations for instruction. However, the ceremony may be altered to conform to the meeting room layout as illustrated, with new members standing in the area between the stations of the first and second vice commanders. The ritual may be modified so that initiation officers deliver their respective instructions to the new members from the podium.

The new members for initiation will assemble at the back of the meeting room or, preferably, in a nearby room immediately prior to the ceremony.

The commander shall call the meeting to order with one rap of the gavel.

Post commander: "We shall now proceed to the initiation of new members. In order that we may impress upon these new members the serious import and sacred obligations of American Legion membership, all present will conduct themselves in a manner befitting such ceremony. The sergeant-at-arms will present those ready for initiation."

The sergeant-at-arms stands at a designated station and salutes the U.S. flag.

Sergeant-at-arms: "Commander, there are (number) veterans who have been accepted for membership in The American Legion and are awaiting the obligation."

Post commander: "As these new members have been accepted for membership, we shall proceed with the initiation. Sergeant-at-arms, escort the new members into the hall and place them properly before the flag."

The sergeant-at-arms escorts the new members to the appropriate location.

Sergeant-at-arms: "Commander, I present these new members for initiation into The American Legion."

The commander gives three raps of the gavel.

Post commander: "The chaplain will offer prayer."

The chaplain steps to the right of the U.S. flag and faces the new members.

Chaplain: "Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, grant that we may approach this ceremony with clean hearts. Keep us ever mindful of our obligation to those who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country and her noble purpose. We humbly pray that your love may find its way into all hearts and souls that they shall never again seek occasion of conflict, but live in peace and harmony, laboring for the broader benefits of humankind. You have blessed us with the opportunity to serve our country in her hour of need. We pray that you would grant us continued opportunities to serve in time of peace as we served in time of war. Bless The American Legion and those here who await its obligation, that together we may advance the sacred cause of justice, freedom and democracy – that together we may serve you and our country in undivided loyalty. Amen."

The chaplain returns to the designated station. Members are seated by one rap of the gavel, and the post commander addresses the new members.

Post commander: "The American Legion cherishes four great principles: justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. Its pledge is service to veterans, especially the disabled, the distressed, and their widows and orphans. The cause of service to community, state and nation is jealously guarded, and the opportunity to serve is offered to all members. Before you are asked to assume the responsibility of membership in The American Legion by accepting its obligations, you will hear an explanation of the principles and symbols of our organization.

"Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the new members to the second vice commander for instruction in justice."

The sergeant-at-arms escorts the new members to the designated position, facing the second vice commander's station. The second vice commander rises.

Second vice commander: "Justice makes no distinction of persons. It favors neither high nor low, neither rich nor poor, neither the classes nor the masses. Justice is the guiding star of life. It transcends all boundaries of race and creed. Justice for our sick and disabled veterans has always been, and must forever be, the first concern of The American Legion. The rehabilitation of those men and women who valiantly offered their all in response to their country's call, the relief of those who have suffered by that sacrifice, is our hallowed duty. Legionnaires must be ever vigilant that none shall feel the injustice of work undone. The American Legion is ever mindful of its duty to the nation, and the nation's duty to those who answered its call in time of war.

"This display of poppies, the official flower of The American Legion, serves as a memorial to those who gave their lives so that justice might prevail. Remember their sacrifice! May your actions forever bring credit upon The American Legion, an organization which is a living memorial to the dead heroes who fought that justice, the divine right of man, might ever endure.

"Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the new members to the past commander for instruction in freedom."

The sergeant-at-arms escorts the new members to the designated position, facing the past commander's station. The past commander rises.

Past commander: "Freedom is an ideal of surpassing strength; it is the power of self-determination. For freedom, Americans throughout the years willingly have fought and died. In the War of the Revolution, freedom was won for the people of the United States. In the wars of the 20th century, the torch of freedom led and inspired the American forces through the darkness of conflict.

"The American Legion is dedicated to the concept of freedom from injustice to the children and youth of our nation. No nation can long endure if it fails to care for its future citizens. The American Legion has achieved recognition as a national leader on behalf of the nation's children and youth that they may know that freedom from want, ignorance, and tyranny are God-given rights to be preserved at whatever the cost. The American Legion staunchly defends the principle of equal opportunity for all in a country where all may enjoy the blessings of freedom.

"This bell typifies the famous Liberty Bell, which in bold and clarion tones rang out the news of freedom and the birth of a new nation. It is here to remind you that America will remain the land of the free only as long as America is the home of the brave. I give you the American flag, the emblem of freedom, and a flag etiquette booklet."

The past commander hands each new member a small U.S. flag and flag etiquette booklet.

Post commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the new members to the first vice commander for instruction in democracy and its meaning to America."

The sergeant-at-arms escorts the new members to the designated position, facing the first vice commander's station. The first vice commander rises.

First vice commander: "Democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Democracy is American in principle and universal in appeal. It offers a voice in government to each citizen. Of its benefits, each citizen may share.

"Democracy finds expression with The American Legion. Within our meeting halls, distinction of rank is unknown. All Legionnaires are equal in a common service. Each Legionnaire is permitted a free voice, but not a voice so free as to transcend the limits of liberty.

"Democracy can exist only where all do their share, where each citizen knows and accepts the responsibility of service to community, state and nation. Legionnaires must encourage the exercise of franchise among our citizens as a means of preserving and perpetuating our precious heritage. Yes, democracy, to The American Legion, is real. It carries a responsibility which each Legionnaire should accept.

Here the first vice commander refers to either a miniature stand of colors consisting of the U.S. flag and American Legion colors at the designated station or the post's set of colors at the front of the room, depending on the initiation format of used.

First vice commander: "These flags symbolize America, the home of democracy and The American Legion. The red stripes of our country's flag represent the valor, the zeal and the passion of those who defended the noble cause of individual dignity; the white stripes signify hope, purity and integrity. The stars of white on a field of blue proclaim that the heights of pure democracy reach to the very stars of the heavens. This

blue and gold emblem against a background of blue reminds us constantly of our golden opportunities as Legionnaires to promote and protect the principle of democracy in a government so dearly won and so valiantly maintained."

"Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the new members to the commander for instruction in loyalty and its application in The American Legion."

The sergeant-at-arms escorts the new members to the designated position, facing the commander's station. The commander rises.

Post commander: "Loyalty is an attribute of The American Legion, as it is the first virtue of the person serving in the uniform of our country. It is as dear as justice is desirable, as freedom is glorious, as democracy is practical. Loyalty will lead us to defend our organization in all that is right, and to do our utmost that we shall be right. Loyalty to our country is the basis of true Americanism. Disloyalty and oppression are foreign to our ideals; nor do we tolerate any form of radicalism or violence seeking to destroy our form of government. The Constitution of the United States of America, the bulwark of our liberties and guarantor of our rights, is sacred to the Legionnaire. Be ever loyal to that which has established your freedoms and defined your responsibilities. Understand The American Legion is in no sense a military organization. Because its membership is drawn from every race, religion, occupational pursuit and political persuasion, The American Legion is obligated to strict neutrality on all questions concerning religion, politics, and industrial strife. You have received instruction in The American Legion's four basic attributes – justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty – and its great principles of service. Are you now ready and willing to obligate yourself as expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion? If so, you will each answer, 'I am.'"

Candidates: "I am."

All new members must answer, signifying they are willing to take the obligation.

Post commander: "All present will stand at attention during the obligation."

The commander gives three raps of the gavel, steps to the right and immediately next to the U.S. flag, raises his or her right hand, and addresses the new members.

Post commander: "Raise your right hand and repeat after me: 'I, (here give your name) / do solemnly pledge / to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America / to maintain law and order / to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism / to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars / to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation / to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses / to make right the master of might / to promote peace and good will on earth / to safeguard and transmit to posterity / the principles of justice, freedom and democracy / to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship / by our devotion to mutual helpfulness / to all of which I pledge myself / for God and country. I am not a member and do not subscribe / to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government.' Hands down."

The commander resumes station and seats members with one rap of the gavel. The chaplain rises and stands near the emblem of The American Legion.

Chaplain: "There shines the emblem of The American Legion. It is your badge of distinction, honor and service. It stands for God and country, and the highest rights of men and women. Of its several parts, each has a meaning.

"The rays of the sun that form the background stand for the principles of The American Legion – for loyalty, justice, freedom and democracy will dispel the darkness of violence, strife and evil.

"The two gold rings around the field of blue, bearing our name, typify two of our four main objectives: rehabilitation of our sick and disabled veterans, and care for the children and youth of America. Within the

rings is placed a wreath for remembrance of those who died that liberty might live. Upon the wreath is set a star reflecting the glory of victory and promising to the world the perpetuation of the cardinal principles of The American Legion.

"Set upon the star are two bronze rings which represent the other two of our main objectives: a deep and abiding spirit of Americanism, and service to the community, state and nation.

"The inscription demands that the wearer shall ever guard the sanctity of home, of country, of free institutions."

The chaplain returns to station. The commander rises and addresses the new members.

Post commander: "The emblem of The American Legion is the emblem of Americanism. Americanism is unity of love, singleness of allegiance, practicality of purpose, care of the distressed, the education of children, all directed to the promotion of a common good. It is that spirit of patriotism which shall ever preserve our land from stagnation, which is the death of peoples. As Legionnaires, we preach and teach the spirit of patriotism throughout the republic. We must be ever mindful of our obligations as citizens, striving constantly to redeem those obligations. In the emblem of The American Legion there is great prophecy. It is the promise of the defenders of the republic, pledging the fullest good for the betterment of all.

"I welcome you to The American Legion and present you with the emblem of The American Legion, a symbol of service."

The commander steps from the station, gives each new Legionnaire an emblem lapel button, and shakes the hand of each new member.

INITIATION OF NEW MEMBERS - SHORT FORM

Every new member should receive some form of initiation. Where it is not practical to conduct full initiation ceremonies, the following short form has been authorized so all new members may take the obligation and receive proper introduction to the Legion.

The post commander or an appointed member, assisted by the post chaplain, who shall be seated at the right of the commander, shall conduct this ceremony.

Small U.S. flags, American Legion emblems, Legion publications and other appropriate items used in the regular initiation ceremony shall be presented by the officiating officers. Certificates of initiation are available from department headquarters. The Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Committee strongly recommends presenting such evidence of initiation.

Post commander: "We will now proceed with the initiation. The sergeant-at-arms will escort the following new members into the meeting hall and place them properly before the flag."

Give the names of all those who are waiting. The sergeant-at-arms salutes the flag and, turning, receives the new members whose names shall be read.

Post commander: "You were privileged to serve your country during wartime. Because of this service, you are today privileged to join the great service organization, The American Legion.

"Unlike the armed forces in which you served, there is no distinction of rank among us. We are composed of members of every race, religion, occupation and political conviction. We maintain also strict neutrality on all questions concerning religion, politics and industrial strife.

"The American Legion cherishes four great principles: justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. We are pledged to serve the disabled, the distressed, the widowed and the orphaned. We are devoted to the cause of service to the community, state and the nation.

"Are you now ready and willing to obligate yourself as expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion?"

Candidates: "I am."

Post commander: "The members will stand at attention while the new members are being obligated."

The commander gives three raps of the gavel, steps to the right and immediately next to the U.S. flag, raises his or her right hand, and addresses the new members.

Post commander: "Raise your right hand and repeat after me: 'I, (here give your name) / do solemnly pledge / to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America / to maintain law and order / to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism / to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars / to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation / to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses / to make right the master of might / to promote peace and good will on earth / to safeguard and transmit to posterity / the principles of justice, freedom and democracy / to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship / by our devotion to mutual helpfulness / to all of which I pledge myself / for God and country. I am not a member and do not subscribe / to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government.' Hands down."

At the conclusion of the obligation, the commander resumes the designated station and seats members with one rap of the gavel. The chaplain arises and stands at a convenient location close to the emblem and calls the attention of the new members to it.

Chaplain: "There shines the emblem of The American Legion. It is your badge of distinction, honor and service. It stands for God and country, and the highest rights of men and women. Of its several parts, each part has a meaning. The rays of the sun that form the background are emblematic of the principles of The American Legion – for loyalty, justice, freedom and democracy will dispel the darkness of violence, strife and evil.

"The two gold rings around the field of blue bearing our name typify two of our four main objectives: rehabilitation of sick and disabled servicemembers and veterans, and care for the children and youth of America. Within the rings is placed a wreath for remembrance of those who died that liberty might live. Upon the wreath is set a star reflecting the glory of victory and promising to the world perpetuation of those cardinal principles of our organization. Set upon the star are two bronze rings which typify the other two of our main objectives: a better and more loyal Americanism, and service to the community, state and nation.

"The inscription demands the wearer shall ever guard the sanctity of home and country and free institutions."

The commander steps from the designated station and advances to the newly obligated members.

Post commander: "I welcome you to The American Legion. It is my privilege to present to you the American flag which is the emblem of freedom, a flag etiquette booklet and the emblem of The American Legion, which you may wear as a badge of democracy and a symbol of your devotion to further service."

The commander returns to station, introduces each newly obligated member to the membership and requests the sergeant-at-arms seat them with their fellow members.

INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS - REGULAR FORM

All officers shall, after their election and at the earliest opportunity, be installed in the following manner.

The installing officer should be a department officer or the officer of another post acting as a representative of the department commander is recommended. The installing officer shall take control of the meeting

following the opening ceremony and is permitted to install alone or with such assistants as may be selected.

All outgoing officers are to be in their respective places as shown in the Manual of Ceremonies*, and each officer shall be given a card on which should be copied the "charge" to the newly elected officer. The positions of retiring officers can be filled by other officers at the discretion of the installing officer.*

The installing officer then calls upon the sergeant-at-arms to bring forward the officers to be installed.

Installing officer: "Sergeant-at-arms, bring the newly elected officers of this post."

The acting sergeant-at-arms brings each newly elected officer to the front, facing the commander's station, in order of rank, i.e., commander, first vice commander, second vice commander, adjutant, finance officer, chaplain, judge advocate, historian, service officer and sergeant-at-arms.

After all are standing in place, with the new commander to the right of the installing officer, the acting sergeant-at-arms salutes and addresses the commander.

Sergeant-at-arms: "I present to you the newly elected officers of this post whose eligibility records for membership in The American Legion have been duly checked and authenticated."

Installing officer: "You have been chosen by your felow members to fill the various offices of (post name and number). You will, I know, vindicate the trust that has been reposed in you, and fulfill in every way the obligations which that trust entails. You shall at once familiarize yourselves with the duties of your particular offices, and you shall proceed upon those duties in the same spirit of devotion and endeavor which characterized that service out of which arose The American Legion. You must know the welfare and success of this post depends largely on you, and you must also know upon your shoulders equally rests the burden of preserving the integrity of The American Legion. You must protect its good name before the people of the United States. You must exalt it in their eyes. You must make them know as we know its purposes and its policy. Ever remember the tolerant spirit that animates its members. There is no rank among us, for each serves as an equal; and all strive toward the same goal, which is the realization in the life of the republic of the ideals of justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. Ever remember the cardinal purposes of The American Legion are the rehabilitation of disabled servicemembers and veterans; care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call and of those who are now suffering the ravages of wounds, disease and want; rightful education of the children of our country, and devoted service to the community, state and nation.

"You will raise your right hands and repeat after me, giving your names:

'I, (here give your name) / do solemnly pledge myself / to perform faithfully and impartially / the duties of the office in The American Legion / I am about to assume / and I further pledge / I am not a member of / and do not subscribe to / the principles of any groups / opposed to our form of government.'"

After the obligation of the new officers, the installing officer addresses the sergeant-at-arms.

Installing officer: "Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the new officers to their respective stations."

The acting or retiring sergeant-at-arms escorts each officer-elect to their respective station, starting with the elected sergeant-at-arms and ending with the commander. The sergeant-at-arms will conduct the sergeant-at-arms-elect to the station of the sergeant-at-arms and, at that station, addresses the elected sergeant-at-arms.

Acting sergeant-at-arms: "You are the sentinel or tiler, the outer guard of this post. You will guard especially against the loss of one of The American Legion's greatest possessions: our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship. You will learn the identity of, and introduce to the commander, all visiting members and guests of the post. You are responsible that no one shall remain a stranger in our midst. Be ready at

all times to assist your commander. Into your hands is given charge of the stand of colors, which you will properly display at all post meetings and on ceremonial occasions."

The acting or retiring sergeant-at-arms escorts the service officer to the proper station. The acting service officer then charges the new service officer.

Acting service officer: "You have been singly honored by this post to perform fundamental, unselfish work, not only for the benefit of members, but for those war veterans particularly in need of your service. Yours is the choice responsibility of looking out for the welfare of all concerned. The duties of a service officer are highly important and exacting, and while your accomplishment will be deeply appreciated by those immediately concerned, the work itself will not be sufficiently conspicuous to catch the headlines in the newspapers. Depending upon satisfactory performance of duty, there will come to you the heartfelt gratitude of each and every member of this post. I congratulate you upon the opportunity to serve so constructively and so unselfishly."

The sergeant-at-arms brings the historian to the proper station. The acting historian charges the new historian.

Acting historian: "Your office is an important one. To you is given the responsibility of preserving and compiling the records of this post. The future can only be judged by the past. Be mindful that the lamp of recorded experience may do much in guiding the footsteps of those who follow. Ever remember that without the recorded history of this post, its policies and accomplishments will be a blank to the ones who come after we are gone."

The sergeant-at-arms conducts the judge advocate to the position of the acting or retiring judge advocate, who gives the following charge.

Acting judge advocate: "To you is assigned a most important duty for which your legal training and/or past Legion experience so aptly prepare you. You are the interpreter of the constitution and by-laws of your post, and may at any time be called upon by the commander and other officers and members of the post to rule upon the legality of their actions and decisions insofar as they affect the good of The American Legion. You are also charged with protecting the integrity of our organization and keeping alight the torch of truth and fidelity that symbolizes the high and ennobling ideals under which our great American Legion was founded. Protect that heritage."

The sergeant-at-arms escorts the chaplain to the right of the commander. The acting chaplain then charges the new chaplain.

Acting chaplain: "To you is given the spiritual leadership of this post. You will, I know, lend dignity and respect to your office. You should be in close confidence with the commander and the other officers of this post and should attend all meetings of the post. You should be ready upon occasion to take your part in the initiation of new members; the dedication of halls, monuments or colors; and the funeral services for a member or other veteran. All such ceremonies are made more commemorative by the use of our ritual. Into your keeping we place the spirit of comradeship of this post. May harmony and unity prevail."

The sergeant-at-arms conducts the finance officer to the adjutant's desk, where the acting finance officer gives the following charge.

Acting finance officer: "You are the keeper of the moneys, and in you is reposed the financial policy of the post. To you is given charge of the year's budget, and to you is given the duty of the payment of all obligations when proper authorization has been given for such payment. Your position is an important one, demanding integrity and honesty. Your election to this office signifies your fellow members' implicit trust in you. Guard well that trust."

The sergeant-at-arms conducts the adjutant to the respective station, and the acting adjutant gives the following charge.

Acting adjutant: "You have been chosen to assist in the wise and effective administration of the commander's office, and to serve not only your fellow Legionnaires but also those whose relationship to our organization has led them to look to us for guidance and relief. You will find your duties many, varied and, at times, taxing of your crowded hours and resources. The successful accomplishment of our program depends, to a great extent, upon you and your performance of the duties of your office."

The sergeant-at-arms conducts the second vice commander to the respective desk, where the acting second vice commander gives the following charge.

Acting second vice commander: "Into your helpful hands are placed the important responsibilities of assisting the commander's office in all duties. Particularly should you be interested in patriotic observances of all kinds, in developing post activities, and in the entertainment features, which mark all meetings. Help to observe strict tolerance among your members on all political, religious and civic matters. The application of justice will be your particular concern."

The sergeant-at-arms conducts the first vice commander to the proper position, where the first vice commander will be charged by the acting first vice commander as follows.

Acting first vice commander: "To you is given the responsibility of an active cooperation between yourself and the commander. Particularly should you interest yourself in the membership of the post. You should be assisted by the most active and devoted members. No single factor has so important an influence on the post's success as membership. You will be the exponent of means of safeguarding the honor of the flag of our country. To you are committed these endeavors with the expectation you shall fulfill each one of them. You are the teacher of democracy."

The installing officer turns to the retiring commander.

Installing officer: "You have just completed a year of impressive service to The American Legion and to (post name and number). The record of your post indicates the quality of that service. Through your earnest performance of the duties of leadership, you have truly justified the great trust which your fellow members reposed in you.

"Although the mantle of leadership is now being passed to another, a great responsibility remains with you. You possess a great wealth of knowledge gained through your leadership experience. Place this wisdom at the disposal of your successors in order that your fellow members may benefit there from. Through your station maintain the principle of freedom within this post.

"On behalf of (post name and number), I thank you for the splendid service you have rendered The American Legion.

"Sergeant-at-arms, conduct Past Commander _____ to the station of the immediate past commander."

The sergeant-at-arms brings the new commander to the installing officer, who in turn brings the entire post to its feet by three raps of the gavel, then charges the new commander as follows.

Installing officer: "To you is entrusted a very important duty of teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of The American Legion throughout your entire post. To you is entrusted supervision of the duties of all other officers of this post. To you may come the needy and the distressed, and it is your duty to see no worthy person is turned away without full justice. It is your duty to see freedom is ever the watchword of those with whom you may come in contact. Loyalty to your post, to its membership, to the state and to the national organization are obligations which you now assume. You are more than the presiding officer for meetings. You are guided by the constitution and by the decisions of the post as a body, yet the responsibility for the success of the year's program is largely on your shoulders. You must initiate and carry through programs to completion. You must thoroughly familiarize yourself with the policies and traditions of your post and of The American Legion. By your sincere acceptance and earnest

performance of these duties, may the great trust which your fellow members have reposed in you be justified. To you, I extend the congratulations of the department, and I wish you well as you assume the responsibilities of your office. I present to you a copy of the *Officer's Guide* and *Manual of Ceremonies* to serve as your guide during the coming year."

Past commander: "The chaplain will offer prayer."

Chaplain: "O God of might, wisdom and justice, through Whom authority is rightly administered, assist with Thy spirit of counsel and fortitude these newly installed officers. May they accept the challenge of their oath. Impress upon each the importance of the duties as well as the honors of their office. May they know the value of working together with Thee. Lead them in the problems that will confront them, keeping them ever mindful of the great heritage preserved by our predecessors, living and departed. Vouchsafe unto them wisdom and protecting care throughout the year. Amen."

The installing officer seats members with one rap of the gavel. Newly elected officers rise.

