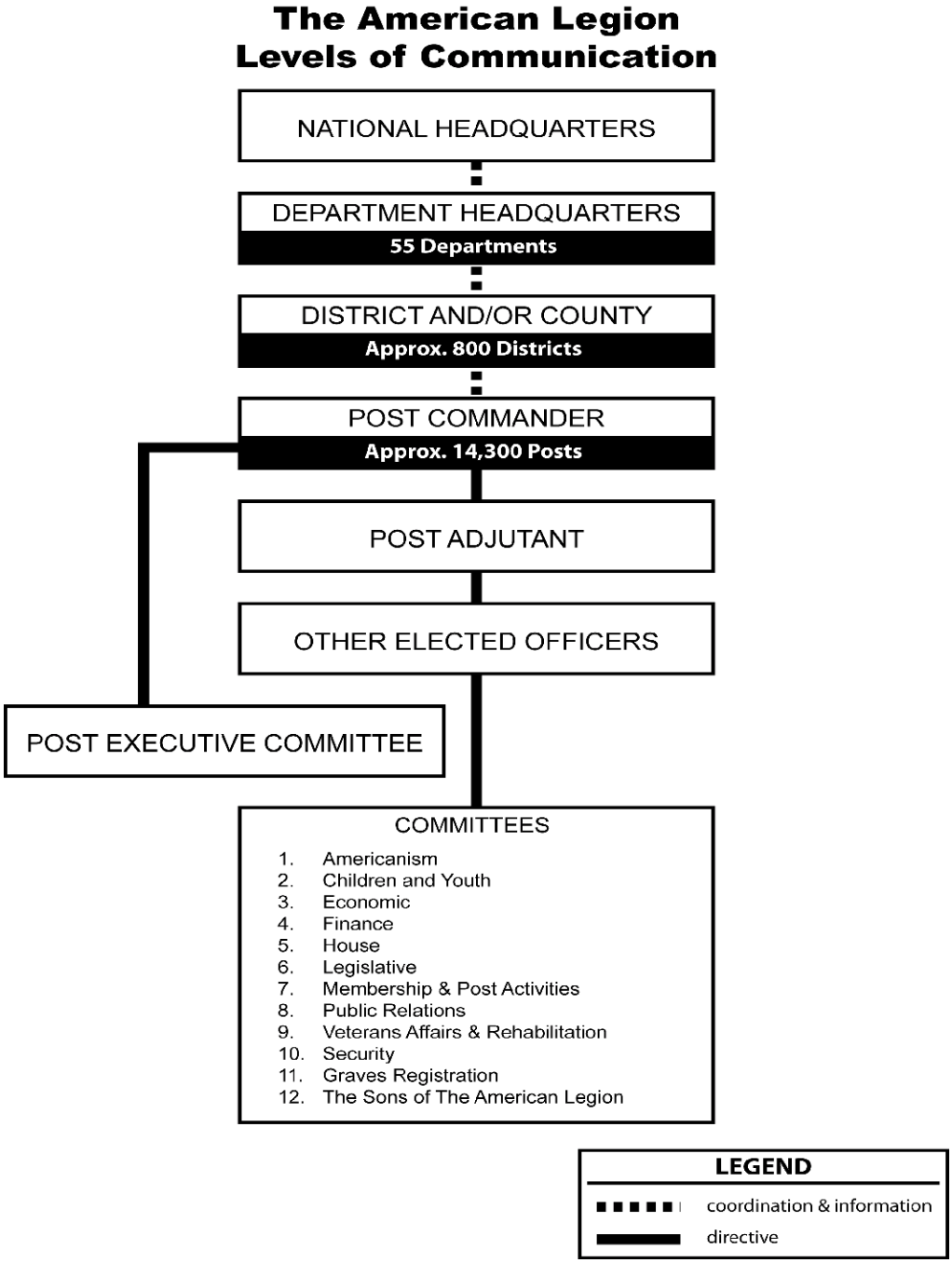
THE AMERICAN LEGION

2014

Officer's Guide

AND MANUAL OF CEREMONIES

The following chart explains the relationship a local post has with other posts, the district or county, the department and National Headquarters. For the sake of brevity, post subcommittees are not included. A list of "standard" post committees and other non-traditional committees (depending on your post's programs and activities) are listed starting on page 19.



Note: Department headquarters and National Headquarters do not manage, operate or control local posts in day-to-day business decisions. Departments and posts uphold the declared principles of The American Legion as well as conform to and abide by the constitution, regulations and decisions of their department executive committee, the National Executive Committee and the National Convention.