Installing officer: "I present you the officers of your choice. I congratulate you on the selections you have made. You have chosen them to guide the destinies of this post. Now it is your duty to aid them in every way. Help them keep The American Legion a free organization of free men and women, faithful to its principles and ideals."

The gavel is handed to the new commander and the installing officer takes a seat.

The new commander then seats the newly elected officers with one rap of the gavel.

INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS - SHORT FORM

Where it is not practical to conduct the full ceremony for the installation of officers, the following short form may be conducted by an installing officer (a duly authorized representative of the department commander) who, after being introduced by the retiring post commander, proceeds as follows:

Installing officer: "The sergeant-at-arms will bring before me the newly elected officers of this post."

The sergeant-at-arms presents the newly elected officers, standing in one row in front of the installing officer, with the new post commander to the right of the installing officer and the retiring post commander to the left of the installing officer.

Sergeant-at-arms: "I present to you the newly elected officers of this post, whose eligibility records for membership in The American Legion have been duly checked and authenticated."

Installing officer: "My fellow Legionnaires, you have been chosen to fill the various offices of (post name and number). I know you will vindicate the trust that has been placed in you. I know you will fulfill every obligation required of you. Familiarize yourselves with the duties of your offices and carry out those duties with the same spirit from which arose The American Legion. The welfare and success of this post depend on you, as does the preservation of the integrity of The American Legion. Protect the good name of The American Legion with the people of our great nation; help them to know the Legion's purposes and policies. Remember the tolerance that animates us as members; remember there is no rank among us for we all serve as equals. We all are aiming for the same goals – the ideals of justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty.

"Remember, too, the cardinal principles of The American Legion are the rehabilitation of all disabled veterans; care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call; care of those who now are suffering from wounds, disease and want; the education of our children; and service to the community, state and nation.

"Raise your right hand, say 'I' and give your names, and repeat after me.

'I, (here give your name) / do solemnly pledge myself / to perform faithfully and impartially / the duties of the office of The American Legion / I am about to assume, / and I further pledge / I am not a member of / and do not subscribe to / the principles of any group / opposed to our form of government.' Hands down."

The installing officer will move to the left to address the retiring post commander.

Installing officer: "Commander _____, you have just completed a year of service to The American Legion and to (post name and number). The records of the post indicate the quality of your service. It is my hope the things you learned about The American Legion and the experience you gained will always be available to those who follow you. On behalf of the department commander, I thank you for the splendid service you have rendered The American Legion."

The installing officer moves to the right to address the newly elected post commander.

Installing officer: "To you, Commander _____, are entrusted with very important duties. You must teach and protect the cardinal principles of The American Legion throughout your post. You are entrusted with the supervision of the duties of all officers of your post. The poor and troubled will come to you, and you must see no veteran is turned away without full justice.

"Loyalty to your post – to its membership – to the state and national organizations are obligations which you now assume. You are more than the presiding officer for meetings; you are guided by the constitution and the decisions of the post body. Yet the responsibility of the year's programs is on your shoulders. You must initiate programs and carry them through to completion. You must familiarize yourself with the traditions of your post and The American Legion. By your sincere acceptance and earnest performance of these duties, may the trust your fellow Legionnaires have reposed in you be justified. "I extend to you the congratulations of the Department of _____, and I wish you well as you assume the responsibilities of your office."

The retiring post chaplain may offer a prayer for the guidance and success of the newly installed post officers.

The installing officer moves to the original position and asks all newly installed officers to face the members and guests in attendance.

Installing officer: "My fellow Legionnaires, I present to you the officers of your choice. I congratulate you on the selections you have made. You have chosen them. Now it is your duty to aid them in every way. Help them to keep The American Legion faithful to its principles and ideals."

POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

The following is a suggested service for American Legion meetings, banquets, luncheons or memorial gatherings with a POW/MIA flag draped over an empty chair. This service can be adopted or modified for your own use. Members should remove their caps.

"Those who have served, and those currently serving in the uniformed services of the United States, are ever mindful that the sweetness of enduring peace has always been tainted by the bitterness of personal sacrifice. We are compelled to never forget that while we enjoy our daily pleasures, there are others who have endured and may still be enduring the agonies of pain, deprivation and imprisonment.

"Before we begin our activities, we pause to recognize our POWs and MIAs.

"We call your attention to this **small table**, which occupies a place of dignity and honor. It is **set for one**, symbolizing the fact that members of our armed forces are missing from our ranks. They are referred to as POWs and MIAs.

"**We call them comrades**. They are unable to be with their loved ones and families, so we join to pay humble tribute to them, and to bear witness to their continued absence.

"The **table** is small, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner, alone against his or her suppressors.

"The **tablecloth** is white, symbolic of the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.

"The **single rose** in the vase signifies the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of the family and friends of our missing comrades who keep faith while awaiting their return.

"The **red ribbon** on the vase represents an unyielding determination for a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us.

"A **slice of lemon** on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate.

"The **salt** sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.

"The **glass** is inverted. They cannot toast with us at this time.

"The **chair** is empty. They are NOT here.

"The **candle** is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to the open arms of a grateful nation.

"The **American flag** reminds us that many of them may never return — and have paid the supreme sacrifice to insure our freedom.

"Let us pray to the Supreme Commander that all of our comrades will soon be back within our ranks.

"Let us remember — and never forget their sacrifice. May God forever watch over them and protect them and their families."

DEDICATIONS

The members of the post will assemble at the designated place in uniform, if such are available, with all officers wearing ceremonial badges and members wearing American Legion caps. They will march to the place of dedication. The commander, chaplain and the member designated to receive the gift will take their places on the platform with public officials and other guests. The post will assemble with the public.

Unless those who are to give the gift request otherwise, the commander will preside. A past commander or other member appointed by the commander will accept the gift on behalf of the post.

The program as outlined by the committee will be followed until the post commander is called upon to address the members of the post.

Post commander: "Members of Post _____, Department of _____, The American Legion, and friends. We are gathered today for a grateful and patriotic duty, to dedicate (these colors, the emblems of the United States of America and The American Legion – this building as a home for The American Legion – this monument, a perpetual memorial to those who died in their country's service, and to those who offered their lives during time of war – other appropriate phrase explaining the purpose of the gathering). May we again dedicate our organization and ourselves to the sacred ideals which are here represented, ever remembering that The American Legion's principal service is for God and country. The chaplain will ask the blessing of God upon these ceremonies."

In place of the following prayer, the chaplain may deliver one of the same length and general tenor.

Chaplain: "Almighty God, Judge over people and nations, we stand before Thee today as loyal servants of our country, grateful for its splendid heritage. We ask Thy blessing upon our great republic. May America ever remain free and mighty and true to her best ideals. Bless the president of the United States and all public servants, that they may walk in justice before Thee and all their acts may rebound to the greater

welfare of our people. We pray Thy blessing upon our flag, the emblem of the republic. May it float forever over a free land. May our ancient watchword, 'In God We Trust,' ever live, and may the faith of our fathers guide, protect and sustain our people.

"We ask Thy blessing upon The American Legion and its members. May we who served our country in war continue in times of peace, to serve and to shield America throughout all our days. May this edifice serve for the good of the many; in service to the living may it be a memorial to the dead. May we be eager and steadfast in our devotion to justice, freedom and democracy. May we be ever loyal to our country and to our God. May our service to the sick and disabled, to the community, the state and the nation merit and have Thy guidance and Thy blessing.

"Finally, we remember in love before Thee our departed members, who showed their loyalty in their lives and sealed it with their deaths. We pray especially for those in hospitals and homes and wherever they may be, sick in mind and body. May their pain be eased and their burdens lifted, and may their heroic example be an everlasting inspiration. May Thy spirit rest upon this service. May it uplift us all to constant devotion to Thy teachings and to the welfare of our country. Amen."

Post commander: "In memory of those who have given their all to this country, who have made the supreme sacrifice and have answered the call of the 'Great Commander of all Divisions,' we will stand in silence and with bowed heads."

Allow for approximately 30 seconds of silence. The commander will introduce the person who is to present the colors, building or edifice to the post. The presentation address follows.

The commander will introduce the past commander (or other officer or member designated) who will accept the gift on behalf of the post. The address of acceptance follows.

The program as set by the committee shall proceed, after which the commander will close the meeting.

DEDICATION OF COLORS

Commander: "The assemblage will rise. Sergeant-at-arms, you will call the guard to display the colors."

The colors will advance to a position in front of the platform and halt within 10 paces of the commander.

Commander: "The bugler will sound 'To the Colors' and the audience will stand at salute."

The post standard will be dipped at a 45-degree angle in salute. After "To the Colors" has been sounded, the commander will address the assembly.

Commander: "In the name of (post name and number), Department of _____, The American Legion, I dedicate these colors. May they fly perpetually as the emblem of the cause for which we fought and which we now gladly serve. Here is the flag of our country; safe within its folds is the freedom and fealty of our nation. Beside it is the flag of The American Legion, on its expanse the emblem of our organization – the star of victory, the laurel wreath of remembrance, about it all the sun's rays, significant of the light of an even brighter day.

"I dedicate these colors to the purposes of our post, community, state and nation, and with them I dedicate this post to the faithful service of our nation, our people, and our flag. Join me in saluting the flag. Hand salute! Two!"

At the conclusion of the dedication ceremony, the colors will be properly returned.

DEDICATION OF AMERICAN LEGION BUILDING OR HALL

Commander: "In the name of (post name and number), Department of _____, The American Legion, I dedicate this structure (hall), embodiment of the ideals of justice, freedom and

democracy for which The American Legion exists. As in time of war, we fight for our country, so in time of peace may we serve the republic fearlessly and well. May we bear in mind those who have gone before, that their memory may dwell within this home and be a constant blessing among us. It is our hope and desire this edifice may be used ever in the service of the sick and disabled; of the widowed and the orphaned; and to the benefit of our community, state and nation. I dedicate this structure to the purposes of our post, and with it I dedicate this post to the faithful service of our nation, of its people, and to the memory of our heroic dead."

DEDICATION OF MONUMENT, SHAFT OR OTHER MEMORIALS

Commander: "In the name of (post name and number), Department of _____, The American Legion, I dedicate this memorial. I dedicate it to the memory of those who fell in the service of our country. I dedicate it in the name of those who offered their lives so justice, freedom and democracy might survive to be the victorious ideals of the peoples of the world. The lives of those who have made the supreme sacrifice are glorious before us; their deeds are an inspiration. As they served America in time of war, yielding their last full measure of devotion, may we serve America in time of peace. I dedicate this monument to them, and with it I dedicate this post to the faithful service of our country and to preservation of the memory of those who died that liberty might live."

At the end of all dedication ceremonies, the chaplain shall give a benediction.

CEREMONY FOR DRAPING AMERICAN LEGION CHARTER

The post may choose the choice of drape and length of draping period.

Commander: "It is my sad duty to report that _____ has (have) been called from our midst. (He/she/they has/have) gone to the Commander of us all in Post Everlasting. Before proceeding with other business of this meeting, we will drape the charter in memory of _____. Sergeant-at-arms, obtain the drape in preparation for draping the charter."

The commander raps the gavel three times.

Commander: "Members rise and face the charter. Attention."

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, you will now drape our charter in memory of our beloved _____ who has (have) passed on.

The sergeant-at-arms drapes the charter.

Commander: "By this act we, as members of (post name and number), (state), proclaim solemn tribute to our departed friend(s). Hand salute! Two!"

After "Two," the sergeant-at-arms returns to his or her station.

Chaplain: "Almighty God and Heavenly Father, who has dominion over life and death, grant to us the grace to remember with love and reverence our valiant and honored departed fried(s). Grant peace and eternal rest to those who have gone before us, and make us ready for that last hour. Strengthen and console those in sorrow and bestow upon us Thy everlasting blessing. Amen."

The commander raps the gavel once and announces that the meeting will continue.

PATRIOTIC HOLIDAYS

MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day originated at the close of the Civil War, and therefore, American Legion posts should give due recognition to the veterans of earlier wars.

After the audience is seated, the post enters, either in uniform or wearing ceremonial badges, and files into reserved space or seats. The commander stands before the post or upon the platform where the guests, speakers and chaplain are seated.

Commander: "This day is sacred with the almost visible presence of those who have gone before us. We honor the memory of those who gave their lives in the service of our country, and of others who have dropped their burdens by the wayside of life and are gone to their eternal rest. May the ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our departed friends and members. Let us renew our pledge of loyalty to our country and its flag. Let us resolve by word and deed to emphasize the privilege and duty of patriotism."

In place of the following prayer, the chaplain may deliver one appropriate to the occasion.

Chaplain: "Let us pray. Almighty God, Giver of all victories, we thank Thee for the opportunities which abide in our land, for Thy guidance in the hour of peril and Thy tender love in times of need. Help us to remember with reverence the valor and devotion of our departed friends – not only those whose bodies consecrate our country's soil, but also those who sleep beyond the seas, and others whose resting places will not be known until that last day when the deep will have given up its dead. O God, teach us to honor them by ever cherishing the ideals for which they fought. Keep us steadfast in the cause of human rights and liberties, of law and order, and true Americanism. Give us the power to see and the will to do right. Grant that The American Legion may preserve the high ideals for which so many have died. May Thy merciful blessing rest upon those they left behind. Keep us forever firm in righteousness, humble of heart, and unselfish in purpose. Amen."

Music or readings are appropriate at this point, such as Kipling's "Recessional," Alan Seeger's "Memorial Day Ode," or John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields."

The commander introduces the speaker or speakers of the day.

Tribute to veterans of all wars

Speeches should be strictly in the nature of a tribute to, or eulogy of, the dead in all our wars, and speakers should be advised accordingly. In the absence of a speaker, or if desired for any other reason, the following address may be given.

Commander: "Again our nation has assembled to honor its heroic dead. A thousand battles of land, sea and air echo the glory of their valiant deeds. Under the quiet sod, or beneath the murmuring waves, their bodies sleep in peace. But in the destinies of veterans, their souls go marching on. Because of them, our lives are free. Because of them, our nation lives.

"When we recall the things they did, the hero hosts seem mighty in our midst. When peril threatened and their country called, with what divine self-sacrifice they left their paths of peace to spring to arms, to make their breasts a barricade against the nation's foes. No sorrow for the loved ones left behind could dim the purpose in their souls. No weariness of march and watch could keep them from their hearts' desire. No horror of the field or sea or air could beat their courage down.

"They fought for us; for us they fell. Now with one accord, in deepest reverence, we do them honor. Let us not remember them in anguish; they would not wish our pity. For their sakes also let us not forget the loved ones left behind. Our tears or words of sympathy cannot bring back the comfort of those loving hands or

the music of those voices stilled. Only the solemn pride of having given more than all the rest is theirs who live to weep. But all the world, because of what they gave, is debtor to them.

"On this Memorial Day let us pledge ourselves anew to patriotic service. Let us make ourselves the friend and brother, son and father, of those who will not see their own again in mortal flesh. Let us grasp with fearless hands the flag so nobly borne before, and, like those others, plant it always on the battlements of righteousness.

"All who stand with us today, will you not consecrate yourselves with us to emulate their sacred service that those who rest in heroes' graves may not have died in vain?

"Let us stand with bowed heads in solemn memory of our heroic dead."

Allow for 30 seconds of silence. The audience may then sing "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Commander: "The chaplain will now pronounce the benediction, after which the audience will please remain until the post has marched out of the hall."

The chaplain says the benediction, and the post files out of the hall.

Cemetery ceremony

If there are no exercises elsewhere, those at the cemetery may be lengthened to include the Memorial Day service. The order of march is as follows: 1) colors, 2) music), 3) rifle team, 4) American Legion and 5) others.

Upon arrival at the cemetery, the procession is drawn up in hollow square or another suitable formation.

Commander: "Parade rest."

The color guard executes parade rest, inclining their heads.

Commander: "Chaplain, lead us in a memorial prayer."

Chaplain: "Eternal God, we thank Thee for this hallowed soil. Make us worthy; we pray Thee to guard our heritage of pride through all the years to come. In memory of these, our dead, may we pledge to our beloved land the same service and the same devotion. And, O Lord, secure to us evermore the peace for which others have died. Amen."

The following floral ceremony may be omitted.

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms (or other member designated), you will deposit upon the monument (or graves) of our friend(s) a token of our enduring memory."

The sergeant-at-arms lays flowers.

Commander: "The flowers may wither, but the spirit of which they are the symbol will endure until the end of time."

In the case of naval posts, it may be preferred to scatter flowers on the sea or a stream instead.

Commander (to the officer in charge of rifle team): "Salute the dead!"

The officer in charge of the rifle team shall cause the salute to be fired in the manner prescribed by infantry drill regulations in force at the time.

The bugler sounds taps. The post returns in the same order of march as before.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

The audience is seated. After the preliminary parade, the post enters, in uniform or wearing ceremonial badges, and files into the reserved space or seats. The commander takes a designated place upon the platform with the chaplain, guests and speaker.

Commander: "(Post name and number), Department of _____, The American Legion, attention to orders."

The adjutant shall read orders. After the reading, members will be seated.

Commander: "Friends, we meet to celebrate the anniversary of our country's independence. The vice commander will read portions from the declaration made by our forefathers on July 4, 1776."

First vice commander: "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed and that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity, which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over the states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

"We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

Commander: "This declaration was followed by years of struggles. There from our nation was born, and on September 17, 1787, it adopted the Constitution, the charter of our rights and liberties, whose preamble I now request our second vice commander to read."

Second vice commander: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare

and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America."

Commander: "This government guaranteed by these great documents has been preserved to the present day. We now pay tribute to those who fought for its establishment and preservation. The same spirit, which animated them, promoted the heroes of the World War of 1917 and 1918 to fight to preserve the freedom of civilization of the world. Out of that struggle grew The American Legion, whose preamble I now request the chaplain to read."

Chaplain: "For God and country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America: to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;

to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

The commander will introduce the speaker of the day. The post may invite children in patriotic dress to sing "America," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," or other patriotic music at this point.

Chaplain: "Let us stand in silence in memory and in honor of the soldiers of the Revolutionary War and those after them who have fought that liberty might endure."

Sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." The post files out and is dismissed.

VETERANS DAY

The post files in and is seated in reserved space or seats. The commander, chaplain and other officers or members with speaking parts take their places on the platform. The active parts are given by four officers or other members designated by the commander.

Commander: "The chaplain will offer prayer."

The following prayer is optional. In its place the chaplain may deliver an appropriate prayer. If any member shall object to prayer on conscientious grounds, observe 30 seconds of silence in memory of the dead, provided the same is so ordered by a majority of members present.

Chaplain: "O God of Hosts, we bow our heads in thankfulness for the victories Thou hast granted us – to us and to those peoples who have united with us to stamp out the evils of aggression, intolerance and greed.

"We beseech Thee to bring the blessings of understanding to the families and friends, in this and other lands, of those who have given their lives that men may be free. Grant, O God, that those closest to the fallen may mingle the pain of their losses with the ennobling light of sacrifice for civilization – sacrifice for a better world for this and other generations yet unborn.

"Grant us too, O God, the courage to so live with the family of nations around the world that the end of strife will be the beginning of enduring peace. Grant us patience in planning with our fellow men and women a world in which nations may resolve their differences by peaceful means.

"Touch Thou the souls of people in every land with the enduring light of wisdom so they may form a brotherhood which will strive to further the arts of peace under laws and ethics blessed by Thy love.

"Grant us now Thy continued blessing upon unity and strength that makes victories possible in war, that we may win greater victories of peace. Amen."

Music or singing would be appropriate at this time.

Commander: "On this day, Veterans Day, we are commemorating the service of veterans of all wars.

"We remember how men and women set aside their civilian pursuits to serve their nation's cause, defending the freedom of mankind and preserving our precious American heritage.

"We believe our strength on the field of battle, on the supply lines which nourished our armed might, lay in the justice of our cause against the forces of evil. We believe our determination made us better warriors because we fought with our minds and our hearts as well as our bodies.

"We recognize service to our country and her cause does not end with the termination of military service. We continue our endeavors on behalf of an honorable world peace with a feeling of profound gratitude to God, and to the men and women who gave their lives as their part of the cost of this noblest of causes.

"Out of blood and sweat we learned of purpose, sacrifice, tolerance, bravery and discipline. These are solid foundation stones upon which a great nation is built. In our continuing quest for an honorable world peace, we must cultivate these virtues."

Auxiliary president or representative: "The waging of war involves more than just the combatants who fight to the death on the field of battle. The fighting forces begin at the fireside and in the hometowns. The repercussions of war's terrible brutality have chilled the heart and dimmed the hopes and dreams of many a loved one left behind on the home front. While the horrors of the battlefield may not have been our experience, we have lived with the terrifying loneliness created to answer an aggressor's challenge.

"In waging war, we have moved forward with a unity of purpose which made us strong, forgetting pettiness, egotism and pride. Our hearts beat in tune with those in other nations fighting for freedom and the dignity and opportunity of mankind. In our constant quest for an honorable world peace, there is need for unity of purpose if we truly are to move toward a brighter tomorrow."

First officer: "If there be glory in war, it is the almost incredible spirit which it engenders. Those who offered their lives sacrifice their all with magnificent abandon. Heroism becomes contagious. Yet, too, in warfare, greed and brutality are epidemic. Too often it is these later which persist in the peace that follows. Let us strive to see the same spirit of self-sacrifice is cultivated in peace as has been exhibited in war.

"It behooves us to rear new standards of success, to inspire youth in peace as youth was inspired in war. Public honor must be given where public honor is due – not to the manipulator of a market, the seeker after profit, power or position, but rather, let us honor the heroes of science who alleviate human suffering and carry to greater heights the standards of civilization.

"Let us honor those who in public service seek not how much they may secure from the nation but how much they can give. Let us honor those who devote their lives to that education, which will lead our children on to live and laugh and learn and love, as we have only dreamed of doing. Let us honor those veterans who carry into ordinary affairs of life a noble idealism and sincere capacity for self-devotion. Let us translate the devotion of war into a devotion of peace. Let us will to live as well as die for our country."

Woman veteran: "The hurts of war fall alike upon those who wear the same uniform, no matter how they may differ in race, creed or culture. Those who fight together suffer together to achieve a common aim.

"In the similarity of battle dress, there is a common denominator: the common purpose, the sharing of danger and suffering, which brings in time of war a tolerance which adds strength to the cause.

"As we put aside the brown and blue and green fabrics that made us one people on the battlefields, we can hold in our minds that tolerance we have achieved. In tolerance there is progress – progress toward a better and a happier world."

Second officer: "Courage is one of the virtues born of war – the courage of individuals in the face of danger and the courage of nations to protect the weak and punish the aggressor. There is bravery to be shown in peace as well. May we recapture the courage which turned the wilderness into cities that bound men together under government.

"We can turn slums into comfortable homes, turn uncertainty into certainty. We can reach new heights of civilization and opportunity for the men and women of this nation if we have the courage to expect and work for a better way of life.

"There can be romance in this challenge also. The bravery that fights for political, social, economic and spiritual gains may be more difficult to practice – may be unsung when achieved – but it is all the more worth striving for."

Third officer: "War has taught us the lesson of obedience to command. 'The game is more than the player ... And the ship is more than the crew.'

"There is a greater discipline we must now pursue if we are to preserve this virtue of obedience in our quest for an honorable world peace. That is obedience to the laws we, ourselves, make – the voluntary discipline of citizenship.

"Under our system of government we may change the laws by majority rule. We may persuade our neighbors to new theories or new courses. We may advocate in free elections the choice of veterans or plans. As good citizens we follow the choice of the majority, whether that choice be the individual's or not.

"This is the virtue of discipline which must be ours in peace. This is the lesson we must learn at home, in school, on the playing fields, in organizations, in the community and the nation. It is the lesson of voluntary obedience to the decisions of the majority.

"We must not be unmindful either of the conclusions of other peoples with whom we have joined in the quest for an honorable world peace. This is the higher order of disciplines."

Commander: "In time of peace we can use the ennobling virtues of war and put behind us its ugliness and suffering. In peace we shall go forward together to scale new heights of achievement in unity of purpose, in sacrifice for the common good, in tolerance for those of different faiths and creeds, in bravery to fight for social and economic gains, and in the discipline of good citizenship. We shall move forward in the sight of God as a strong nation in a peaceful world."

Other speakers may be introduced by the commander. Sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Post members file out.

FLAG CEREMONIES

BLUE STAR SERVICE BANNER AND FLAG

The Blue Star Service Banner was designed and patented in 1917 by Army Capt. Robert L. Queisser of the 5th Ohio Infantry. Queisser's two sons served on the front line. His banner quickly became the unofficial symbol for parents with a son or daughter in active military service.

On Sept. 24, 1917, an Ohio congressman read the following into the Congressional Record: "The mayor of Cleveland, the Chamber of Commerce and the governor of Ohio have adopted this service flag. The world should know of those who give so much for liberty. The dearest thing in all the world to a father and mother: their children." Blue Star Mothers and Gold Star Mothers organizations were established during World War I and remain active today.

During World War II, the Department of War issued specifications on manufacture of the flag, as well as guidelines indicating when the service flag could be flown and by whom. Restrictions were also passed on

who can wear the service lapel. DoD authorized the service flag and service lapel on Dec. 1, 1967, with DoD Directive 1348.1, which implemented an act of Congress (U.S. Code 179-182).

The Blue Star Service Banner is an 8.5-by-14-inch white field with one or more blue stars sewn onto a red banner. The size varies but should be in proportion to the U.S. flag. Today, families display these banners when they have a loved one serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. The blue star represents one family member serving, and a banner can have up to five stars. If the individual is killed or dies, a smaller golden star is placed over it. Gold stars are placed above the blue stars or to the top right of the flag, in the event a flag represents multiple servicemembers.

Blue Star Service Banners were widely used during both world wars, and The American Legion revived the tradition after 9/11 by providing banners to military families across the nation. The American Legion also offers Blue Star Banner corporate flags for corporations and government organizations wanting to show support for employees actively serving in the National Guard or reserve.

Order a Blue Star Banner from Emblem Sales at **emblem.legion.org** or toll-free at **(888) 453-4466**.

GOLD STAR BANNER CEREMONY

This suggested program may be performed as part of a regular meeting or other event sponsored by the post. The program may be modified to fit the occasion. Notify the audience that applause is never given when a person is introduced as a Gold Star Mother or family member.

Commander: "We will now conduct a Gold Star Banner presentation to the family member(s) of a veteran killed in combat (or one who was wounded and died of his/her wounds or disease during wartime). This is a solemn ceremony during which due reverence is requested. Please do not applaud during or after the presentation. The Gold Star replaces the Blue Star, signifying that a family member who was serving during wartime is now deceased. Please stand."

The commander makes three raps with the gavel.

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the recipient(s) to the position of honor."

The recipients are escorted to a position in front of the head table/podium, facing the audience. The sergeant-at-arms takes a position to the right of and faces the recipients. The commander then goes to a position in front of and faces the recipients. The chaplain follows, standing to the right and facing the commander.

Adjutant: "The Gold Star Banner will be presented to _____, the (relation) of _____. _____ entered the (branch of service) in (year). (He or she) was assigned to (unit/station) and died while serving our country in (location).

NOTE: Additional information citing the service and circumstances of death may be added.

After conclusion of the reading, the chaplain gives the banner and tack to the commander for presentation.

The commander approaches the recipient and offers condolences and comments appropriate for presentation of the Gold Star Banner and tack. These personal comments to the recipient should express gratitude for service rendered on behalf of the veterans, citizens and the president of the United States. They need not be spoken loudly for all present to hear. The commander then presents the Gold Star Banner and tack to the recipient.

The script is repeated with appropriate changes for each recipient until all banners and tacks are presented.

Commander: "The chaplain will offer prayer. Please uncover."

Chaplain: "Let us pray. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we ask that Your blessing be bestowed on those who now receive these mementos. We thank You for this opportunity to share with them this special

occasion to honor _____, our departed veteran in this ceremony. Let us always honor the memory of those brave soldiers who gave the supreme sacrifice, so that we may experience freedom in a country that is free. Heavenly Father, keep this family in your kind care. Bless them and comfort them in their times of sorrow. And let us be reminded of life, liberty, justice, freedom and democracy, so that we may be ever grateful to You for those who gave so much for their country. We ask Your blessing upon this service and grant unto us your continued fellowship that makes abiding peace. Amen."

Commander: "Please recover."

A bugler may play taps. Members should render a hand salute as the commander gives the appropriate commands.

Commander: "Please be seated."

The commander makes one rap with the gavel and members are seated.

Commander: "It is with a feeling of honor and sadness that we have presented the Gold Star Banner and tack to _____. Although we may not have experienced the personal loss that (he/she/they has/have), we, as veterans, appreciate the sacrifice given through the loss of our fellow veteran. In this simple ceremony, we seek to express our appreciation. The arms of a grateful nation are wrapped around this family to comfort them in their loss."

"At this time, we offer (her/him/them) the opportunity to make any remarks if (he/she/they) desire."

Allow a pause for remarks by the recipient.

Commander (to the recipients): "We thank you for your attendance to accept these mementos. This concludes our ceremony. You may leave now or return to your seats as you wish. Sergeant-at-arms, escort our honored recipients."

Commander: "Please stand."

The commander makes three raps with the gavel. After the recipients leave or return to their seats, the commander and chaplain return to their positions. The commander makes one rap with the gavel.

Commander: "Please be seated. We shall now continue with our regular business."

The commander may also conclude the program with a chaplain's benediction and "To the Colors."

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

At the 75th National Convention in Pittsburgh in 1993, The American Legion passed Resolution No. 159, officially adopting the Veteran of the Month program, which honors deceased veterans and fallen warriors by flying their burial flags. Eligible honorees include deceased veterans with honorable discharges, U.S. servicemembers who died on active duty, those who remain missing in action, and civilian employees of the armed services who were granted veteran status.

The veteran's personal history and military service are profiled in advance publicity, and read at the flag raising and again at the flag-lowering service at the end of the month. The service includes "Taps," along with the folding and presentation of the burial flag in a protective case to a member of the deceased's family.

RETIREMENT OF OLD COLORS

This ceremony is suggested for occasions when an American Legion post may wish to retire, not dispose of, colors that have become unserviceable.

Commander: "It has been recommended our worn set of old colors be fittingly retired. As they have served our post for many years and on a great variety of occasions, we shall retire them with the respect they deserve.

"Sergeant-at-arms, you will have the color guard advance and present the colors for final inspection."

The colors are brought to the commander's rostrum in proper form.

Sergeant-at-arms: "We have the honor to present for inspection and retirement the colors which have served our post for (number) years."

The sergeant-at-arms steps to one side.

Commander: "The members of the inspection team will examine the colors."

The two inspectors can be post officers.

First inspector: "The colors have become faded and worn as a result of use in post functions. I recommend they be retired."

Second inspector: "These colors have become unserviceable in a worthy cause and they should be honorably retired from further service."

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, prepare the colors for retirement."

The sergeant-at-arms instructs the color guard to prepare to retire the colors. The commander gives three raps of the gavel.

Commander: "The chaplain will offer prayer."

Chaplain: "Almighty God, Captain of all hosts and commander over all, bless and consecrate this gathering. We thank You for our country and its flag, and for the liberty for which it stands. We thank You for The American Legion and its banner, and the privilege You have given us to serve our country in its hours of need and to continue to serve our country in time of peace. Amen."

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, retire the colors."

Most posts keep old colors in a trophy case or other location where they can be properly displayed or stored.

DIGNIFIED DISPOSAL OF UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS

This ceremony is suggested as part of a Flag Day observance. The post assembles outdoors at night. Members form two parallel rows about 20 feet apart, facing each other. Officers take up stations as shown in the graphic on **page 95**. A small fire is burning opposite the commander and beyond the rows of members.

Sergeant-at-arms: "Commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable flags of our country for inspection and disposal."

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, advance with your detail and present the flags for disposal and inspection."

The sergeant-at-arms calls the detail to attention. The detail forms at the post of the sergeant-at-arms, takes the flags to be inspected, marches abreast down center until opposite the second vice commander, turns right and halts two paces in front of the second vice commander. The sergeant-at-arms steps forward and salutes.

Sergeant-at-arms: "Vice commander, we present these unserviceable flags for your inspection."

Second vice commander: "Is the present condition of these flags the result of their usual service as the emblem of our country?"

Sergeant-at-arms: "These flags have become faded and worn over the graves of our departed friends and the dead servicemembers of all our nation's wars."

Second vice commander: "Present these flags to the first vice commander for inspection."

The sergeant-at-arms salutes, does an about-face, commands the detail "About face," crosses behind the detail and takes post at its left, and commands "Forward march." The detail marches to within two paces of the first vice commander, halts and proceeds as before.

Sergeant-at-arms: "Vice commander, we present these flags which have been inspected by the second vice commander, for your further inspection."

First vice commander: "Have any of these flags served any other purpose?"

Sergeant-at-arms: "Some of these flags have been displayed in various public places."

First vice commander: "Present them for final inspection and dignified disposal."

The sergeant-at-arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail "About face," crosses behind the detail and takes position on its left, commands "Forward march." The detail marches to center, turns left, halts within two paces of the commander, sergeant-at-arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

Sergeant-at-arms: "Commander, we have the honor to present for final inspection and proper disposal these flags of our country."

Commander: "Have these flags been inspected by the first and second vice commanders?"

Sergeant-at-arms: "They have."

Commander: "Second vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

Second vice commander: "Commander, these flags became unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend they be honorably retired from further service."

Commander: "First vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

First vice commander: "Commander, since these flags have become faded and worn in a tribute of service and love, I also recommend they be fittingly destroyed."

Commander: "We have presented here these flags of our country which have been inspected and judged as unserviceable. They have reached their present state in a proper service of tribute, memory and love.

"A flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze or a beautiful banner of finest silk. Its intrinsic value may be trifling or great; but its real value is beyond price, for it is a precious symbol of all that we have worked for and lived for, and died for — a free nation of free men and women, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of justice, freedom and democracy.

"Let these faded flags of our country be retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites and their places be taken by bright new flags of the same size and kind, and let no grave of our military dead be unhonored and unmarked. Sergeant-at-arms, assemble the color guard, escort the detail bearing the flags and destroy these flags by burning. The members shall stand at attention."

The color guard forms. The detail does an about-face. Preceded by the color guard, the detail marches down center to the fire. National colors cross over and take position on the right of the fire, facing the commander. Post standard takes position on the left of the fire. The detail lines up behind the fire, which is burning low.

Commander: "The chaplain will offer prayer."

Chaplain: "Almighty God, Captain of all hosts and Commander over all, bless and consecrate this present hour. We thank You for our country and its flag, and for the liberty for which it stands. To a clean and purging flame we commit these flags, worn out in worthy service. As they yield their substance to the fire, may Your holy light spread over us and bring our hearts renewed devotion to God and country. Amen."

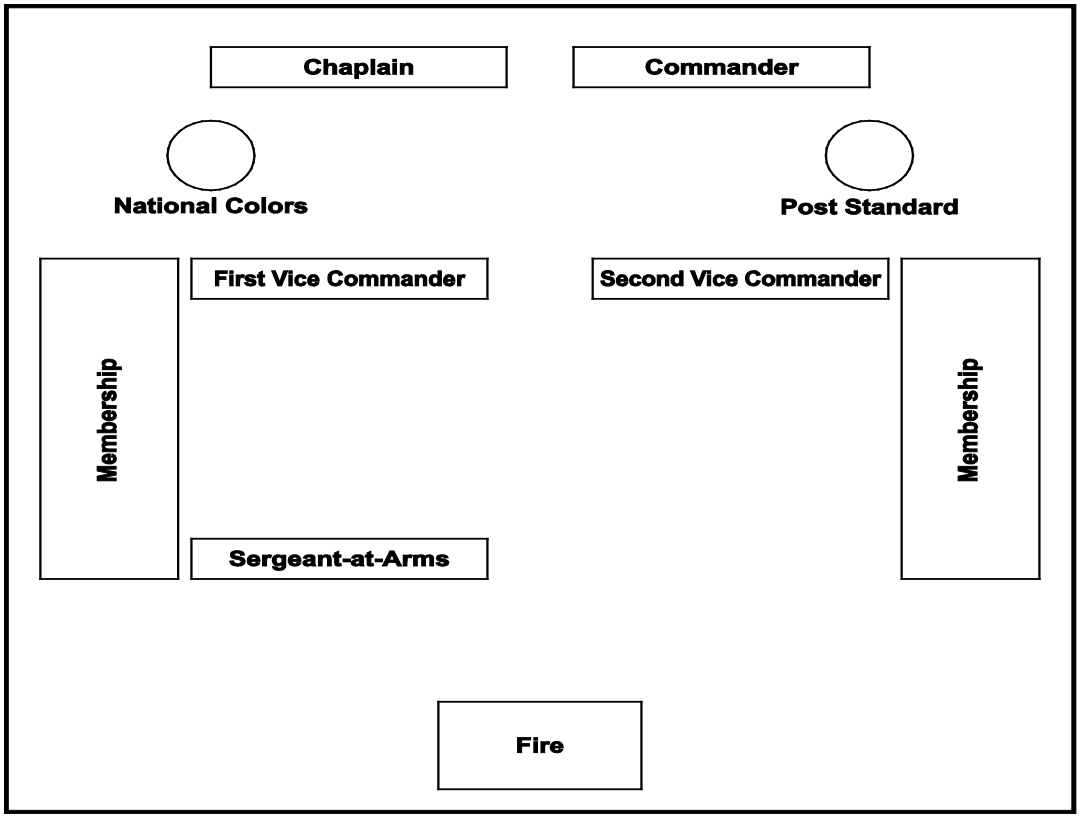
Commander: "Present arms."

The color guard presents arms. The post standard is dipped. All officers and members, except the flag detail, salute. Members of the flag detail dip the unserviceable flags in kerosene and place them on a rack over the fire. The bugler sounds "To the Colors."

Commander: "Order arms."

The color guard resumes its station and the detail is dismissed. The color guard advances down the center and places colors. Members of the detail resume their places among the members.

DIGNIFIED DISPOSAL OF UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS



FLAG PRESENTATION

1. Open the ceremony with a chairman or master of ceremonies calling the gathering to order and briefly outlining the purpose of the meeting.

2. "Let us stand as (post chaplain or local minister) pronounces the invocation."

3. A reading of Wilbur D. Nesbit's "Your Flag and My Flag." The chairman introduces the person who will give the reading. **Note:** Check the Internet or a public library for other appropriate verses celebrating the flag.

4. The chairman or designated person explains the purpose of the presentation, and introduces the organization or person presenting the flag as well as the organization or individual to whom the flag is to be presented.

5. The person presenting the flag should have it ready. Be sure the flag has been properly folded in the form of a colonial hat with only the blue field and stars showing **(see page 107)**. The person who is to receive the flag is called from the front of the audience, and after a few words by the presenter, receives the flag.

6. The person receiving the flag makes an acceptance speech.

7. The Pledge of Allegiance should be recited by everyone present. (Legionnaires will remove their caps.)

8. Mass singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," "America," or other appropriate patriotic song.

9. Benediction.

NOTE: Should a more elaborate program be desired, such as raising the flag on a flagpole, conduct presentation ceremonies as indicated above and extend the program following No. 6 and before mass singing and the benediction. If a flag raising is included, it's recommended an honor guard consisting of at least seven riflemen, two color bearers carrying the U.S. flag and American Legion colors, and two Legionnaires to raise the flag be marched to the flagpole. (A 150-foot distance is recommended.) After the flag is raised and/or the national anthem is played, the honor guard should fire one volley as a salute to the flag. If a band is not available, a bugler could be substituted to play "To the Colors."

PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

For chaplains asked to pray at meetings other than post meetings, these prayers have been printed for their use:

JOINT MEETING

"Most gracious Father of us all, from Whom comes all help and blessings, look upon us gathered here, and with Thy favor, direct us in all our actions. Grant to us vigilant hearts; give us minds to know Thee, diligence to seek Thee, and wisdom to find Thee. Sanctify us with Thy presence, bless us with Thy might, and assist us with Thy counsel, that all our endeavors may begin with Thee and through Thee may be happily ended. Amen."

BENEDICTION

"May the strength of God sustain us; may the power of God preserve us; may the hand of God protect us; may the way of God direct us; may the love of God go with us. Amen."

MEMORIAL SERVICE

"Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who hast dominion over life and death, grant to us the grace to remember with love and reverence our valiant and honored departed friend. Grant peace and eternal rest to those who have gone before us, and make us ready for that last hour. Strengthen and console those in sorrow and bestow upon us Thy everlasting blessing. Amen."

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS FOR VETERANS

In 2000, Congress legislated that, upon request of the next of kin, all eligible veterans must receive military funeral honors when they pass on. At a minimum, the funeral honors will consist of a two-person uniformed military detail, with at least one member representing the service branch of the deceased.

The legislation also encourages veterans service organizations, including The American Legion, to augment the honors detail as an authorized provider with pallbearers, firing party, bugler and color guard.

The American Legion has performed tens of thousands of burial ceremonies for veterans' families throughout its history; this will not change.

Whenever The American Legion is assisting the U.S. government, it should conform to DoD's methods of conduct. In working together, we honor, in the highest traditions of U.S. military service, those who have gone before. In doing so, all the requirements for a reverent, respectful and dignified ceremony are met.

The individual military services will provide training to an authorized provider assisting with the ceremony, including positioning, timing, safety and proper funeral honors protocol.

All eligible veterans, including military retirees, are entitled to military funeral honors. At a minimum, the funeral honors ceremony will consist of the playing of taps and the folding and presentation of the U.S. flag. At least two uniformed military personnel shall perform the ceremony. If a bugler is not available, an electronic recording will be played. One of the uniformed military personnel will be from the deceased veteran's parent military service and will present the flag to the next of kin.

The detail leader will coordinate all arrangements with the funeral director, other member(s) of the military honors detail, and authorized providers, such as The American Legion. He or she will ensure the funeral director explains military honors to the family, and that they understand the honors to be performed. It is especially important the family know about the firing of three volleys, if a firing party is present. Additional military funeral honors elements should be in accordance with the family's wishes.

Once the detail leader has coordinated the arrangements, his or her final pre-interment responsibility is to train and rehearse the detail. The detail leader is responsible for all aspects of the military funeral honors ceremony, whether active-duty servicemembers or authorized providers perform them.

POSITIONING/TIMING PROTOCOL

1. The order of the ceremony is the sounding of taps, the folding of the flag, and the presentation of the flag to the family. If there is a firing party, the volleys are fired before the sounding of taps. The detail leader is responsible for ensuring each step in the ceremony is executed properly, from the arrival of the funeral cortege to its departure.

2. The bugler and color guard should be positioned at the gravesite so they are in view of the family, approximately 30 to 40 yards from the grave. The firing party should also be in view of the family, but 45 to 75 yards from the grave, positioned to fire over the grave.

3. The firing party may include three to seven rifle bearers and one commander, reflecting the U.S. military custom of firing "three volleys of musketry" over the graves of fallen individuals.

4. The military honors detail should be positioned near where the hearse will stop. After the funeral procession has arrived, the funeral director will open the rear of the hearse and the pallbearers should move into position so they can move easily to the back of the hearse when needed.

5. When the family is ready to proceed, the funeral director will signal the pallbearers to withdraw the casket from the hearse and carry it to the grave. The bugler, firing party and color guard are already in their gravesite positions.

6. All detail participants (except for the pallbearers) will respond to "attention" and "present arms" as the casket is carried to the grave. All detail participants will "order arms" after the casket has been placed on the lowering device. Pallbearers may be instructed to hold the flag over the casket, or to move off as a group and stand in formation for the service.

7. During the committal or religious service, all the detail participants may stand at "parade rest."

8. When the committal or religious service is completed, the service representative and assistant will assume the clergy's position at the head of the grave, and all detail participants will come to the position of "attention." The funeral director will ask the mourners to stand for the rendering of honors.

9. Once the mourners are standing, the detail leader and all elements will execute "present arms," volleys will be fired, and taps sounded. Upon completion of taps" all will "order arms," and the funeral director will request the mourners to be seated.

10. The flag is folded. The two-person military detail, the pallbearers, or a combination of the two do the folding. Once the flag is folded, it must end up in the hands of the detail assistant, who will pass it to the detail leader.

11. The detail leader will present the flag to the next of kin. The wording accompanying the presentation should be in accordance with each military service's tradition of expressing the thanks of a grateful nation.

12. Following the flag presentation, the detail leader will offer condolences to the remainder of the immediate family and other mourners seated in the front row. It is appropriate and encouraged for a representative of the authorized provider to offer condolences after the detail leader.

13. Once condolences have been offered, the detail leader and assistant will return to the cortege arrival point and await the cortege's departure. The bugler, firing party and color guard are released when the detail leader departs the gravesite. They may remain in place until the family departs or quietly return to their vehicles.

It is the sacred obligation of all Americans to honor our deceased veterans by performing these time-honored duties in the best tradition of the deceased veteran's service. The American Legion helps fulfill that obligation by supplementing the effort of the military services.