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With respect to information contained in this document, neither The American Legion nor any of its employees makes any warranty, express or implied, nor assumes 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. All items of information in this document are suggestions except for the National Constitution and By-laws. You should consult your own counsel for "best practices" when dealing with any business operations or American Legion programs, even those covered by resolutions approved by the National Executive Committee or National Convention.

AMERICAN LEGION OFFICER'S GUIDE

and Manual of Ceremonies

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The *Officer's Guide* is intended as the principal handbook issued by National Headquarters to help American Legion officers fulfill their responsibilities. This handbook combines in one volume a guide to post offices, operations and procedures; the Manual of Ceremonies, in which ceremonies prescribed by the National Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Committee are described; and an appendix including The American Legion Constitution, eligibility requirements, parliamentary procedures, a suggested post constitution and by-laws, and more.

Publications on all major American Legion programs are available from your department headquarters and National Headquarters. As these are received or obtained, they should be given to the responsible post officers or committee chairpersons. See the complete list at **www.legion.org/publications**. Many can be downloaded for free; others are available at low cost.

As the year unfolds, you will receive through various department and national publications additional information concerning specific programs and suggestions for worthwhile activities. Should you have questions on American Legion policies or procedures, contact your district officer. In addition, your department headquarters is always available for advice and information. When necessary, department headquarters can call on National Headquarters for information, clarification, or assistance on any matter.

The community knows The American Legion by its posts. In your community, The American Legion is your post. We hope this handbook will help you carry out your many responsibilities, and we encourage you and your fellow post officers to become familiar with its contents.

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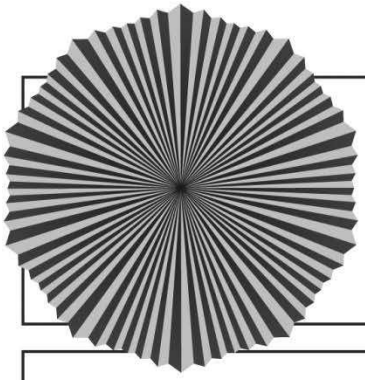
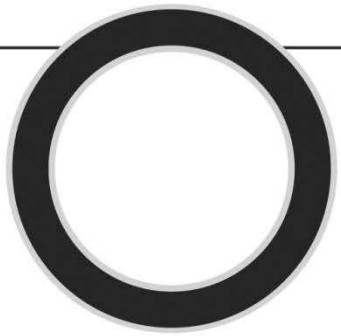
The American Legion emblem

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.

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 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.

FOREWORD

Serving as a post officer is a privilege and honor bestowed upon you by your fellow comrades. Through your election, your peers have recognized your leadership skills and potential to manage the post effectively. Your term in office will offer many opportunities to learn new skills while enhancing the experience of others and growing as a leader. Your term can also reap personal and professional development benefits for a lifetime.

The *Officer's Guide* is an informational tool to assist you throughout your year as a post officer. Included is the *Manual of Ceremonies*, a compilation of time-honored American Legion rituals based on tradition and established policy.

The American Legion recognizes that each post is unique, and that all leaders have different management styles. To accommodate these differences, post officers have great deal of latitude in how they choose to manage their post as long as they follow the basic legal requirements established in the charter of The American Legion and in the National Constitution and By-Laws. A copy of each is contained in the appendix of this guide.

Remember, you are not on your own. Every member of your post is part of your team, and it is the post officers' responsibility to guide members toward reaching the post's shared goals. Every member has his or her role to play, and by working together, your post will be able to meet its full potential and serve a vital role in your community.

Your post's challenge is to focus on service to veterans, their families and the community in which you reside. To meet this challenge, your post must develop goals and objectives. The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion is an ideal, a set of missions and battles that can never be decisively won or lost – only fought for. It serves as a vision for your post leadership to craft a mission statement from which you can establish short- and long-term goals. In the appendix, you will find a list of five resolutions pertaining to The American Legion's blueprint for meeting challenges it faces in the 21st century **(see pages 104-105)**. These Though they stem from a study completed and reported to the National Executive Committee in 1997, these resolutions remain germane today, so much so that the NEC revised and reaffirmed them in October 2012. They can provide guidance and direction as you establish your post's programs and set goals.

By accepting the elected office you have, you made a decision to serve. Go and make the best of it.

SECTION I

Post Operations

The post

The American Legion is incorporated by an act of Congress and is organized into local posts, which, for purposes of coordination and administration, are grouped into departments. The post is the combat unit of The American Legion. Depending upon its ability to realize American Legion policies and properly interpret them to others, and to successfully carry out unselfish activities for the community, the state and the nation, our organization will stand or fall. The post *is* The American Legion. Its duties are beautifully spelled out in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion. Membership is by post only. Programs are effective to the degree the post adopts and puts them into operation. Mutual helpfulness becomes a reality through the post's comradeship, social activities and service programs.