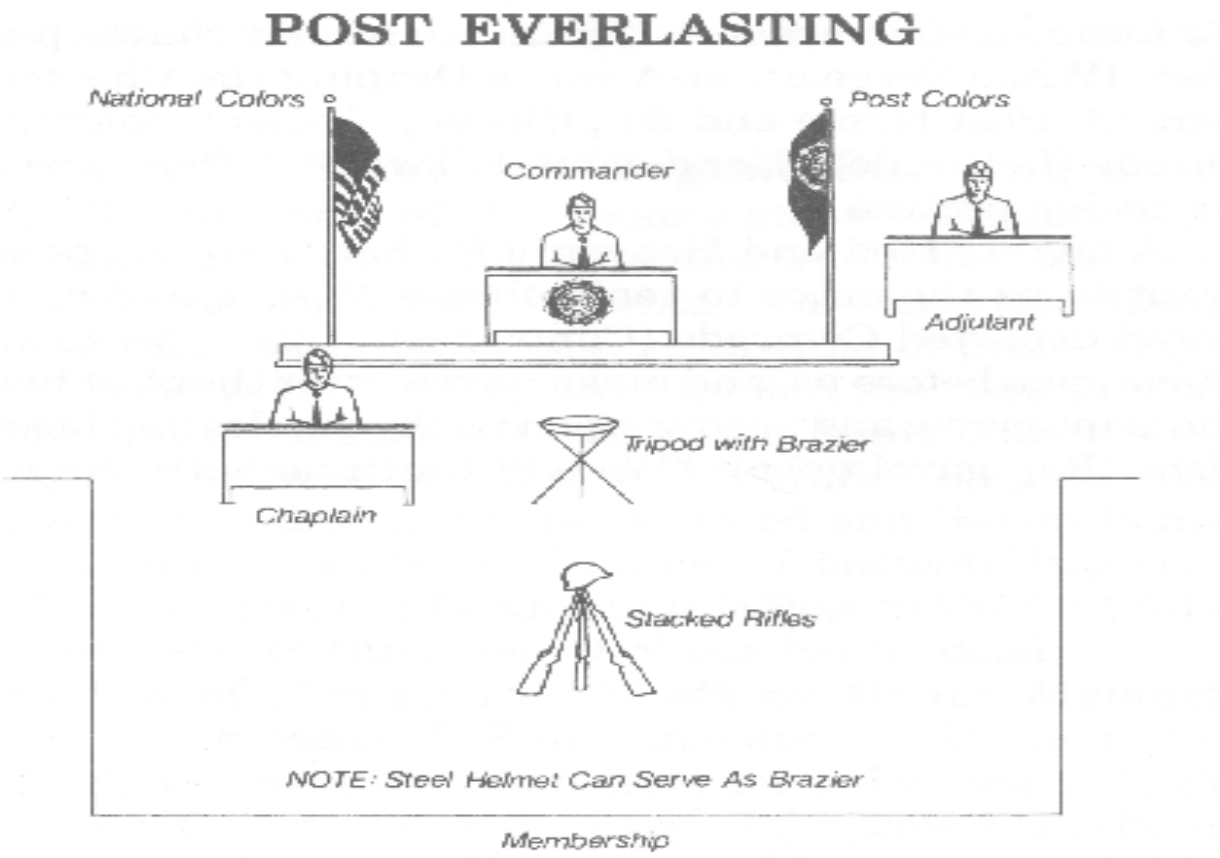
Authorized providers may receive reimbursement for certain expenses incurred in the rendering of military funeral honors. The assigned military unit will assist in obtaining reimbursement.

As an authorized provider of military funeral honors, The American Legion is the nation's representative for this most hallowed event. The Legion's dignified participation reflects the professionalism of our own service to the nation, and leaves a lasting impression on everyone present – a source of pride and support for the veteran's family, friends and a grateful nation.

The guidelines above should be followed when The American Legion is assisting as an authorized provider. If The American Legion is conducting the ceremony without the presence of a military detail, it will follow the rendering of honors set forth in this guide.

POST EVERLASTING

The American Legion service is nonsectarian. Therefore, it may vary in accordance with the religious beliefs of the deceased Legionnaire. The wishes of the family of the deceased, and of the officiating clergyman, should be respected. The casket is covered with a U.S. flag when closed or as it leaves the chapel or home. If the deceased served under an allied flag, that flag shall also be displayed near the casket.



The diagram above illustrates the proper position of flags, tables or stands used by officers participating in this ceremony. This equipment – with the exception of the brazier and stacked rifles, which are posted during the ceremony – should be put in place before the meeting opens.

Commander: "It is my sad duty to report that _____ has been called from our midst, and gone to report to the Commander of all."

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: "Before proceeding with other business of this meeting, we will conduct the Post Everlasting Ceremony for _____." Sergeant-at-arms, allow no one to enter or leave this room until the conclusion of this ceremony. All present will remain silent until the conclusion of this ceremony."

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, you will place the brazier and stack the rifles before this rostrum, properly arranged for our Post Everlasting ceremony."

The sergeant-at-arms salutes and gives the necessary commands to three rifle bearers and a member with the brazier. The commander returns the salute.

Sergeant-at-arms: "The equipment is properly arranged, commander."

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, you will retire the detail."

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: "This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before. We come to honor the memory of one who offered his (her) life in the service of our country and who has now enrolled in that great spirit army, whose footfalls cause no sound, but in the memory of mankind, their souls go marching on, sustained by the pride of service in time of war. Because of them our lives are free; because of them our nation lives; because of them the world is blessed.

"May this service deepen our reverence for our departed friends."

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: "The adjutant will place an American Legion cap on the rifles in remembrance of _____'s service to our country in the Armed Forces of the United States."

The adjutant places a cap on top of the stacked rifles. The commander waits until the adjutant returns, then gives three raps of the gavel.

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, lights out. Our chaplain will offer prayer."

Chaplain: "Our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom has transferred _____ to the jurisdiction of Post Everlasting of The American Legion. May your soul rest in peace. Amen."

Commander: "Adjutant, enter the name of _____ in the record of members of (post name and number) who have transferred to Post Everlasting."

The adjutant enters the name in a book provided for this purpose. The commander waits until the adjutant rises.

Commander: "Adjutant, hand me the letter containing the service and Legion records of _____, which we will transmit to Post Everlasting of The American Legion."

The commander then reads a letter.

Commander: "Chaplain, transmit this letter containing the service and Legion records of _____ to the adjutant of Post Everlasting."

The commander hands the letter to the chaplain, who places it in the brazier; the record burns. NOTE: The record burned by the chaplain can be either a blank piece of paper or a typed document. Do not burn the deceased member's post records.

Commander: "Bugler, sound taps in memory of _____ and in memory of all the members of Post Everlasting of The American Legion."

The bugler sounds taps.

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, turn on the lights."

The commander raps the gavel once to seat members.

Commander: "Adjutant, remove the hat. Sergeant-at-arms, remove the brazier and rifles."

A Post Everlasting citation is available through Emblem Sales, providing the next of kin with a permanent service record and a tribute to the deceased.

Service and American Legion records should contain the member's full name in full, date of birth, date of enlistment, service branch, rank, the theatre of war in which the member served, battles (if any), date

discharged, date joined The American Legion, Legion activities (if any), American Legion offices held (if any), and date of death. **Note:** Add or delete as the situation requires and as circumstances dictate.

AT FUNERAL, CHAPEL OR HOME

Post commander: "Another Legionnaire has been called to the High Command, and has gone to report to the Commander of us all."

Chaplain: "Let us pray. Eternal God, Supreme Commander of us all, Lord of the far-flung battle line, to whom the ranks of life report, we bow before You with reverent hearts and in sublime faith, knowing You lead us on in death as You have in life. For again You have ordered a Legionnaire to that realm in the West, beyond the twilight and the evening star, where beauty and valor and goodness dwell forever with the unnumbered multitude. Mindful of service nobly done, You have called (name of deceased) to everlasting rest. You have sealed (his or her) lips. With the faded blossoms of springtime and the withered leaves of autumn, You have called our friend to eternal peace, to the land of your silent mystery.

"Hear now the sorrows of those who mourn. Touch their tired hearts with healing. Protect them with Your holy care. Keep clean and bright in memory the splendid flame that now has flickered out, and shelter us with Your compassion.

"Lord of all life, who lives forever, again You have taught us the measure of our days. We are strangers with You and sojourners as our fathers were. Our days are as a shadow and there is none abiding. But You abide. Your years fail not. You never change.

A thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. The grass withers, the flower fades, but Your word endures forever. And therein is our help and hope.

"You heal the broken in heart and bind up their wounds. Comfort Your people. In their sorrow may there be no bitterness, no doubt of Your eternal goodness. Give them to know you do not mock us with this stubborn hope of life eternal – that having created and cared for us, You will not desert us to the dust; that You hold us with a love unfailing; that our dead are in Your keeping; and that You are able to do far more for them than all we ask or think.

"Until for us also the day breaks and the shadows flee, grant us so to live so our lives may honor the Legionnaires who have gone before us. Together we may come to the city which You have prepared for those who love You and keep Your commandments. For Your own name's sake we pray. Amen."

A short eulogy should be offered by someone who knew the veteran and Legionnaire well.

Post commander: "This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before. We come to honor the memory of one who offered life and service for God and country, one who has now enrolled in that great spirit army whose footfalls cause no sound. But in our memory, their souls go marching on. Proudly we remember their service in time of war. Because of them, our lives are free; because of them, our nation lives; because of them, the world is blessed. May the ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our honored member and friend.

"Let us not enshroud their memory with thoughts of sorrow. Tears or words of sympathy cannot bring back the comfort of those loving hands or the music of voices stilled. The solemn pride of that service is theirs, and for the living to remember.

"Legionnaires and friends, let us here pledge ourselves anew to united service, to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by a devotion to mutual helpfulness in the protection of those left behind.

"We realize how futile are mere words to express our deep and abiding sympathy in your loss. May you feel our friend is at rest, and in endless peace. Generation after generation, all the shadowy peoples of the past

have lived as we live, perplexed and mystified by death. They have gone into the great beyond with hearts filled with wistful longing, as all must go.

"Surely there is an afterlife for all who have been loyal and true, a life to which light and peace shall come, where the burden shall be lifted and the heartache shall cease, where the love, the hope and the fulfillment that escape us here shall be given to us, to be ours forever."

The chaplain offers a prayer in accordance with the faith of the deceased.

Protestant prayer

Chaplain: "O God, who heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds, look in tender pity and compassion upon Thy servants whose joy has been turned into mourning. Leave them not comfortless, but grant that they may be drawn closer to Thee and to one another by their common sorrow. Fill their souls with the light and comfort of Thy presence. Grant unto them such a vision of that life wherein all mysteries shall be revealed, and all tears be wiped away, that they may be able to endure. So dwell with them and be their God, until the day break and the shadows flee away, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Jewish prayer

Chaplain: "O Lord, who art full of compassion, who dwellest on high – God of forgiveness, who art merciful, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness – grant pardon of transgressions, nearness of salvation and perfect rest beneath the shadow of Thy divine presence, in the exalted places among the holy and pure, who shine as the brightness of the firmament, to (name of deceased) who hath gone to (his or her) eternal home. We beseech thee, O Lord of compassion; remember unto (him or her) for good all the meritorious and pious deeds, which (he or she) wrought while on earth. Open unto (him or her) the gates of righteousness and light, the gates of pity and grace. O shelter (him or her) forevermore under the cover of Thy wings, and let (his or her) soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. The Lord is (his or her) inheritance; may (he or she) rest in peace. And let us say amen."

Catholic prayer

Chaplain: "Father, we entrust our (brother or sister) to Your mercy. You loved (him or her) greatly in this life; now that (he or she) is freed from all its cares, give (him or her) happiness and peace forever.

"The old order has passed away; welcome (him or her) now into paradise where there will be no more sorrow, no more weeping or pain, but only peace and joy with Jesus, your Son, and the Holy Spirit forever and ever.

"Eternal rest grant unto (him or her), O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon (him or her). May (his or her) soul and all of the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen."

When there is a service at the chapel or home and the casket is open, the commander or chaplain may place a poppy inside at the end of the service.

"The memorial poppy is a national symbol of the flowers in Flanders Fields that embodies the sacrifices of men and women who served and died for their country in all wars. We now leave this poppy with you in your honor, and as an eternal reminder of the binding comradeship we feel for you."

The commander salutes. If the casket is sealed and draped with the U.S. flag, do not use the poppy, as nothing is placed on top of an U.S. flag. Simply salute.

Chaplain: "Farewell, our friend and fellow Legionnaire."

All Legionnaires present at the funeral service shall pass the casket and salute the deceased Legionnaire. After the salute, the Legionnaires present shall leave the funeral chapel in single file and with dignity.

NOTE: Wherever the term "commander" is used in connection with funeral escort, procedure at cemetery and graveside, it refers to the commander of the firing party. The post commander shall be at the head of the American Legion delegation, except when the funeral service is conducted at the grave. Then the post commander shall be on the left of the chaplain and at the head of the grave.

FUNERAL ESCORT

The escort is formed outside the church, chapel or residence. Upon appearance of the casket, the commander gives the call to present arms.

Rifle team commander: "Present ... arms."

After the casket is placed in the hearse, the final command is given.

Rifle team commander: "Order ... arms."

PROCEDURE AT CEMETERY

Once the column is opposite the grave, the rifle team and Legionnaires form a line facing the grave. The chaplain or clergy stands at the head of the grave. The casket is carried along the front of the line to the grave.

Rifle team commander: "Present ... arms."

The rifle team presents arms. The casket having been placed over the grave, arms are brought to the order.

Rifle team commander: "Parade rest."

The officer in charge of the rifle team brings the detachment to parade rest. All incline their heads.

AT GRAVESIDE

If no previous service has been conducted, the service for church, chapel or home should be read at the grave, prior to the following committal.

Chaplain: "Man is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth as a flower and is cut down. He flees also as a shadow and continues not. Forasmuch as God has taken out of the world the soul of our departed friend, we therefore commit (his or her) body to the ground to sleep and (his or her) soul to endless peace to rest. The dust returns to earth as it was, and the spirit returns unto God who gave it."

The chaplain offers a benediction (if desired). At the conclusion of the chaplain's service, the chaplain will ask the family to rise for the rendering of military honors.

Rifle team commander: "Salute our departed friend."

The officer in charge of the rifle team gives order according to infantry drill regulations in force at the time.

The rifle team fires three rounds of blank cartridges, the muzzles of the pieces being elevated. The bugler sounds taps and two pallbearers remove the U.S. flag from the casket, fold it in the traditional manner ***(see page 107)****, and place it on the arm of the chaplain, who will present the flag to the nearest kin.*

The escort forms a column, marches in quick time to where it first assembled, and is dismissed.

AMERICAN LEGION MILITARY FUNERAL ESCORTS

A full American Legion military funeral requires 21 Legionnaires in uniform: one chaplain, two color guards, eight rifle team members, one bugler, one commander, six pallbearers, and two color bearers of the rifle team. The rifle team commander is in charge of all details and movements. The rifle team should be composed of members who are familiar with handling a rifle. The rifle team should meet prior to the service and simulate volley firing. The entire escort should be arranged according to height and uniform worn.

In some instances, a family calls upon the post to take charge of the church or home service as well as the graveside service. As a general rule, however, the church has charge of the church or home services, after which the post chaplain conducts the final rites. The post conducting the funeral should confer with the clergy and the funeral director beforehand on the exact procedure to be followed.

POST SERVICE IN PLACE OF WORSHIP, CHAPEL OR HOME

The entire escort should be inside. All uncover except those bearing arms or colors. The pallbearers and rifle team should sit as separate groups.

POST SERVICE FOLLOWING THOSE AT PLACE OF WORSHIP, CHAPEL OR HOME

Pallbearers are covered, even when carrying the casket. When the casket comes into view, the rifle team commander calls members to attention.

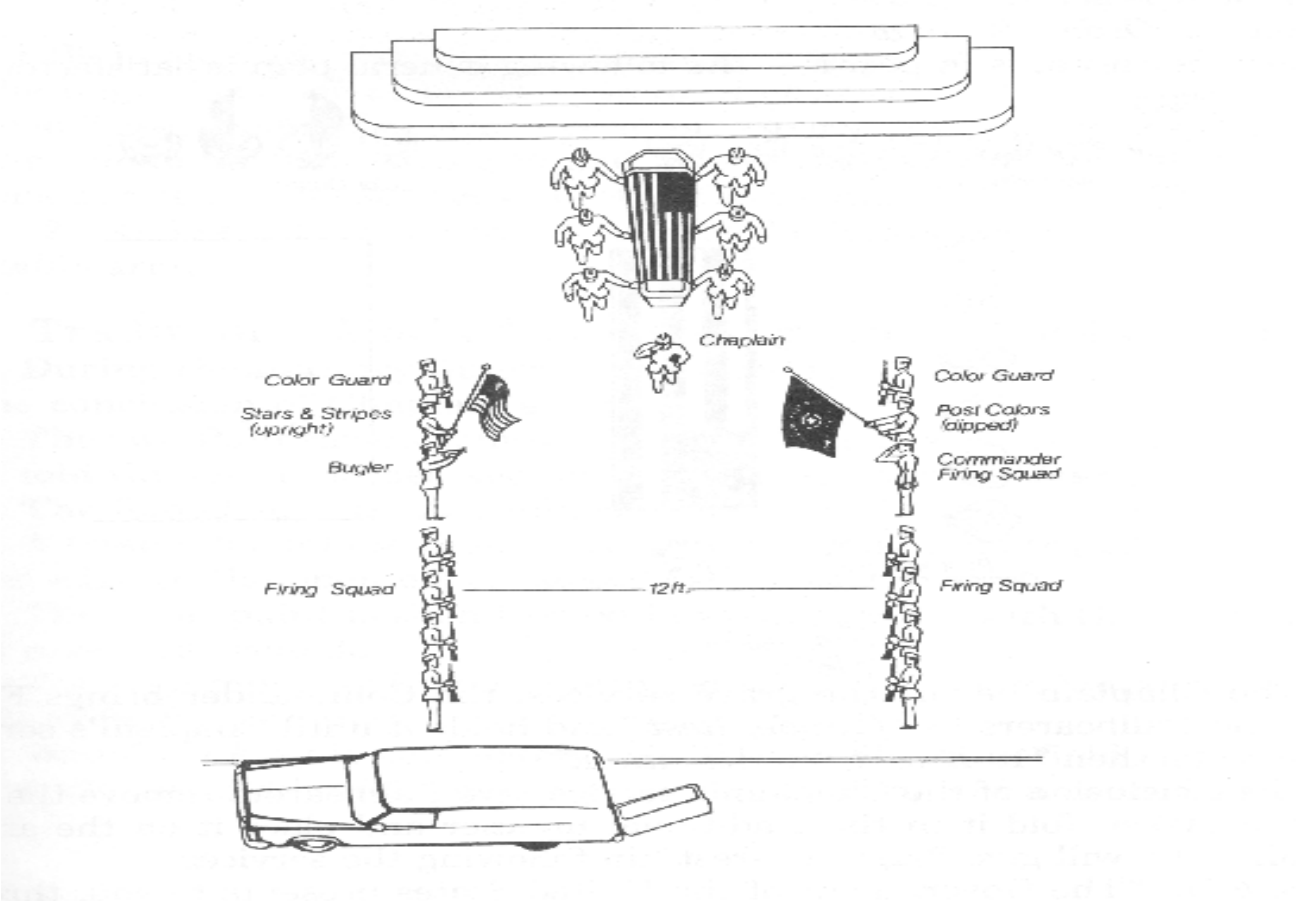
Rifle team commander: "Escort, attention."

Rifle team commander: "Present arms."

The commander salutes. As the chaplain leads the body through the escort, the commander holds the right hand salute. The chaplain salutes only the flag. The post banner is dipped as the casket passes. The rifle team remains at "present arms" until the casket is in the hearse and the doors are closed.

Rifle team commander: "Order arms."

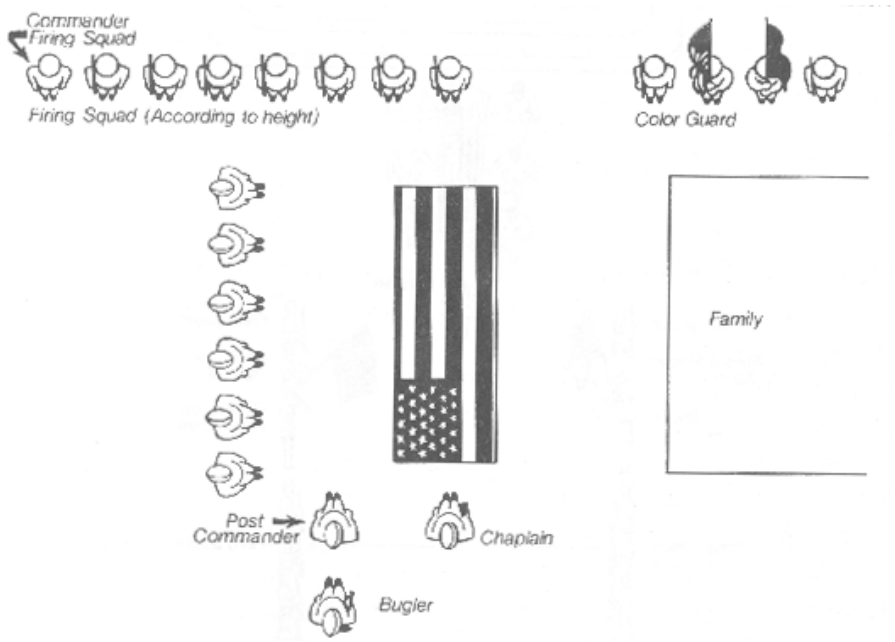
ESCORT LEAVING THE CHAPEL AND HEADING TOWARD THE HEARSE



Units should be arranged at the building exit before the body comes out of the place of worship or home, in the following order:

- The escorts enter cars as quickly as possible.
- The firing party, color bearers, guards and commander should go ahead of the procession and assume their places.
- The chaplain, bugler and pallbearers should go to the cemetery ahead of the funeral procession.
- The firing party can be given necessary drill at the grave before the hearse arrives.
- No definite arrangement at the grave is advisable because the surroundings at each differ. The following plan, changed when necessary, is satisfactory.
- The pallbearers at the cemetery await the opening of the hearse.
- The chaplain leads the casket from the hearse to the grave.
- Upon sight of the casket, the commander says, "Present arms," holds position until the body is set over grave, then says, "Order arms."

WHEN THE CASKET IS IN POSITION



As the chaplain begins the graveside service, the commander brings the rifle team and pallbearers to parade rest, holds position until the chaplain's services are completed, then says, "Escort, attention." The chaplain will ask the family to rise for the rendering of military honors.

At the commander's order, "Ready," bring the rifle so that the muzzle of the rifle is level with point of chin. The right foot should be placed to the rear about 10 inches. The right hand should be on small of stock and left hand at rear of sight.

At the command "Load" (rifles should be loaded, none in the chamber before the body is taken from hearse), work the bolt and put the cartridge in the chamber.

Remain at position of "Ready" until order "Aim" is given. An aiming point should be designated so elevation of rifles is uniform. The command of execution is "Fire."

After firing, the first and second volleys come to position of "Ready" and wait for the command, "Ready, aim, fire." Upon completion of the third volley, come to "Present arms" without command.

If the rifle jams, don't attempt to fix it; simulate firing.

The bugler takes position at the head of the grave and sounds taps. Echo taps, if possible, is impressive.

The commander of the firing party says, "Order arms."

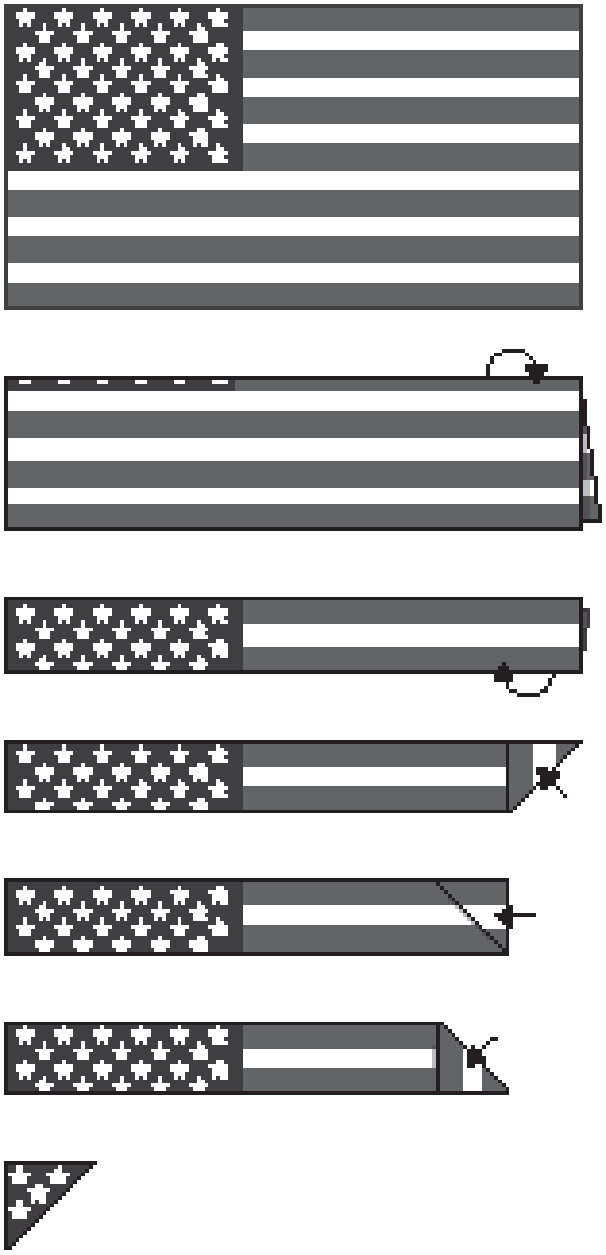
Following the rifle team volley, two pallbearers remove the flag from the casket, fold it in the traditional manner and place it on the arm of chaplain, who will give the flag to the nearest kin following the service.

Chaplain: "On behalf of the president of the United States (the United States Army, the United States Marine Corps, the United States Navy, the United States Air Force, the United States Coast Guard or the United States Space Force) and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one's honorable service."

This concludes the service, and the commander says, "Right or left face, at trail, forward, march," followed by the colors and then by pallbearers.

TRADITIONAL METHOD OF FOLDING U.S. FLAG

1. During military funerals, the flag is folded immediately at the conclusion of chaplain's service.
2. The two pallbearers remove the flag from the casket, hold it taut and fold the lower striped section of the flag over the blue field.
3. The folded edge is folded over to meet the open edge.
4. A triangular fold is started by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to the open edge.
5. The outer point is turned inward, parallel with the open edge, to form a second triangle.
6. The triangular folding continues until the entire length of the flag is folded. When completely folded, only the blue field should be visible, and it should be folded in the triangular shape of a cocked hat.



SECTION 4

GOVERNING RESOLUTIONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

To download the full text of these resolutions, and to search and view all current American Legion resolutions, go to **archive.legion.org**.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Washington, D.C.
February 7, 1921

Resolution No. 5: Permanent Charters
Origin: Wisconsin
Submitted by: National Executive Committee
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, No post of The American Legion shall be permanently chartered except on the recommendation of the department in which such post is situated; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Washington, D.C. on February 7, 1921, That a permanent charter will not be approved or issued to a post by a department until the department is satisfied that all conditions are present to indicate that such post will be able to maintain itself and to continue its existence; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That a permanent charter being once granted to a post, will not be revoked or altered, except upon recommendation of the department affected.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Indianapolis, Indiana
May 5-6, 1938

Resolution No. 46: Transfer of Members of The American Legion From One Post to Another
Origin: Subcommittee on Resolutions
Submitted by: Subcommittee on Resolutions

WHEREAS, Throughout each current Legion year many members of The American Legion transfer from one post to another; and

WHEREAS, No action has ever been taken by the National Executive Committee determining whether the transferring post or the post to which such transfer is made shall receive credit for such members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 5–6, 1938, That in all instances where a member of The American Legion during a current year transfers from one post to another after payment

of his current year's dues, the transferring post shall retain said dues and shall have credit for such membership during the remainder of such year for which said dues were collected, but said transferred member shall be entitled to all of the benefits and assume all of the responsibilities of membership in the post to which transfer is made, after such transfer is effective.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Indianapolis, Indiana
May 1-2, 1963

Resolution No. 43: Department American Legion Colleges Recommended
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted by: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The success of The American Legion in both membership performance and in program operations is largely dependent upon post leadership; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon thenational organization and the several department organizations of The American Legion to lend their assistance in leadership training and development; and

WHEREAS, The experience of a number of departments has clearly demonstrated the great value of well-planned department American Legion colleges; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committeeof The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 1-2, 1963, That the value of such colleges be called to the attention of all departments and that the Membership& Post Activities Committee and its staff be directed, upon the invitation of departments, to lend their assistance to departments in the planning and holding of such colleges insofar as travel budgets and staff time will permit.

FORTY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Washington, D.C.
August 30, 31, September 1, 1966

Resolution No. 570: Reaffirmation of American Legion's Policy Not to Discriminate Against Persons Because of Race, Religion, Color, Creed or National Origin
Origin: Illinois
Submitted By: Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs (Membership)
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is considering extending the privilege of membership to a new generation of war veterans; and

WHEREAS, Many of the new eligibles will not be aware of the history, purpose, programs or policies of The American Legion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Washington, D.C., August 30, 31, September 1, 1966, That the national headquarters be instructed to undertake an educational program directed toward the non-member eligibles, which program should emphasize the service programs and the fact that membership is in no way based on race, creed, color, national origin or political affiliation.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
MAY 6-7, 1998

Resolution No. 1: The American Legion Data Base and Name and Address Information Protection
Origin: Subcommittee on Resolutions
Submitted By: Subcommittee on Resolutions

WHEREAS, The name and address list of members of The American Legion is a very valuable asset; and

WHEREAS, Technological changes may place the security of this asset at risk; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee, by Resolution No. 1 adopted August 23, 1976, established standards to protect said asset; and

WHEREAS, It is advisable to reiterate and bring to date the protection and standards for use of said asset; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6-7, 1998, That it hereby reaffirms, reiterates and amends Resolution No. 1, adopted by the National Executive Committee August 23, 1976, to take into account changes in technology; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the data base of The American Legion, which includes lists of names and addresses of individuals and Posts in electronic media, is a very valuable asset of The American Legion which the National Adjutant is hereby directed to protect as a paramount duty; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That each Department of The American Legion is strongly urged to adopt procedures and standards to protect data base information which may come into the custody or control of a Department; and, be it further

RESOLVED, Under no circumstances shall the names and addresses of individual Legionnaires be released or lists of Posts be released to any outside person, firm or corporation for a purpose not directly connected with a program or activity of The American Legion, except that nothing contained herein shall restrict the distribution of such names and addresses to Departments and Posts as may be necessary to the administration of programs of The American Legion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the authority previously extended is re-affirmed to permit administrative officials of The American Legion to furnish lists of American Legion Posts to Government agencies to assist in carrying out programs which have this expressed approval of The American Legion or which, in the judgment of the National Adjutant, are related to or in accordance with such expressed actions; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That when an inquiry is received concerning an individual Legionnaire, the National Headquarters may forward such inquiry to the individual concerned so that direct contact may be made by the Legionnaires with the person making the inquiry, but National Headquarters will not provide any information to the inquiry, beyond an acknowledgment of the inquiry and a statement that if the person in question is found to be a member of The American Legion, the inquiry will be forwarded to that person; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the above restrictions will not apply to official inquiries received in writing from recognized law enforcement agencies on the stationery of such agencies, and that National Headquarters personnel are authorized and directed to cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies and to provide the information sought in compliance with official requests of such agencies.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
OCTOBER 13-14, 2010

Resolution No. 14: Affirmative Consent For Transfer
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted by: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion since 1919 has been an organization of volunteers tied together by four pillars of service; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion since 1919 is an organization where members are required to sign volunteer consent for membership; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a grass roots community based organization with a focus on veteran's service on a voluntary basis; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion encourages individuals to become members of the post that they desire and that can best serve both that individual's preference and the overall goals and objectives of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The current, long standing policy of The American Legion is that an individual member has the right of affirmative consent concerning his or her membership affiliation with their American Legion post; and

WHEREAS, The strength of The American Legion lies with its individual members and their dedication and devotion to their selected American Legion post; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meetings assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 13-14, 2010, That before a membership transfer occurs there must be a Member Data Form 30-001 (attached) provided to National Headquarters, signed by a member or certified by a post commander or post adjutant, where member has given his or her oral permission to be transferred.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
MAY 9 – 10, 2012

Resolution No. 12: Background Screening Procedures And Policies For American Legion Youth Program Volunteers
Origin: Americanism Commission
Submitted by: Americanism Commission

WHEREAS, An economic news release by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, shows that nearly 26 percent of all volunteer hours worked throughout the United States in 2011 were contributed toward educational or youth-related organizations; and

WHEREAS, Youth programs of The American Legion rely heavily upon dedicated volunteers willing to contribute time and skills for executing essential functions of the programs; and

WHEREAS, The aftermath of recent high-profile allegations of child sexual molestation across the United States has demonstrated the importance for ensuring protection of vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, Through numerous resolutions over the years The American Legion has advocated for guarding against child neglect and abuse; and

WHEREAS, Screening, clearly established polices, instruction, and oversight are all effective elements of volunteer management that can help uphold the integrity and safety of a youth program and mitigate the risk and liability to an organization; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9-10, 2012, That departments of The American Legion are strongly urged and encouraged to establish background screening procedures and policies similar to those of the National Organization for volunteers supporting youth programs conducted within their departments.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
OCTOBER 12-13, 2016

Resolution No. 4: Establish National Poppy Week
Origin: Marketing Commission
Submitted By: Finance Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary have long utilized the red poppy in memoriam to promote reverence for our military who sacrificed their lives for our freedom, and long promoted remembrance of our veterans for their sacrifices in service to our country; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Auxiliary and Legion Family have long utilized the red poppy as its official flower symbolizing the blood shed by those who have served in our U.S. military, and distributed poppies for donations as a symbolic homage to honor our military and veterans; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 3 adopted by The American Legion National Executive Committee in May 2014 expanded the Legion's Poppy Fund Program Rules providing more flexibility for the Poppy Program with expanded options, including who may make the poppies or poppy items, and allowing Poppy Funds to benefit both veterans and active-duty military as provided in the expanded Poppy Rules, creating new opportunities to pay homage to our veterans and military via the symbolism of the red poppy; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that as The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary approach our 100th anniversaries, we expand the meaning and symbolism of the poppy with an official National Poppy Week declared by Congress, providing greater opportunities for The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary to mirror the manner in which the poppy is symbolically showcased in England and Canada in celebratory fashion on their Remembrance Day, also known as Armistice Day and Poppy Day; and

WHEREAS, That the American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee at its meeting August 27, 2016 in Cincinnati, Ohio, voted to establish a National Poppy Day and directed national leaders to work with The American Legion in promoting federal legislation to establish a National Poppy Day, ideally to be observed on the Friday before Memorial Day; now, therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12-13, 2016, That The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary further advocate a Congressional declaration establishing a National

Poppy Week around Memorial Day, starting the Monday before and continuing through Memorial Day, to bring greater significance to the poppy as a symbol of the sacrifice our veterans make for our freedom.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
OCTOBER 12-13, 2016

Resolution No. 16: Expectations for Rendering Proper Respect when Participating in Programs of The American Legion
Origin: Americanism Commission
Submitted By: Americanism Commission
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion since its founding has supported this country, and

WHEREAS, Countless members of The American Legion died defending the Constitution of the United States and the First Amendment; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has fought bigotry, racism and similar concepts since its founding; and

WHEREAS, The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion pledges that "For God and Country" we shall associate ourselves together "To foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism"; and

WHEREAS, There have been public displays of disrespect to the Flag of the United States, including during the National Anthem, by certain individuals, groups and others failing to show respect thereto; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion realizes there are proper platforms for expressing protest or disagreement; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion vehemently rejects using disrespect to the Flag of the United States or the National Anthem as a platform for publicly expressing protest or disagreement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12-13, 2016, That The American Legion expects participants of all its programs to show proper respect to the Flag of the United States, at all times, including during the National Anthem; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the national organization of The American Legion recommends to departments and posts that the chairman or director of any American Legion program make clear to all participants in advance of the program that The American Legion has the expectation for rendering proper respect to the Flag of the United States, at all times, including during the National Anthem; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That if any participant of any program of The American Legion cannot or will not live up to this expectation, the individual should not be a participant in American Legion programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That if any participant of any national -level program of The American Legion cannot or will not live up to this expectation, the individual will be removed from the program and not be allowed any further participation.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
RENO, NEVADA
AUGUST 21, 2017

Resolution No. 3: Law Enforcement and Tolerance
Origin: Subcommittee on Resolutions
Submitted By: Subcommittee on Resolutions

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 407: Law Enforcement and Tolerance, was implemented at the Fifth National Convention assembled in San Francisco, California, October 15-19, 1923, and stated:

> "WHEREAS, The fundamental law of our country guarantees to all peoples equal rights and equal opportunities and the right to worship their God as they see fit; and
>
> WHEREAS, It is provided that our laws shall be made and enforced by representatives of our people, chosen under the law so to do; and
>
> WHEREAS, Membership of The American Legion is made up of those who served our country in time of great national stress, without distinction as to race, color, creed or class; and
>
> WHEREAS, The American Legion is pledged to the orderly enforcement of our laws through lawful agencies; now, therefore, be it
>
> RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in San Francisco, California, October 15-19, 1923, That we consider any individual, group of individuals, or organizations, which creates, or fosters racial, religious or class strife among our people, or which takes into their own hands the enforcement of law, determination of guilt, or infliction of punishment, to be un-American, a menace to our liberties, and destructive to our fundamental law; and, be it finally
>
> RESOLVED, That we consider such action by any individual, groups, or organizations, to be inconsistent with the ideals and purposes of The American Legion"; and

WHEREAS, Due to the volatile and current violent events occurring in numerous cities throughout the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion completely supports the rule of law and order; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes the time has come to reaffirm our commitment to law and order by reaffirming Resolution 407 of 1923; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Reno, Nevada, on August 21, 2017, That The American Legion considers any individual, group of individuals, or organizations, which creates, or fosters racial, religious or class strife among our people, or which takes into their own hands the enforcement of law, determination of guilt, or infliction of punishment, to be un-American, a menace to our liberties, and destructive to our fundamental law; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion considers such action by any individual, groups, or organizations, to be inconsistent with the ideals and purposes of The American Legion.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Indianapolis, Indiana
May 9-10, 2018

Resolution No. 1: Rules and Regulations Governing use of the Name and Emblems of The American Legion
Origin: Emblem Committee
Submitted By: Marketing Commission

WHEREAS, The National Organization of The American Legion is the sole trademarked owner of name "The American Legion," "American Legion," the traditional golden emblem of The American Legion and a number of other American Legion related logos and/or insignia; and

WHEREAS, Some merchandise bearing the Legion name, emblem, logo or insignia thereon, are neither meeting the specifications heretofore adopted for the manufacture of such merchandise nor receiving approval for the manufacture thereof, have been manufactured and sold to Legionnaires, departments, districts, counties and posts, and that neither the national organization nor the several departments are receiving any financial benefit by reason of the sale of such unauthorized merchandise except in the instances by the purchase of the Legion name, emblem, logo or insignia from the American Legion Emblem Division and/or American Legion official licensees; and

WHEREAS, It is the desire and intention that the individual Legionnaire and the several posts, counties, districts and departments shall have merchandise bearing the Legion name, emblem, logo or insignia thereon of the best quality obtainable and at the best price and that any profits therefrom shall inure to the benefit of The American Legion for its many programs; and

WHEREAS, The basic endeavor of the Emblem Committee and its division always shall be to provide the best quality official American Legion merchandise to our membership at equal to or better than would be available through any other medium, by the mass production of such Legion merchandise; and

WHEREAS, The manufacture, sale, or purchase for re-sale of any merchandise bearing thereon the name, emblem, logo or insignia, or any colorable imitation thereof, of The American Legion, should be made only when authorized under the rules and regulations of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The emblem is protected by federal criminal law, letters patent and trademark and the name is a trademark and appears as part of the emblem of The American Legion and should never ever change; and

WHEREAS, Resolution Number 71, adopted by the National Executive Committee May 5-7, 1947, as amended by Resolution Number 51, adopted by the National Executive Committee May 3-5, 1948, as amended by Resolution Number 11,adopted by the National Executive Committee May 5-8, 2005, was the most recent resolution addressing the rules and regulations governing use of the name and emblems of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, There have been several changes since 2005 that affect the use of the name and emblems of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, This resolution clarifies, brings up-to-date, replaces, and rescinds Resolution Number 71, adopted by the National Executive Committee May 5-7, 1947, as amended by Resolution Number 51,adopted by the National Executive Committee May 3-5, 1948 and Resolution Number 11, adopted by the National Executive Committee May 5-8, 2005; and

WHEREAS, Your Emblem Committee and your Marketing Commission have reviewed this resolution and recommend it for approval; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9- 10, 2018, That the use, display and the manufacture, sale or purchase for re-sale either separately or appended to, or to be appended to, or the reproduction on any article of merchandise manufactured or sold, of the badge, medal, emblem, or other insignia or any colorable imitation thereof, or the reproduction thereof for commercial purposes, of The American Legion, or the printing, lithographing, engraving or other like reproduction on any poster, circular, periodical, magazine, newspaper or other publication, or the circulation or distribution of any such printed matter bearing the reproduction of such badge, medal, emblem or other insignia or colorable imitation thereof, of The American Legion, shall be in accordance with the following rules and regulations (For examples of use see Attachment A) hereby declaring the policy of The American Legion:

1. That the word "Emblem" used hereafter shall mean all insignia, logo, badge, medal, emblem, or any colorable imitation thereof or the reproduction thereof, of The American Legion, including all trademark designs as listed in the booklet titled "Name and Emblem – Use and Protection Guide" (amended as needed) and/or listed at the United States Patent Office.

2. That the national organization of The American Legion is sole owner of the Emblem and all associated trademarks.

3. That the national adjutant has the legal authority to authorize the use of an Emblem and may appoint designated representatives who may also authorize the use of an Emblem.

4. That all national officers are charged with resisting and restraining any unauthorized use of the name, "The American Legion," "American Legion" or an Emblem.

5. That the use of an Emblem by the individual Legionnaire shall be limited to the wearing of the official insignia and to the possession of authorized jewelry, or merchandise, bearing an Emblem provided by American Legion Emblem Sales or official American Legion licensees.

6. That the use of an Emblem by posts shall be strictly confined to self-production by using the exact imprint or reproduction of an Emblem upon stationery, or upon post publications, notices, posters, or placards, websites or matters of similar character used in the ordinary routine communication of legitimate post business and activities sponsored and duly authorized by the post and to the use of authorized regalia or merchandise bearing an Emblem as provided by American Legion Emblem Sales, official American Legion licensees or otherwise authorized by the national adjutant or the national adjutant's designated representative.

7. That the use of an Emblem by posts for:

(a) any commercialized use;

(b) any items reproduced by non-Post commercial means; or

(c) for the sale of any merchandise bearing an Emblem and/or words "The

American Legion" or "American Legion" needs prior written authorization from the national adjutant or the national adjutant's designated representative for such activity.

8. That the use of an Emblem by departments shall be the exact same standards as the use by posts, as stated herein, except that department convention committees are privileged to use an Emblem for decoration and souvenir purposes, subject in each instance to the prior approval of the national adjutant or the national adjutant's designated representative.

9. That any other use of the name, "The American Legion", or "American Legion" or an Emblem, including but not limited to licenses or permissions, shall be subject to the prior written approval

of the national adjutant, or the national adjutant's designated representative: Provided, however, (a) that any requests for such other use of an Emblem by posts shall first be subject to department written approval before submission to the national adjutant, and (b) that any such use by the departments, when approved by the national adjutant, shall be confined completely within the territorial limits of the department.

10. That all merchandise bearing an Emblem for commercial purposes by any entity shall be manufactured in accordance with all trademarked specifications and only upon the prior written approval of the national adjutant or the national adjutant's designated representative.

11. That the manufacture, sale or purchase for re- sale of any merchandise, equipment or products of any kind whatsoever bearing thereon an Emblem, by any person or corporation without the prior written approval of the national organization of The American Legion, shall be prohibited and shall be considered in violation of the rules and regulations of the national organization and the Act of Congress of the United States, approved June 25, 1940, it being Public Law No. 663, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, Chapter No. 426.

12. That display of an Emblem shall be in a dignified manner and each display shall be the entire Emblem standing by itself without any attachment or inclusion of or into any other symbol, with the exception of jewelry where room is not available for such independent display. The Emblem represents The American Legion, and accordingly, is entitled to all appropriate respect; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution Number 71, adopted by the National Executive Committee May 5-7, 1947, as amended by Resolution Number 51, adopted by the National Executive Committee May 3-5, 1948 and Resolution Number 11, adopted by the National Executive Committee May 5-8, 2005 is hereby rescinded.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Indianapolis, Indiana
October 17-18, 2018

Resolution No. 10: Support of the Veteran's Creed
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion has since its founding in 1919 dedicated itself to the service of veterans, their families, active servicemembers and the local communities where we live; and

WHEREAS, One of the reasons The American Legion exists is "…To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy …"; and

WHEREAS, The Veteran's Creed is very similar to the U.S. Army's Soldiers Creed which has the intent to underline the "altruistic ethos of veterans themselves"; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans across America, seek to continue to make a difference in their communities and across our country; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans continue to take their oath of allegiance to their country and brothers and sisters in arms seriously; and

WHEREAS, In the fall of 2017, veterans groups worked with Georgetown University, located in Washington, D.C., to establish a Veteran's Creed whose intent was to inspire veterans to continue to serve and lead in service to their communities and country; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion can use the Veteran's Creed as a rallying point for our brothers and sisters in arms to understand that our mission is far from over; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 17-18, 2018, That The American Legion support, by appropriate means, the Veteran's Creed and its eight points; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion publish the Veteran's Creed as follows in the Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies:

1.) I am an American Veteran

2.) I proudly served my country

3.) I live the values I learned in the military

4.) I continue to serve my community, my country and my fellow veterans

5.) I maintain my physical and mental discipline

6.) I continue to lead and improve

7.) I make a difference

8.) I honor and remember my fallen comrades

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
May 8-9, 2019
Indianapolis, Indiana

Resolution No. 18: Buddy Check
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted by: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, At its core, The American Legion is an organization by, for, and about veterans of our United States; and

WHEREAS, Serving those who serve is an honor and distinction not unique to The American Legion, but one Legionnaires should endeavor to serve as an example for all Americans; and

WHEREAS, Our most sacred responsibility is to care for our fellow men and women who served this nation with honor; and

WHEREAS, Legionnaires are naturally inclined, through demonstrated commitment to serve something greater than self, to extend hearts and hands to others; and

WHEREAS, Our duty is to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness; and

WHEREAS, Only with servant leadership and direct contact can we uncover needs and priorities of our warriors and avert any crisis; and

WHEREAS, Legionnaires shall conduct veteran outreach as part of their daily routine; and

WHEREAS, Legionnaires at all levels join together at least twice per year to contact all members both active and expired with a health and welfare check to be known as "Buddy Check"; and

WHEREAS, "Buddy Check" is not a membership drive or attempt to solicit participation in, or donations for, American Legion programs, it is solely a health and welfare check or offer of assistance; and

WHEREAS, This resolution has the concurrence of the Media & Communications Commission and the Marketing Commission; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in Regular Meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 8-9, 2019, That the process of "Buddy Check" be made formal and executed Legion-wide concurrent with the weeks of The American Legion birthday and of Veterans Day; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the "Buddy Check" be promoted through national and department marketing, media and social media campaigns; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the "Buddy Check" weeks be the primary operational focus of every member, post, department and the National Headquarters; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That results of each "Buddy Check" week be established as a reportable item on the annual Consolidated Post Report.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
EMAIL 2020

Resolution No. 5: Vision, Mission, Values and Motto of The American Legion
Origin: Finance Commission
Submitted By: Finance Commission
(As amended by National Executive Committee Resolution No. 38, October 14-15, 2020)

WHEREAS, The American Legion was chartered by the United States of America on September 16, 1919, with the initial primary organizational purposes enumerated in 36 USC §21702; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion founders expanded these initial purposes into the American Legion's Preamble which communicates to the organization the principles of The American Legion and the purpose of the Constitution of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, Current modern business practices have evolved since The American Legion originated and it is leadership's goal to stay abreast of such evolutions; and

WHEREAS, One such business practice is an organization's use of a vision statement, a mission statement, value principles and a motto; and

WHEREAS, A vision statement is a short succinct public statement of an organization's future and long-term directional goals; and

WHEREAS, A mission statement is a short succinct public statement of how an organization intends to fulfill its vision; and

WHEREAS, Value principles guide the organization's business decisions and actions; and

WHEREAS, A motto is a reiterated phrase that encapsulates the vision and mission of an organization; and

WHEREAS, The vision and mission statements, along with the value principles and motto, help define the purpose of an organization, align the organization's resources toward a successful future, provide clear and effective decision guidance; form part of a business' strategic planning tool and publicly communicate the message; and

WHEREAS, In order that The American Legion has clear guidance to act in these turbulent times; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion by electronic mail vote pursuant to Rule 12 of the Rules of the National Executive Committee, That The American Legion adopt the following vision statement: "The American Legion: Veterans Strengthening America"; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion adopt the following mission statement: "To enhance the well-being of America's veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness"; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion adopt the following value principles:

- **A VETERAN IS A VETERAN – which means The American Legion embraces all current and former members of the military and endeavors to help them transition into their communities.**
- **SELFLESS SERVICE – which means The American Legion celebrates all who contribute to something larger than themselves and inspires others to serve and strengthen America.**
- **AMERICAN VALUES AND PATRIOTISM – which means The American Legion advocates for upholding and defending the United States Constitution, equal justice and opportunity for everyone and discrimination against no one, youth education, responsible citizenship and honoring military service by observing and participating in patriotic and memorial events.**
- **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – which means The American Legion meets the unique needs of local communities.**
- **ADVANCING THE VISION – which means The American Legion educates, mentors and leads new generations of Americans.**
- **HONORING THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US – which means The American Legion pays perpetual respect for all past military sacrifices to ensure they are never forgotten by new generations.; and, be it finally**

RESOLVED, That The American Legion adopt the following motto: "Veterans Strengthening America."

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
May 5-6, 2021
Virtual

Resolution No. 5: Guidelines for the American Legion Riders National Program
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted by: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, American Legion Riders (ALR) was established in 1993 as a post-level activity at Garden City American Legion Post 396, Department of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 35: "American Legion Riders as a National Program," NEC, October 17- 18, 2007, Resolution No. 32: "Amendment to Resolution No. 35," NEC, May 4-5, 2011 and Resolution No. 19 (NEC, Oct. 2020), Subject: "Updated Program Guidelines for the American Legion Riders (ALR) National Program" were guiding documents for the post and department ALR programs under the support of the hosting posts and departments and are combined in this resolution; and

WHEREAS, Today there are more than 2,100 ALR chapters at the post, district and department levels whose membership consists of members of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary who share a common interest in motorcycle ownership and pleasure riding for veterans' causes; and

WHEREAS, The ALR has expanded to more than 150,000 members, 2,100 local chapters in all 50 domestic departments and in two foreign departments; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the ALR is to use their common interest and association to promote the aims and purposes of The American Legion as well as the promotion of motorcycle safety and awareness; and

WHEREAS, Since 2014, ALR has raised approximately 1 million dollars annually for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund while raising The American Legions brand awareness and penetration in their communities and promoting the American Legion Family; and

WHEREAS, Membership growth in The American Legion has increased in many posts that have supported ALR and in some cases these members now serve in leadership positions within The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, Many posts, districts and departments of The American Legion have acknowledged ALR as a local American Legion program and are tasked with establishing guidelines for their ALR program to follow; and

WHEREAS, ALR supports those individuals serving in uniform today through participation in such activities as the Patriot Guard, which was founded by the Department of Kansas ALR to provide escorts for our fallen heroes returning from war and taking care of the needs of the families left behind; and

WHEREAS, All ALR members strive to maintain the image of The American Legion by upholding The American Legion name and brand which symbolizes the integrity and principles of this great organization; and

WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of The American Legion, through the ALR Advisory Committee, to review and amend from time to time such guidelines to provide more effective direction to The American Legion Riders programs in order to protect the trademarks, emblems and copyrights of The American Legion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled virtually on May 5-6, 2021, That all American Legion Riders (ALR) groups be organized as programs supported by a post, department or other duly constituted department governing body of The American Legion and shall uphold the declared principles of The American Legion as well as conform to, and abide by, the lawful regulations and decisions of their department, post and/or other duly constituted department governing body; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That because The American Legion owns, controls, protects and defends The American Legion's intellectual property, composed of trademarks, emblems and copyrights (Emblem or Emblems), the following guidelines are required to fulfill protective standards:

1. All members of the ALR shall be current members of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary.

2. Each ALR member shall establish and maintain ALR membership by owning, individually or through marriage, a common-law marriage, a life partnership or a long-term relationship, a motorcycle licensed and insured as required by the ALR member's state laws.

3. ALR programs may allow for continued ALR membership for those ALR members who have given up motorcycle ownership because of age, illness, injury or other reasons outside the ALR member's control.

4. ALR programs may allow current members of The American Legion family to join ALR chapters as supporting members.

5. The only approved titles for ALR officers shall be chairman and vice-chairman or director and assistant director.

6. All ALR members shall maintain the image of The American Legion, protect The American Legion's Emblems, which symbolizes the integrity and principles of The American Legion and if wearing Emblem items then the Emblem items will be American Legion authorized Emblems.

7. ALR members' vests should display the integrity, principles and values of The American Legion and the ALR by avoiding patches or pins with (1) explicit or offensive language and/or images and (2) political or partisan language and/or images since The American Legion is a non-partisan organization.

8. The ALR chapter should strive to represent the virtues, values, ethics and morals of The American Legion in support of freedom, democracy and the safety of our citizens.

9. Per NEC Resolution No. 37, May 4-5, 1988 ALR chapters do not have the authority to enter into any formal association or club/council membership with any outside organization that may act or vote in any manner outside the control of The American Legion.

10. All ALR members shall obey the laws of their respective state and/or the state(s) in which they ride.

11. The ALR chapter's sponsoring organization (post, district and/or department) are strongly urged to review liability insurance coverage to ensure that adequate insurance coverage is available to insure/cover the sponsoring organization, including insurance coverage for any specific special riding event; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That American Legion Riders programs shall abide by the American Legion National Constitution and National By-laws as well as their established post, district and department directives; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That American Legion National Headquarters and the respective departments shall maintain general oversight of the American Legion Riders program in regard to proper use of the Emblems of The American Legion, the American Legion Riders and the American Legion Legacy Run and to ensure compliance with the American Legion National Constitution and National By-Laws; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 19 (NEC, Oct. 2020), Subject: "Updated Program Guidelines for the American Legion Riders (ALR) National Program" is hereby superseded and rescinded.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
October 12-13, 2022
Indianapolis, Indiana

Resolution No. 7: American Legion Family Day
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted by: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The founding fathers of The American Legion established their principles through the creation of the Four Pillars of The American Legion, which are Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth programs; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion through resolve urges all members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the American Legion Riders, and the Sons of The American Legion, known collectively as the American Legion Family, to assist in carrying on efforts in their locales by developing plans in support of the Four Pillars by remaining informed and assisting veterans, families, schools, workplaces and communities in their time of need; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Family continues to remain steadfast in their commitment to these principles in meeting the ever-expanding needs of their local communities throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is increasing its efforts to reduce the number of veteran suicides by promoting a program titled, "Be The One," and encouraging all members of the American Legion Family to participate by raising awareness and funds to donate to charities that assist in the prevention of veteran suicide; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Family is an integral component supporting those in need within their local communities and does so in an unselfish manner without want of notice, personal gain or recognition; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12-13, 2022, That a special day known as "American Legion Family Day" be established and observed annually on the last Saturday of April, when all American Legion posts throughout the nation would open their doors to their members and the members of their local communities with the intent of celebrating all great deeds and works of the American Legion Family with the intent to educate, recruit, recognize and to give back to those members that continually support the gift of giving; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the American Legion Family shall place special emphasis and awareness on the "Be The One" program on American Legion Family Day.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
October 12-13, 2022
Indianapolis, Indiana

Resolution No. 6: Officer and Chairman Certification of Service Update
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted by: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The Certification of Service Record of American Legion Officers has been in effect since October 20, 1931 pursuant to Resolution No. 591 adopted by the Thirteenth National Convention in 1931; and

WHEREAS, It is advisable to update the recommendations of Resolution No. 5 (NEC, May 9-10, 2018); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12-13, 2022, That within 30 days of induction into office, every national officer and national chairman of The American Legion must provide satisfactory evidence of honorable military service proving eligibility for membership in The American Legion, as follows, provided that such eligibility has not previously been presented to the national organization:

(a) Eligibility for American Legion membership of post officers will be certified by their post adjutant with notification to their department adjutant; and

(b) Eligibility for American Legion membership of department officers will be certified by their respective department adjutants with notification to the national adjutant; and

(c) Eligibility for American Legion membership of national officers, National Executive Committee members, Alternate National Executive Committee members, commission chairmen and committee chairmen, after an initial review by the national judge advocate, will be certified by the national adjutant and reported to the National Executive Committee; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That any member with aspirations of future national leadership in The American Legion may, at any time, submit one's proof of eligibility for American Legion membership to the office of the national judge advocate; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 5 (NEC, May 9-10, 2018) is hereby superseded and rescinded.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
May 10-11, 2023
Indianapolis, Indiana

Resolution No. 13: Be The One Days
Origin: Marketing Commission
Submitted by: Marketing Commission

WHEREAS, Research indicates between 17 and 22 veterans take their own life each day; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is committed to reducing that number; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates a stigma exists for veterans with mental health issues, making that audience less likely to ask for help; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Family is actively raising awareness of the issues through a variety of programs, including an annual American Legion Family Day on the last Saturday of April; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2023, That, commencing on June 1, 2023, the first day of every month be observed as a special day to reduce the stigma around mental health issues among the military community, when all American Legion Family members wear a "Be The One" item to signal their commitment to Be The One to save one veteran; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That all American Legion posts should place special emphasis and awareness on the "Be The One" program on the first day of every month.

Appendix

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

I Order of Business
II Motions
III Amendments
IV Nominations and Elections
V Courtesies in the Assembly
VI Parliamentarian
VII Authorized Business

PROCEDURE

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE is the application of parliamentary law to the conduct of an organization. It is wise for all leaders to familiarize themselves with the technique of conducting a meeting. While it is important that the members understand the fundamental rules of parliamentary procedure, this knowledge should be used only to ensure order, to expedite business, and to develop an organization that will cleave to the objects for which it was organized. For a member constantly to raise points of order and to insist upon the strict observance of every rule in a peaceable assembly where there are members ignorant of these rules and customs is but to defeat the opportunity of gradually accustoming the membership of the proper observance of parliamentary procedure.

THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of an organization contain specific rules for the conduct of its business. General rules and customs for orderly procedure, in addition to these specific rules, are commonly known as parliamentary law. These rules are needed to guide the deliberations of an organization in order to do the right thing in the right way at the right time, and to secure the best results with the least expenditure of time and effort. The underlying principles of parliamentary law are justice and courtesy to all, one thing at a time, the rule of the majority, and the right of the minority. –

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY – It is important for every organization to adopt some authority on parliamentary law, and for the members to be familiar with both the specific and the general rules of the organization. A copy of the by-laws should always be on the commander's desk. Excellent books and small leaflets on parliamentary procedure have been written in simplified form and are available, but "Roberts' Rules of Order Newly Revised" is the accepted authority for The American Legion.

I. ORDER OF BUSINESS (IF NOT OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN BY-LAWS)

1. CALL TO ORDER – The commander taps once with the gavel and says, "The meeting will come to order (follow ritual, roll call). The adjutant will please read the minutes of the preceding meeting."
2. MINUTES – After the minutes have been read by the adjutant, the commander asks, "Are there any corrections?" If none is made, "The minutes stand approved as corrected."
3. FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT – The commander calls for the finance officer's report. After it has been read, the commander says, "If there are no questions or corrections, the report will be filed for auditing." The Auditing Committee reports at such times as the by-laws provide.
4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT – In some organizations, much of the routine business is handled by the executive committee. This committee submits a report of its meeting at each regular meeting of the organization for adoption by the membership. The executive committee may transact only such business as the membership authorizes, except where the by-laws give the committee power to act. This report might include the outstanding points in communications and committee reports submitted at

the executive committee meeting, and presented to the organization for the information or the action of the group.

5. COMMUNICATIONS – These may include letters received, notice of the next meeting, and any matters of general interest to the organization, read by the adjutant.
6. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS – Standing committees are usually provided for in the by-laws and function throughout the year. The commander should have a list of the standing committees and call on each chair by name for reports according to plans previously made. If a report is made that contains merely a statement of opinion or facts, the commander says, "If there are no objections, the report is accepted." If it contains resolutions or recommendations for future action, a motion should be made by the reporting member "to adopt the resolutions or recommendations which may be amended in exactly the same manner as any main motion."
7. SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS – Special committees are appointed for special purposes and are automatically discharged when the special duties for which they were created are completed and their final report made to the organization. If there are any special committees to report, the commander says, "We will now hear the report of the special committee appointed to _____." A motion to adopt the resolution or recommendations of the committee opens the report to discussion and amendment.
8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – The commander brings before the meeting any business postponed from the previous meeting, or any matters introduced at that meeting on which action was not completed. A list of these unfinished matters should have been prepared from the minutes of the last meeting by the adjutant. Only when the unfinished business has been disposed of may new business be brought forward.
9. NEW BUSINESS – The commander says, "Is there any new business to come before the meeting?" Communications and motions calling for action by the organization may then be presented and necessary action taken. This closes the business part of the meeting.
10. THE PROGRAM is presented.
11. ADJOURNMENT – Members should remain seated and in order until the meeting is declared adjourned. The commander may, if desired, use the "common consent" motion to adjourn, i.e., "If there are no objections, the meeting stands adjourned." Formal adjournment is usually followed by a social hour.

II. MOTIONS

Business is introduced by a motion, or by a resolution. The steps in making a motion and voting on it are as follows:

1. OBTAIN THE FLOOR – The member rises and addresses the presiding officer as Mr. or Madame Commander, as the case may be, and gives own name unless known by the commander. If the member is entitled to the floor, the chair repeats the name of the member. This recognition gives the member the right to speak.
   It is out of order for another member to stand before the member speaking has finished, or to remain standing after another has been given the floor.
2. MAKE THE MOTION – The member then states the motion or offers a resolution; for example, "I move that we take action to secure a playground for this community." In order to state a motion properly, members of the organization should become accustomed to using the words "I move that" when introducing a motion.
3. SECOND THE MOTION – If anyone wishes the matter discussed and voted upon, a member says, "I second the motion," without rising or addressing the Chair. If no member seconds it, immediately the chair, except in small assemblies, repeats the motion and asks, "Is the motion seconded?" In small assemblies, where every member has evidently heard the motion, instead of repeating the motion, the chair may say, "You have heard the motion; is it seconded?" If the motion is not then seconded,

the chair may say, "There being no second, the motion is not before the assembly." Note: Consult your parliamentary authority for the motions that do not require a second.

4. STATE THE MOTION – After the motion is seconded, the Chair then states the motion; for example, "It has been moved and seconded that we take action to secure a playground for this community." As this motion is debatable and amendable, the Chair should then immediately ask, "Are you ready for the question?" or "Is there any discussion?" If the motion is not debatable or amendable (consult your parliamentary authority on this point if in doubt), the Chair should then immediately put the question to vote.
5. DISCUSSION – After a motion has been stated by the chair, it is before the assembly for consideration and discussion. Speakers to the motion must (1) be entitled to the floor, (2) address their remarks to the presiding officer, (3) be courteous in their language and department, and avoid all personalities. Speakers must observe the rules of the organization as to the number of minutes and number of times they may speak on a question. The maker of a motion may vote against, but not speak against, the motion. Discussion must relate to the immediately pending question. Note: Consult your parliamentary authority for the few exceptions by which a speaker may be interrupted after having been assigned the floor, and also for the rules to guide the Chair when more than one person arises at the same time.
6. PUT THE QUESTION – After sufficient opportunity has been given the debate, the Chair repeats the motion and says, "Are you ready for the question?" After waiting a moment, if no one claims the floor, the Chair then says, "All those in favor of the motion as stated, say aye. All opposed, say no."
7. ANNOUNCE THE VOTE – The chair says, "The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted," or "The noes have it, and the motion is lost," as the case may be. In the event of a tie, the motion is lost unless the Chair votes in the affirmative in order to carry the motion. A tie loses because every question must be carried by at least a majority. If in doubt as to the result, the Chair calls for a rising vote, first for, and then against, the motion, asks the adjutant to count the votes, and then announces the results.

III. AMENDMENTS

After the question has been stated to the assembly by the presiding officer, it may be desirable to change it in some way. A member may rise, address the chair, and after being recognized by the chair, say, "I move to amend the motion by adding the words 'with proper supervision' after the word 'playground.'" After the motion to amend has been seconded, and the motion repeated as it will read if amended so all may understand the effect the amendment will have on the main motion, the chair then calls for remarks on the amendment.

The discussion is now upon the proposed amendment. After discussion is over, the chair puts the question and calls for a vote on the amendment. Example: "The question is on adding the words 'with proper supervision' to the motion we take action to secure a playground for this community. All those in favor of this amendment please say 'aye,' those opposed say 'no.'" After announcing the result of the vote on the amendment, the chair will then restate the motion before the house in its original form if the amendment has been lost, or as amended if the amendment has been carried and the vote is then taken upon the question in its final form (if no further amendments are offered).

An amendment may be offered in any of the following forms: "I move to amend by inserting," or "adding" if at the end of the motion, and "I move to amend by striking out and inserting," or "by substituting" in case of an entire resolution, by-laws or paragraph.

Only one amendment of the first degree is permitted at a time when a motion or resolution is under consideration, but one amendment of that amendment – that is, an amendment of the second degree – is also in order. While there may be only one amendment of each degree pending at the same time, any number of them may be offered in succession after disposing of the prior amendment. An amendment must relate to the subject to be amended.

The amendment of the second degree, if there is one before the assembly, receives first consideration. After disposal, unless another secondary amendment is offered, the amendment of the first degree is then pending. After all amendments have been disposed of, the main motion as amended (or in its original form if all the amendments have been lost) is placed before the assembly for action.

WHAT SHALL I DO …

To introduce business? Make the main motion.

To modify the motion? Amend, commit or refer.

To defer action? Postpone to a certain time, make a special order (require a two-thirds vote), or lay on table.

To suppress or limit debate? Move the previous question (two-thirds vote) or limit debate (two-thirds vote).

To suppress the question? Object to consideration (two-thirds vote), postpone indefinitely or lay on table.

To consider a question a second time? Take from table, reconsider and rescind.

To prevent action from becoming final? Reconsider and enter on the minutes.

To reverse the decision of the chair? Appeal.

To ask a question about procedure? Use parliamentary inquiry.

To withdraw a motion? Ask for permission to withdraw a motion.

To read something to the assembly? Request to read papers.

To correct a mistake? Rise to a point of order.

A motion that's been carried, lost or postponed indefinitely can't be considered again during the same session except by a motion to reconsider the vote disposing of the question, or to rescind the action taken. The motion to reconsider can be made only by one who voted on the prevailing side. The motion to reconsider must be made on the same day or the calendar day (not counting Sundays or holidays) after the vote which is to be reconsidered was taken. Any member may second this motion. The motion to reconsider, if carried, annuls the vote already taken and brings the motion before the assembly again for action.

A motion to rescind an action may be made if the motion to reconsider is not already pending. The motion to rescind may be made by any member. Its purpose is to undo some action already taken and is identical with the motion to amend by striking out something previously adopted, such as a by-law, resolution, section or paragraph. If made on the same day, it only requires a majority vote, but on a subsequent day, if without notice of intention to rescind it, requires a two-thirds vote.

In case of doubts as to parliamentary procedure, or if difficult questions arise, such as to lay on the table, to postpone, to limit debate, to reconsider, point of order, etc., consult the parliamentary authority.

For further assisantace with parliamentary procedures, refer to "Robert's Rules for Order," available at **emblem.legion.org**.

IV. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

The choosing of officers for a Legion group is one of the most important functions. It means the choosing of leaders upon whose faithful service the success of the organization largely depends. Among the qualifications necessary for efficient official leadership is an understanding of the purpose of The American Legion, knowledge of the work and enthusiasm for it, a high sense of justice, fairness and courtesy, open-mindedness, moral courage and the ability to get along with other people.

Officers should be chosen for their ability to perform the work of the office to which they are elected, and not because of their social prestige or because they want the office. Willingness to serve is not enough; fitness to serve must stand above every other consideration.

A nominating committee reports to the assembly only nominees approved by a majority vote of the committee. No action is taken on the report of nominating committee. Nominations from the floor are always in order after nominating committee has reported.

A nomination is only a statement of a preference and does not control the election in any way. When voting by ballot, one may be elected without having been nominated, subject to getting the required number of votes at the election.

The elective ballot alone elects. Mistakes made in nominating do not invalidate elections, as you may vote for whom you please, regardless of nominations.

Members of a nominating committee may be nominated for office without resigning from the committee. When printed ballots are used, names presented from the floor as well as the names presented by the nominating committee must be printed on the official elective ballot so there will be no discrimination among the candidates.

NOMINATION BY BALLOT

No nominations are made from the floor when nominations are by ballot, as all have had opportunity to nominate by ballot.

The method of election best fitted to a particular group should be provided in the by-laws. These election rules must be strictly adhered to. If the election rules prove unsatisfactory, amend them. But abide by them as they are, until properly amended.

Before proceeding to an election, it is customary for nominations to be made from the floor or by a nominating committee, or by ballot. The by-laws may prescribe the method, but if they do not, then the assembly by motion may choose the method of nominating. This motion is not debatable.

Only members of the organization can make nominations or vote at an election.

The by-laws should provide that no name shall be placed in nomination without the consent of the nominee. This prevents promiscuous nomination and withdrawals.

Nominations from the floor may be made by any voting member. Nominations require no second, but a second is complimentary to the candidate.

NOMINATIONS BY COMMITTEE

If names of candidates are to be presented by a nominating committee, this committee should be named at least one month before election day and the by-laws should provide the method of appointing (or electing) the committee. The usual methods are election by the assembly, or election by the executive committee or part by the assembly and part by the executive committee.

The commander should not appoint the nominating committee nor be a member of it.

The nominating committee should give thoughtful consideration to the qualifications of each candidate for office and should secure the consent of the candidate before placing the name on the ticket.

CLOSING NOMINATIONS

Nominations from the floor may be closed by a two-thirds vote, or the commander may close nominations by unanimous (common) consent of the assembly (no one objecting). If for any reason it is desired to reopen nominations, it may be done by a majority vote (unless the by-laws limit the time for nominations).

A member may be nominated for more than one office, unless the by-laws forbid. If elected to more than one office, the member must choose immediately on which office to serve. The other office (or offices) shall be filled according to the provisions of the by-laws, if simultaneous service in more than one office is forbidden.

ELECTIONS

Majority vote is necessary if there is no by-law to the contrary. Plurality vote never elects except by special by-laws. A person ineligible to hold office at the time of election cannot be elected even by unanimous vote.

The usual methods of election are by voice, or by ballot (a secret vote). The by-laws may provide that election shall be by ballot except when there is but one candidate for office, the election may be by voice. The ballot vote is the fairest vote when there is more than one choice for an office. When the by-laws require the vote to be taken by ballot, it is out of order to move that the adjutant or any other person shall cast the ballot of the assembly, as ballot vote is a secret vote and each voter must cast their own ballot.

ELECTION BY VOICE

The election to office may be by voice, and vote taken on each candidate separately, or the assembly may, by a majority vote, order the vote taken on the ticket as a whole when there is but one candidate for each office.

ELECTION BY BALLOT

Ballots should be given to identified voting members only. The names of candidates for each office may be printed or written on the ballot, or the voter may write the name of choice on the ballot. The identity of the voter must not be indicated in any way, as a ballot is a secret vote. If printed ballots are used, the names from the floor and those proposed by the nominating committee must be printed on the official ballot. Printed ballots cannot be used if nominations and elections take place at the same meeting. Instructions may be given to the assembly concerning the method of marking the ballot. An unmarked (blank) ballot is just a scrap of paper and is not counted in elections. The election committee has no authority to make any changes in the election ballot or mark it in any way.

The vote cast for each office must be preserved in such manner that if the election is questioned, the votes may be verified by a recount. If printed ballots are used, the election committee places the voted ballots in a sealed packet together with its report (signed by at least a majority of the election committee), and delivers the packet, sealed, to the adjutant. This sealed packet shall not be opened except by order of the assembly or the board for the purpose of verifying the vote or destroying the packet.

If slips of paper are used for voting for each separate office, the votes cast for each office must be sealed in a separate packet and delivered to the adjutant in like manner.

The form of the report of the elections committee for each office to be filled is as follows (example): "For commander—Number of votes cast—30; necessary for election—16; Brown received—19; Jones received—10; Green received—1."

After the vote for all the offices has been read (the largest vote for each office stated first), the names of the committee members signing the report are read, the report is handed to the commander, and the reporting member sits. The commander announces who is elected.

In counting the ballots, every name for which a vote has been cast must be reported.

Newly elected officers take their seats at the time prescribed in the by-laws. If there is no such rule, they are seated following election, or at the time established by usage as a precedent.

When there is more than one vice commander, they always should be numbered to establish their precedence when acting as commander pro tem.

V. COURTESIES IN THE ASSEMBLY

Members contribute to the success of a meeting when they:

1. Come to order at once when the commander opens the meeting.
2. Give thoughtful attention throughout the business meeting and the program.
3. Rise to address the chair, and wait to speak until recognized by the chair.
4. Sit down at once when someone else has been given the floor.
5. Rise to make a motion, but remain seated in small assemblies when seconding the motion.
6. Write a long or involved motion and give to the adjutant, when asked to do so.
7. Rise when a rising vote is requested and remain standing until the vote is taken.
8. Vote on every question.
9. Limit their remarks to their rightful share of the time of the meeting and do not infringe upon the right of others. The floor should be given to one who has not spoken on the question, in preference to one who has spoken, if there is any question as to precedence.
10. Rise to make reports, remain seated during the discussion of the report.
11. Refrain from conversation during the meeting.
12. The courtesy of the floor may be granted to one who is not a member when it is desired to have such one speak during a business session.

VI. PARLIAMENTARIAN

A parliamentarian may be appointed if there is a member of the organization who is well informed on parliamentary law. It must be remembered the function of a parliamentarian is to express an opinion on the point in question when requested to do so. The ruling or decision based upon this advice must be stated by the presiding officer.

VII. AUTHORIZED BUSINESS

Authorized and lawful business which the organization becomes responsible for can only be transacted at meetings regularly or specially called for that purpose at which meetings there is a quorum present.

The notice for a special meeting must state the special business to be transacted, and no other business can be entertained.

If no quorum is present, the motion to adjourn and to provide for an adjourned meeting are the only motions in order.

VIII. MOTIONS CLASSIFIED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

1. **Privileged motions**: Fix time to adjourn, to adjourn, to recess**, question of personal privilege, call for order of business.

2. **Subsidiary motions**: Lay on table, previous question (2/3), postpone to Indefinite time*, refer to committee*, postpone*, amend amendment*, amend*, objection to consideration (2/3).
3. **Main motion***: A main motion is used to bring before the meeting any particular subject for consideration of the assembly.

* Debatable; others are not.

** Debatable only when no other motion pending.

Those not marked with (2/3) require only majority vote.

If additional knowledge of parliamentary procedure is desired, posts should refer to "Roberts' Rules of Order Newly Revised." Copies can be purchased from Emblem Sales at **(888) 453-4466** or online at **emblem.legion.org**.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE IN THE EXPULSION OR SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

(may be revised and changed by subsequent action of the National Executive Committee)

Many departments and posts of The American Legion have failed to adopt a method of practice and procedure on the suspension or expulsion of a member. The following is not mandatory for any post or department, but is offered as a guide or form to follow. It is approved by the National Executive Committee.

Article IV, Section 2 of the By-Laws of The American Legion is as follows: *"A Post may suspend or expel a Post member from The American Legion only after providing the member due process and a proper showing of cause. Charges shall be based upon disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty and/or conduct unbecoming a member of The American Legion. All charges must be made under oath in writing by the accusers, and no member in good standing shall lose their membership until given a fair trial by the Post or Department in such manner and form as the Post or Department By-Laws and Post or Department Executive Committee shall prescribe."*

I. PROCESS

The first process in all actions of expulsion or suspension against a member of The American Legion in good standing shall be by filing with the adjutant of the post written charges in triplicate, properly verified by affidavit of the accuser or accusers.

II. WRIT — WHEN RETURNABLE WHEN WRITTEN CHARGES ARE FILED

The adjutant shall issue a writ dated upon the day it shall be issued and sign it, directed to the sergeant-at-arms (or some other member of the post in good standing), commanding that person to summon the accused to appear at the post meeting place at the next regular meeting (providing 15 days have intervened), to show cause why he should not be suspended or expelled (as the case may be).

III. SERVICE — RETURN

It shall be the duty of the sergeant-at-arms, or the member appointed, to serve the writ so issued, by reading it to the accused and at the same time delivering to the member a verified copy of the charges filed. The person serving the writ shall endorse upon said writ the time and manner of serving it and immediately thereafter file the same with the Post adjutant.

IV. ALIAS WRIT

Whenever it shall appear by the return that the accused is not found fifteen (15) days, or more, previous to the regular post meeting, the adjutant, at the request of the accuser, shall issue another writ and so on until service is had.

V. FAILURE TO MAKE RETURN

If the sergeant-at-arms, or the member to who a summons is delivered, shall neglect or refuse to make return of same within the time required in Paragraph 4, another summons shall be issued, directed to some other member in good standing for service as herein above set forth.

VI. SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

Whenever the accuser shall file with the adjutant of the post in which the charges are pending, an affidavit showing the accused has gone out of the state or on due inquiry cannot be found or is concealed within the state so that process cannot be served upon the intended, and stating the place of residence of such accused, if known, or that upon diligent inquiry the place of residence cannot be ascertained, the adjutant of the post shall cause publication to be made in the county where the post is located and if there be no newspapers published in said county, then in the nearest newspaper published in the state containing notice of the pendency of such charges before said post, the names of the accused and the accuser, and the time and place of the hearing of said charges. Within two days of the first publication of such notice, the adjutant of said post shall send a copy

thereof by mail addressed to the accused if the place of residence is stated in said affidavit; said notice shall be published at least once each week for three successive weeks.

VII. CHARGES

The accuser or accusers must be members of the same post as the accused and shall set forth the charges of disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty and conduct unbecoming a member of The American Legion in terms of simplicity and understanding in order the accused may properly prepare a defense.

VIII. ACCUSED TO ENTER HIS/HER APPEARANCE IN WRITING

Before the accused defends in his/her own proper person, or through counsel, he/she shall enter an appearance by filing an answer to said charges on or before the date of the regular meeting to which the accused has been summoned to appear.

IX. FAILURE TO ANSWER

If the accused fails to answer the charges, in manner and form as herein last set forth, the charges and matters and things therein stated shall be taken as confessed and the prayer for expulsion or suspension granted.

X. DATE OF TRIAL

Whenever the accused enters an appearance by filing an answer to the charges preferred, the entire proceedings shall automatically be continued until the next regular post meeting, at which time the trial shall be had.

XI. CONTINUANCE

Either party may apply for a continuance before the day set for trial, however, it shall be accompanied by a written motion, supported by affidavit of the party so applying. Good and substantial cause must exist before said motion is granted. The presiding judge advocate shall pass on said motion.

XII. TRIAL — POST JUDGE ADVOCATE TO PRESIDE

The post judge advocate shall preside at the trial, and shall have the power and authority to pass upon the materiality and relevancy of all the evidence presented, and shall have general power to prescribe the necessary and reasonable rules and regulations for the orderly procedure of said trial.

XIII. POST JUDGE ADVOCATE VACANCY

In case of death, removal, vacancy, resignation or disability of the post judge advocate, it shall be the duty of the department commander, when duly notified by the post adjutant, to appoint a special judge advocate in the department to fill the vacancy. Such special judge advocate so appointed shall have the authority, right and powers of a duly elected post judge advocate. The post shall bear the expenses of any special judge advocate.

XIV. POST OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO ACT AS JURORS

The post officers and the post executive committee are hereby selected as jurors to ascertain under the guidance of the judge advocate the truth of the charges preferred. Their province is strictly limited to questions of fact, and within that province they are still further restricted to the exclusive consideration of the matters that have been proven by evidence of the interested parties in the course of the trial. Their decision shall be reduced to writing and filed with the post adjutant, who, in turn, shall enter the same in the post records.

XV. CAUSES OF CHALLENGE

If any post officer or any member of the executive committee, or any other member selected as a juror, shall state he/she cannot fairly and impartially render a verdict therein in accordance with the evidence, and the presiding judge advocate shall be satisfied of the truth of such statement, said member or members shall be challenged for cause.

XVI. PEREMPTORY CHALLENGE

Each party shall be entitled to challenge of two jurors without showing cause for such challenge.

XVII. WHEN A POST HAS NO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

When a post has no executive committee, the presiding judge advocate shall direct the sergeant-at-arms to summon five members of the post to sit as jurors in their place.

XVIII. DUTY OF SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

If any member is challenged peremptorily or for cause, or if any post officer or member of the executive committee shall be absent from said trial, the presiding judge advocate shall direct the sergeant-at-arms to summon a sufficient number of members of the post to sit as jurors in their place.

XIX. IF SERGEANT-AT-ARMS NOT PRESENT, ETC.

If the sergeant-at-arms is not present at said trial or upon objection of either party to the cause to the sergeant-at-arms summoning a sufficient number to fill the vacancies, the presiding judge advocate shall appoint a special sergeant-at-arms to summon the necessary persons to act as jurors.

XX. MEMBERS INSUFFICIENT TO FILL PANEL

When the membership of the post, through cause or otherwise, is insufficient in number to make a full panel for jury service, the trial shall be continued until the next regular post meeting. The post adjutant, within five (5) days thereafter, shall transmit such information to the department commander, who shall, before the next regular meeting of the post, cause the sergeant-at-arms of said post to summon a sufficient number of members of The American Legion from the body of the county in which the post is located to fill the vacancies.

XXI. AMENDMENTS

At any time before a final decision is made by the jury upon the trial of a member upon expulsion or suspension, amendments may be allowed by the presiding judge advocate upon such terms as are just and reasonable.

XXII. NUMBER NECESSARY TO EXPEL OR SUSPEND

To expel or suspend a member of The American Legion in good standing, two-thirds of the members selected to sit as jurors shall vote in the affirmative.

Article IV, Section 3 of the By-Laws of The American Legion is as follows: *"Any member who has been suspended or expelled has the right of appeal to their Department Executive Committee, or to the Department Convention, according to the provisions in the By-Laws of such Department. The decision of the Department shall be final."*

I. TIME FOR APPEAL

Within forty (40) days after judgment of expulsion or suspension is made and recorded, the accused ONLY may take an appeal in manner and form as set forth in Article IV, Section 3 of the By-Laws last mentioned.

II. STENOGRAPHIC REPORT

Either party demanding a stenographic report of the trial shall pay for the same, and when said report is completed, it shall be the duty of the presiding judge advocate, on appeal, to examine the same and if correct, officially certify to the correctness of such report, and the same shall be immediately filed with the department adjutant, who, in turn, shall present the same to the department executive committee or the department convention officials, according to the by-laws of such department. All matters and things contained in such stenographic report shall become a part of the record and shall be considered in the final decision by the department. In addition to the stenographic report, all interested parties shall have the further right of appearing in person, or by counsel, and present further evidence and arguments upon such final hearing.

III. NOTICE BY DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT UPON REQUEST

When an appeal is taken by accused, in compliance with Article IV, Section 3 of the By-Laws of The American Legion, it shall be the duty of the accused to obtain from the department adjutant the date of the executive committee meeting or department convention and the exact time and place of such hearing on appeal. This notice should be given if possible at least ten (10) days before the meeting or convention.

IV. APPEAL — DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE TO PRESIDE

Upon appeal the department judge advocate shall preside at the trial, and shall have the power and authority to grant a continuance to either party if deemed for the best interest of the Legion; to pass upon the materiality and relevancy of all the evidence presented and shall have general power to prescribe the necessary and reasonable rules and regulations for the orderly procedure of said trial.

V. NO FURTHER APPEAL

The decision reached by the department executive committee or department convention shall be final.

VI. EFFECT OF DECISION

Where an appeal is taken by the accused and the department executive committee or department convention sustains the appeal, the expelled member automatically becomes a member in good standing of said post, and it is mandatory the adjutant reinstate said member upon the post membership roll. Any post failing to comply with this provision is subject to having its charter suspended or revoked.

Article IV, Section 4 of the National Constitution of The American Legion is as follows: *"No person, who has been expelled from The American Legion by a Post, and such expulsion reported by the Department to the National Headquarters within thirty (30) days, shall be admitted to membership in another Post without the consent of the expelling Post, except that where such consent has been asked for and denied by such Post, such person may then appeal to the Executive Committee of the Department of the expelling Post for permission to be admitted to membership in another Post, and shall be ineligible for membership until such permission is granted."*

MEMBER DISCIPLINARY ACTION DUE PROCESS CHECKLIST

PARTIES
Department
Post
Accused/Member ID

1. INCIDENT REPORT RECEIVED AND INVESTIGATED – WITHIN 10 DAYS	
☐ Yes ☐ No	Date

2. ALL PARTIES WERE SERVED – MINIMUM 15 DAYS BEFORE HEARING DATE	
☐ Yes ☐ No	Date
☐ Plaintiff ☐ Defendant ☐ Witnesses ☐ Jury/post officers	

3. HEARING	
Hearing date	
3a. CONTINUANCE REQUESTED	
☐ Yes ☐ No	If yes, extend hearing date 15-60 days ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
3b. CHANGE OF VENUE	
☐ Yes ☐ No	If yes, extend hearing date 30-60 days ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

4. FINAL HEARING	
Date	☐ Innocent ☐ Guilty

5. VERDICT CERTIFIED WITH ALL PARTIES – WITHIN 15 DAYS OF VERDICT	
☐ Yes ☐ No	Date

6. APPEAL REQUESTED – FILED WITHIN 40 DAYS OF STEP 5	
☐ Yes ☐ No	Date

7. FINAL APPEAL DATE – WITHIN 70 DAYS OF VERDICT CERTIFICATION		
☐ Yes ☐ No	Date	**Appeal verdict**: ☐ Sustained ☐ Overturned

8. THE PLAINTIFF AND DEFENDANT WERE NOTIFIED – WITHIN 20 DAYS OF THE FINAL VERDICT	
☐ Yes ☐ No	Date

9. WERE ALL STEPS OF DUES PROCESS FOLLOWED?
☐ Yes ☐ No
WHAT PART WAS NOT COMPLETED OR SKIPPED? (EXPLAIN WHY)

COMPLETED BY
Name
Title

EXPULSION RECOMMENDED	
☐ Yes ☐ No	Post Judge Advocate

EXPULSION APPROVED		
☐ Yes ☐ No	Post Adjutant	Date
	Post Commander	Date

UNIFORM CODE OF PROCEDURE FOR THE REVOCATION, CANCELLATION OR SUSPENSION OF POST CHARTERS

Adopted by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion May 1-2, 1941, Indianapolis, Ind., and amended by that body November 6-7, 1941

I. CHARGES

Section 1. A charge that any Post should, for any good and sufficient cause, have its charter cancelled, suspended or revoked may be initiated by any intermediate body between the Post and the Department, or by any three Posts of the Department in which the Post accused is located. A charge may be withdrawn only with the consent of the Department Commander.

Section 2. Such charge shall be filed with the Department Commander at Department Headquarters.

Section 3. Such charge shall be in writing, and signed by the respective Commanders and Adjutants of the intermediate bodies or Posts, as the case may be, and sworn to before any officer authorized to administer oaths.

Section 4. Three additional copies of such charge shall be filed with the original. The Department Commander shall forthwith cause one copy of such charge to be served on the defendant Post by delivering a true copy thereof to the Adjutant of said Post, as hereinafter provided.

Section 5. Such charge shall include the following:

a. A certified or attested copy of the resolution authorizing the filing of such charge.

b. The full name and address of the Post against which the charge is made, as well as the full name and address of the Commander and Adjutant of such Post.

c. A clear, concise and detailed statement of the facts upon which the charge is based.

d. The section or sections of the National and Department Constitutions and By-Laws alleged to have been violated.

e. Affidavits or documents substantiating the charge may be attached.

Section 6. After a charge has been filed, the Department Commander shall forthwith cause a full investigation of the facts to be made. After such investigation, the Department Commander shall file a report and recommendation with the Department Executive Committee for its action thereon at its next meeting.

Section 7. Proceedings relating to the cancellation, suspension or revocation of a Post charter may also originate with either the Department Commander or the Department Executive Committee.

Section 8. The action of the Department Executive Committee in rejecting any charge or charges against a Post shall be final.

II. RESOLUTION OF DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Should the Department Executive Committee determine by a majority vote that the Post should surrender its charter, said Department Executive Committee shall direct the defendant Post to surrender its charter for cancellation, and shall pass a resolution that unless the charter is so surrendered, prior to the date therein specified, a hearing and trial be held to determine whether the Post charter should be cancelled, suspended or revoked, and said resolution shall include the following:

a. A statement that the Department Executive Committee has determined that a hearing and trial is warranted.

b. Authorization and direction to the Department Commander and Department Adjutant to sign a formal complaint.

c. The names and addresses of the members of the subcommittee before which the hearing and the trial is to be held.

d. The name and address of the Department Judge Advocate or special acting Department Judge Advocate who is to assist the committee.

e. Authorization to the subcommittee to hire such stenographic or other help as may be necessary and to incur such expense as may be necessary. Said expense, including the cost of stenographic report of the trial when ordered to be transcribed by the subcommittee or the Department Executive Committee, shall be taxed as costs against the Department, complainants or defendant Post in such manner and amount as the Department Executive Committee shall prescribe.

f. That the subcommittee shall report its written findings of fact and recommendation to the Department Executive Committee at its next meeting, provided, however, that if the hearing or trial is not completed, a partial report shall be made.

III. COMPLAINT

Section 1. In all cases, a formal complaint, in triplicate, shall be drawn by the Department Judge Advocate and signed by The American Legion, through its Department Commander and Department Adjutant, setting forth the following:

a. A clear and concise statement of the facts upon which the charges are predicted.

b. The origin of the charges.

c. A copy of the resolution of the Department Executive Committee appointing the subcommittee and its assistants.

d. A copy of the Uniform Code of Procedure for the Revocation, Cancellation or Suspension of Post Charters.

e. The time within which an appearance or answer shall be filed by the Post, which shall be not less than 20 or more than 60 days from the date of the service of a copy of the complaint.

f. The time and place for the hearing and trial, which shall not be more than 30 days after the date of the expiration of the time for the filing of the answer.

Section 2. Any such complaint may be amended by the subcommittee of the Department Executive Committee in its discretion at any time upon such terms as may be deemed just in the opinion of the said subcommittee.

IV. SERVICE

Section 1. The subcommittee shall cause a true copy of the complaint to be served on the defendant Post.

Section 2. All complaints, orders and other process and papers of the subcommittee or the Department organization of The American Legion may be served personally, or by registered mail, or by leaving a copy thereof at the principle office or Headquarters of the intermediate body or Post, or place of residence of the person or officer to be served. The verified return by the individual serving the same showing service thereof in the manner herein provided, or the registry return receipt shall be proof of service.

Section 3. All notices, orders, papers or other process which are to be served on the Department Headquarters of The American Legion, or the subcommittee appointed to conduct the trial, shall be deemed served if they are served on the Department Adjutant at Department Headquarters, said service to be made as herein above provided.

Section 4. Witnesses may be summoned by a notice signed by either the special acting Department Judge Advocate, the Department Judge Advocate, or by a member of the subcommittee.

V. ANSWER

Section 1. The defendant Post shall file an answer to said complaint with the Department Judge Advocate at Department Headquarters within the time specified in the complaint. The answer shall contain a clear and concise statement of the facts which constitute its defense. Any charge or specification in the complaint which is not expressly denied or explained in the answer shall be deemed to be admitted.

Section 2. In the event that the complaint is amended during the course of the hearing or trial, the defendant shall be furnished with a copy of such amendment, and may file an amended answer to the said amended complaint within five days thereafter.

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE

Section 1. The subcommittee to hear and try and make written findings of fact and recommendations with reference to the matter of the cancellation, suspension or revocation of the Post charter shall be appointed by the Department Executive Committee and shall consist of not less than three (3) members of the Department Executive Committee. No member of the Post under investigation shall be a member of such subcommittee.

Section 2. Should no member of the subcommittee be a lawyer, opinions on questions of law may be obtained from the Department Judge Advocate.

Section 3. A majority of the members of the subcommittee shall constitute a quorum. If for any reason there is less than a quorum, the hearing shall be adjourned until a quorum is present.

Section 4. The duties of the Department Judge Advocate or special acting Department Judge Advocate shall be to see that the trial is prompt, complete and thorough, make all arrangements for the hearings, the summoning of all witnesses and the production of all papers. He shall see that all the orders of the subcommittee shall be carried out. He shall examine and cross-examine all witnesses.

VII. HEARING AND TRIAL

Section 1. The rules of evidence prevailing in courts of law and equity shall not be controlling. The subcommittee shall decide all questions arising as to relevancy of the evidence and the regularity of the proceedings.

Section 2. The subcommittee may hold its hearings in closed sessions or may open them to the public. The subcommittee shall hear witnesses on oath or affirmation.

Section 3. Any party to the proceeding shall have the right to appear at such hearing in person, by counsel or otherwise, subject to such reasonable restrictions as may be placed on this right by the subcommittee, and to examine and cross-examine witnesses and to introduce documentary or other evidence.

Section 4. Stipulations of fact may be introduced in evidence with respect to any issues.

Section 5. Objection to the conduct of the hearing shall be stated orally together with a short statement of the grounds of such objection and included in the stenographic report of the hearing.

Section 6. Any party to the proceedings shall be entitled to a reasonable period at the close of the hearing for oral argument, which shall not be included in the stenographic report of the hearing. Briefs may be filed by the parties within the time fixed by the subcommittee.

Section 7. In the discretion of the subcommittee, the hearings may be continued from day to day, or adjourned to a later date, or to a different place by announcement thereof at the hearing by the chairman or vice-chairman of the subcommittee or by other appropriate notices.

Section 8. A stenographic report of the trial shall be made.

VIII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE

Section 1. The subcommittee, after it has completed its hearings, shall file the complete report of the proceedings had upon the trial, together with its written findings of fact and recommendations with reference thereto with the Department Adjutant not less than five (5) days before the next meeting of the Department Executive Committee, all of which shall be open to the inspection of all members of the Department Executive Committee, as well as representative or representatives of the defendant Post.

Section 2. The Department Executive Committee shall consider said report and act thereon.

Section 3. At the Department Executive Committee meeting at which the report of the said subcommittee is to be considered, one representative of the defendant Post may, within the discretion of the Department Executive Committee, be given the privilege of the floor for not more than one hour.

Section 4. Should the subcommittee's report be a partial report, the Department Executive Committee may continue the committee and authorize it to hold further hearings and present its final report at the next meeting of the Department Executive Committee.

IX. APPEAL

Section 1. Should the Department Executive Committee refuse to cancel, suspend or revoke the charter of the Post, such decision shall be final and no appeal can be taken there from.

Section 2. Should the Department Executive Committee, upon a report of its subcommittee, cancel, suspend or revoke the charter of the defendant Post, the defendant Post and the National Adjutant shall be notified by the Department Adjutant of the decision of the Department Executive Committee, which notice shall be mailed within five (5) days after such decision has been rendered. Should the defendant Post desire to appeal from the decision of the Department Executive Committee, it shall serve its notice of appeal, signed by the Post Commander and Post Adjutant, on the Department Adjutant at Department Headquarters within thirty (30) days from the date of said suspension, cancellation or revocation.

Section 3. Upon receipt of said notice of appeal, the Department Commander shall immediately notify the National Commander of such appeal and shall cause the Department Judge Advocate, or acting Department Judge Advocate, and the subcommittee to submit all the papers and the complete record of the hearings to the National Commander. Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, the National Commander shall appoint a subcommittee of not more than five (5) nor less than three (3) members of the National Executive Committee for the purpose of hearing the appeal from the action of the Department Executive Committee.

Section 4. The National Executive Committeeman, or alternate, from the Department of which the defendant Post is a part, shall not be eligible to serve on this committee.

Section 5. This subcommittee of the National Executive Committee shall meet at least one day prior to the meeting of the National Executive Committee and to this committee the National Commander shall refer the complete record, in writing, of said proceedings with such exceptions thereto as are made by the defendant Post.

Section 6. This subcommittee may make its recommendations merely from the records, or it may permit representatives of the Department or the defendant Post to appear and argue the matter before the committee, and it may, as such hearing of such appeal, take further evidence relating thereto under such rules and conditions as it may from time to time adopt.

Section 7. This subcommittee shall review the cause and recommend to the National Executive Committee the action to be taken thereon.

Section 8. The decision of the National Executive Committee, based upon the report of this subcommittee, shall be final and there shall be no appeal there from.

Section 9. The cost of the proceeding may be re-taxed as the National Executive Committee shall deem just and equitable.

U.S. FLAG CODE

U.S. CODE TITLE 4, CHAPTER 1

§ 4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG; MANNER OF DELIVERY

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform, men should remove any non-religious headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Members of the armed forces not in uniform and veterans may render the military salute in the manner provided for persons in uniform.

§ 5. DISPLAY AND USE OF FLAG BY CIVILIANS; CODIFICATION OF RULES AND CUSTOMS; DEFINITION

The following codification of existing rules and customs pertaining to the display and use of the flag of the United States of America is established for the use of such civilians or civilian groups or organizations as may not be required to conform with regulations promulgated by one or more executive departments of the Government of the United States. The flag of the United States for the purpose of this chapter shall be defined according to sections 1 and 2 of this title and Executive Order 10834 issued pursuant thereto.

§ 6. TIME AND OCCASIONS FOR DISPLAY

(a) It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed 24 hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.

(b) The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.

(c) The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all weather flag is displayed.

(d) The flag should be displayed on all days, especially on New Year's Day, January 1; Inauguration Day, January 20; Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, the third Monday in January; Lincoln's Birthday, February 12; Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February; Easter Sunday (variable); Mother's Day, second Sunday in May; Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May; Memorial Day (half-staff until noon), the last Monday in May; Flag Day, June 14; Father's Day, third Sunday in June; Independence Day, July 4; National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, July 27; Labor Day, first Monday in September; Constitution Day, September 17; Columbus Day, second Monday in October; Navy Day, October 27; Veterans Day, November 11; Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November; Christmas Day, December 25; and such other days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States; the birthdays of States (date of admission); and on State holidays.

(e) The flag should be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of every public institution.

(f) The flag should be displayed in or near every polling place on election days.

(g) The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse.

§ 7. POSITION AND MANNER OF DISPLAY

The flag, when carried in a procession with another flag or flags, should be either on the marching right; that is, the flag's own right, or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.

(a) The flag should not be displayed on a float in a parade except from a staff, or as provided in subsection (i) of this section.

(b) The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle or of a railroad train or a boat. When the flag is displayed on a motorcar, the staff shall be fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender.

(c) No other flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the flag of the United States of America, except during church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea, when the church pennant

may be flown above the flag during church services for the personnel of the Navy. No person shall display the flag of the United Nations or any other national or international flag equal, above, or in a position of superior prominence or honor to, or in place of, the flag of the United States at any place within the United States or any Territory or possession thereof: Provided, That nothing in this section shall make unlawful the continuance of the practice heretofore followed of displaying the flag of the United Nations in a position of superior prominence or honor, and other national flags in positions of equal prominence or honor, with that of the flag of the United States at the headquarters of the United Nations.

(d) The flag of the United States of America, when it is displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, should be on the right, the flag's own right, and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.

(e) The flag of the United States of America should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of States or localities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs.

(f) When flags of States, cities, or localities, or pennants of societies are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States, the latter should always be at the peak. When the flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the flag of the United States should be hoisted first and lowered last. No such flag or pennant may be placed above the flag of the United States or to the United States flag's right.

(g) When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they are to be flown from separate staffs of the same height. The flags should be of approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace.

(h) When the flag of the United States is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill, balcony, or front of a building, the union of the flag should be placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff. When the flag is suspended over a sidewalk from a rope extending from a house to a pole at the edge of the sidewalk, the flag should be hoisted out, union first, from the building.

(i) When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window, the flag should be displayed in the same way, with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street.

(j) When the flag is displayed over the middle of the street, it should be suspended vertically with the union to the north in an east and west street or to the east in a north and south street.

(k) When used on a speaker's platform, the flag, if displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag of the United States of America should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speaker's right as he faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the clergyman or speaker or to the right of the audience.

(l) The flag should form a distinctive feature of the ceremony of unveiling a statue or monument, but it should never be used as the covering for the statue or monument.

(m) The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. On Memorial Day the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, then raised to the top of the staff. By order of the President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to Presidential instructions or orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law. In the event of the death of a present or former official of the government of any State, territory, or possession of the United States or the death of a member of the Armed Forces from any State, territory, or possession who dies while serving on active duty, the Governor of that State, territory, or possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff and the same authority is provided to the Mayor of the District of Columbia with respect to present or former officials of the District of Columbia and members of the Armed Forces from the District of Columbia. When the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, or the Mayor of the District of Columbia, issues a proclamation under the preceding sentence that the National flag be flown at half-staff in that State, territory, or possession or in the District of Columbia because of the death of a member of the Armed Forces, the National flag flown at any Federal installation or facility in the area covered by that proclamation shall be flown at half-staff consistent with that proclamation. The flag shall be flown at half-staff 30 days from the death of the President or a former President; 10 days from the day of death of the Vice President,

the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of a State, territory, or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a Member of Congress. The flag shall be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day, unless that day is also Armed Forces Day. As used in this subsection -

(1) the term "half-staff" means the position of the flag when it is one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff;

(2) the term "executive or military department" means any agency listed under sections 101 and 102 of Title 5, United States Code; and

(3) the term "Member of Congress" means a Senator, a Representative, a Delegate, or the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico.

(n) When the flag is used to cover a casket, it should be so placed that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

(o) When the flag is suspended across a corridor or lobby in a building with only one main entrance, it should be suspended vertically with the union of the flag to the observer's left upon entering. If the building has more than one main entrance, the flag should be suspended vertically near the center of the corridor or lobby with the union to the north, when entrances are to the east and west or to the east when entrances are to the north and south. If there are entrances in more than two directions, the union should be to the east.

§ 8. RESPECT FOR FLAG

No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America; the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, State flags, and organization or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor.

(a) The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.

(b) The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.

(c) The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.

(d) The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery. It should never be festooned, drawn back, nor up, in folds, but always allowed to fall free. Bunting of blue, white, and red, always arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle, and the red below, should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping the front of the platform, and for decoration in general.

(e) The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used, or stored in such a manner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged in any way.

(f) The flag should never be used as a covering for a ceiling.

(g) The flag should never have placed upon it, nor on any part of it, nor attached to it any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture, or drawing of any nature.

(h) The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.

(i) The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard. Advertising signs should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown.

(j) No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen, and members of patriotic organizations. The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing. Therefore, the lapel flag pin being a replica, should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.

(k) The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

§ 9. CONDUCT DURING HOISTING, LOWERING OR PASSING OF FLAG

During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, those present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

§ 10. MODIFICATION OF RULES AND CUSTOMS BY PRESIDENT

Any rule or custom pertaining to the display of the flag of the United States of America, set forth herein, may be altered, modified, or repealed, or additional rules with respect thereto may be prescribed, by the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, whenever he deems it to be appropriate or desirable; and any such alteration or additional rule shall be set forth in a proclamation.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

U.S. CODE TITLE 36, SUBTITLE I, PART A, SECTION 301

(a) Designation.— The composition consisting of the words and music known as the Star-Spangled Banner is the national anthem.

(b) Conduct During Playing.— During a rendition of the national anthem—

(1) when the flag is displayed—

(A) individuals in uniform should give the military salute at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note;

(B) members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute in the manner provided for individuals in uniform; and

(C) all other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, and men not in uniform, if applicable, should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart; and

(2) when the flag is not displayed, all present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were displayed.

Note: For uniformity when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, each Legionnaire should hold the Legion cap by inserting the fingers of his or her right hand into the cap, leaving the front of the cap at the top and placed over the heart with the Legion emblem facing outward.

HOW TO WRITE A RESOLUTION

Because resolutions adopted by your membership represent formal expressions of the official opinion or will of the post, extreme care should be devoted to both their preparation and thought content. The following guidelines and suggestions relate primarily to the form your post's resolutions should take, rather than their content. However, when considering resolutions, keep in mind that any proposal transmitted beyond your post and within the organization of the Legion must be "germane" – that is, closely related to the purpose for which The American Legion exists.

Resolutions requiring county, district or department consideration must be prepared and forwarded in accordance with their respective regulations and by-laws. A well-written resolution stands a better chance of]favorable consideration at your county, district, or department convention than a resolution that is vaguely worded, poorly documented and carelessly formulated.

From the standpoint of the policies and practices of The American Legion as a whole, resolutions are all-important. The national organization cannot act on a given problem in the absence of a controlling resolution; conversely, it must act on a matter when mandated to do so by a resolution that has been properly adopted by the national convention or National Executive Committee. If your post seeks to be a leader in the policies and practices of The American Legion, it can do so only through the resolution process.

Download the resolution booklet at **legion.org/publications**.

POST PROCEDURES MAY VARY

In some posts, the member who moves the adoption of a resolution must present it in writing at the time the motion is offered. Other posts follow the practice of assigning one member, or a special committee, the task of drafting or editing those resolutions to be sent forward for convention consideration. However, it remains the responsibility of the post commander to make sure each resolution truly reflects the sense of the action taken by the post – and is presented in the best possible form.

Except for certain details (noted in the discussion of resolving clauses below), the national organization has not established an official style guide for the preparation of American Legion resolutions. However, the National Executive Committee has expressed (Resolutions No. 20 and 21, May 1960) that certain general considerations are applicable to all resolutions being forwarded for action by the national organization, as follows:

1. A resolution should contain "supporting documents," and its intent should be clearly defined.

2. A resolution should be free of errors of fact and law.

3. A resolution should have material relevance to the purposes and programs of The American Legion. (On the latter point, the National Executive Committee specifically cautions Legion posts to beware of becoming a channel through which non-Legion organizations seek to achieve their goals.)

A resolution should deal with only one subject. Those that attempt to treat more than one subject are unwieldy to process at conventions, especially if they involve matters that do not fall within the jurisdiction of a single committee of the convention. They are generally rejected or amended to delete reference to more than one subject.

Resolutions have two major parts: a preamble and a resolving section. Each consists of one or more clauses (paragraphs) and the whole is read in its entirety, beginning with the preamble, as one continuous, complex sentence. The preamble sets forth the reasons for the resolution; the resolving section sets forth the intent of the resolution.

PREPARE PREAMBLE LAST

Although it precedes the resolving section in appearance, the preamble of a resolution should be prepared after the resolving section is put into final form. Once the intent of the resolution has been clearly stated, it is much easier to decide what statements need to be in the preamble to make clear the reasons for the resolution. Also, during committee or floor debate, a preamble is always amended last because changes in the resolution may require changes in the preamble.

The resolving section begins with the word "RESOLVED," usually printed in capital letters and followed by a comma. Between this opening word and the statement of the intent of the resolution, there should be inserted the following information: (1) identification of resolving authority, (2) the circumstance and place of the action, (3) date of the action. The first word after this information would be "That" with a capital "T."

Examples:

"RESOLVED, By Post No. _____, The American Legion, Department of _____, in regular (or special) meeting assembled in (place and date), That …."

This clause, referred to as the "resolving clause" (similar to the "enacting clause" of a law), should be uniform for every resolution. For national convention and National Executive Committee resolutions, the resolving clauses have been standardized as follows:

"RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in (city and state), (date), That …."

The word "That" immediately following the resolving clause introduces the clause, which is the object of the verb "RESOLVED." It aids the reader to find the point at which the meat of the resolution begins; it aids the drafter of the resolution to launch a strong and unmistakable statement of intent.

Examples:

"RESOLVED, …. That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to …."

"RESOLVED, …. That The American Legion is opposed to repeal or weakening of …."

Although each resolution should deal with only one subject, it is often necessary or desirable to attach additional clauses (or paragraphs) to a resolution's resolving section to cover matters that are closely related to the main intent. This device is especially useful for spelling out the details of how and by whom the intent of the resolution is to be carried out or accomplished.

Example:

"RESOLVED, By (etc.) … That (etc.) …; and, be it further

"RESOLVED, That (etc.) …; and, be it further

(add RESOLVED paragraphs as required) …; and, be it finally

"RESOLVED, That (etc.) …."

As shown here, the identifying information is stated only once, in the first paragraph of the resolving section of a resolution, and is not repeated in subsequent paragraphs. A period is used only once – at the close of the last paragraph of the resolving section.

CONSTRUCTION OF RESOLUTION PREAMBLE

The preamble of a resolution is made up of one or more clauses (or paragraphs), each of which begins with "WHEREAS." Two or more of these clauses are joined together by a semicolon followed by "and."

Example:

"WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

"WHEREAS, This service is performed through The American Legion's basic programs; and (etc.)"

Each clause in the preamble should contain a statement of fact that is logically related to the intent of the resolution and explains and justifies the need for the resolution. Accuracy of each statement in the preamble is critical because the intent must be based on fact not misinformation ("WHEREAS, Public Law 101-22 prohibits …" or "WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes …" or "WHEREAS, In Texas v. Johnson, 1989, the United States Supreme Court rule …" clearly identifies the source). Double-check facts and attempt to document the source as much as possible. Providing supporting materials along with the resolution would be helpful to respective reviewing commissions or committees. Each clause would stand alone as a complete sentence if the "WHEREAS" were removed and a period were used in place of the semicolon at the end.

The final clause of the preamble is joined to the resolving section of the resolution by a semicolon, followed usually by the phrase "now, therefore, be it …" (acceptable variations in common usage are "therefore be it," or simply "be it").

Example:

"WHEREAS, ... (etc.) .....; and

"WHEREAS, ... (etc.) .....; and

"WHEREAS, ... (etc.) .....; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, By ..... (etc.) ....., That ..... (etc.) ....."

Note: The "WHEREAS" may be set out in capital letters, italics, underscored, etc., depending on preference. When capitalized, it is usually followed by a comma, and the first letter of the following word is capitalized.

There is no formula for deciding how many "WHEREAS" clauses a resolution should have. In general, the fewer the better, provided the reason or reasons for the resolution are adequately stated. Most of the good reasons for a resolution will have been stated during the debate for its adoption. Use them. It is not necessary, however, to refer in the preamble to every fact or circumstance that has a bearing on the intent of a resolution.

Study the resolving section and get the exact purpose of the resolution firmly in mind. Then start writing down statements of fact which relate to this purpose. Organize them into a logical sequence (throwing out the weak or unnecessary ones), and then put a "WHEREAS," in front of each, a semicolon at the end of each, plus the appropriate connecting word ("and") or words ("now, therefore, be it") for joining them to each other and the resolving section. Do not use a period in the preamble.

When dealing with issues of legislative intent, do not use specific bill numbers. Address the legislative intent of the bill. Bills are subject to amendments; thus, their legislative intent can change dramatically. Instead of "support H.R. 333," for example, be more specific by saying "support legislation that, if enacted, would …."

Resolutions are important business to The American Legion. Write them with thought and care.

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