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

The individual Legionnaire's perception of The American Legion – particularly the post officer's perception – largely defines the post. If the person perceives the Legion to be a bar, the post will be a bar, and that is all. If the person thinks the post is doing a good job but still isn't attracting new members, then the perception of what the Legion should be, or is, does not agree with what the majority of veterans in the area want in an organization.

All posts do not have to be alike, although there is a tendency to think so. Membership troubles 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. Certain perceptions can prevent the development of new activities that would produce new leaders and new members, while others can result in the expansion of programs, leadership and, eventually, membership. They also help or hinder the establishment of new posts that might attract and serve entirely new groups of veterans.

The post must never forget, however, its responsibility to the veterans and children of its community – and to the community itself. What the community thinks of The American Legion is just as basic as what a Legion post thinks of itself. The American Legion exists only with the approval of our society, or at least a large segment of it. This is true whether it's the national organization or a post. Each post is judged by the community. Its success or failure reflects this judgment. A good post will encourage active participation by its members with other civic-minded committees and organizations within the community. It will seek to participate whether or not the activity is initiated by The American Legion.

A good post will know the needs of the community. It will know them by the simple process of planned contacts by representative post members with city officials, educators, welfare workers, community leaders, and other civic and fraternal groups. A Legionnaire who does a good job for the community deserves recognition and thanks from the post, whether the project was post-sponsored or not.

Veterans activities alone will 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.

Kinds of posts, goals

Each Legionnaire sees The American Legion through his or her personal experiences or desires. The organization is big enough and broad enough to accommodate everyone, but the post will reflect the composite personality of its members. There are country club-type posts and community posts. There are posts of ethnic groups and all women. There are 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.

What the post wants and needs to do, it can do, but only if the membership, and the post officers in particular, carefully spell out its goals or standards in terms of service to the community and then translate them into action. Service is getting members to do a job and having fun while doing it. It's doing what needs to be done, whether for the members or the community. Thus, post officers must be aware of the likes and dislikes of its members, and equally aware of the needs of the community.

Developing leaders

The American Legion requires a terrific amount of manpower. More than 13,000 new post commanders are needed each year. This number tops 100,000 when other post officers are elected. Some hold the same office year after year, but there is always a need for fresh volunteer leaders.

Where are they found? First, a veteran becomes a member. Then, experience, education and exposure through serving on committees and attending leadership schools, conventions and conferences prepare that person for other positions of responsibility. Leadership training, formal or informal, should be ongoing.

If the post's work has gone well and the present officers have been effective, there should be no lack of competition for elective post offices. But there may come a time when someone must be approached and urged to run for post commander or other elective office. This is particularly true in some small posts where many members have already served. This should be anticipated and a long-term plan in place. The present officers and active members must be on the lookout for future officer material, and Legionnaires showing ability and interest should be encouraged to seek higher office.

Elections

The post constitution and by-laws will spell out the dates for nomination and election of officers. If these do not agree with the department constitution and by-laws, the post's election dates should be changed. For best communications between the post and department, it is desirable for all posts to conduct elections on or near the same date, and the results promptly reported to the department.

Installation

The installation of a new group of officers is the first occasion of the new Legion year for an impressive ceremony and one of the top social events on the post's calendar. If new officers are casually installed, their attitude toward their obligation will be casual. If the installation is accompanied by a banquet, visits from department and district officers, and entertainment that draws a crowd, the new officers are going to be fully aware of the responsibilities they have assumed.

Impressive installation ceremonies can provide the framework around which other rituals can develop. The *Manual of Ceremonies* covers the initiation of new members, dedication of halls, funeral services and other rituals that are standard throughout The American Legion. Department headquarters and National Headquarters can provide additional tools to make these ceremonies more effective.

In many departments, regulations are in effect as to who the installing officers should be. Check with the district commander for these details.

District/county

Departments have the authority to create intermediate bodies between the post and department to assist as a liaison between such organizations, and for the purpose of promoting the programs of The American Legion. The department executive committee 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 do provide for county organizations, inter-county councils and other subdivisions below the district level. In one department, county organizations substitute for districts.

Depending upon the powers delegated, the district does have some supervisory powers over the posts comprising the district, but the primary purpose is to promote, stimulate and coordinate programs so the posts' work becomes more effective.

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

Department

The American Legion is organized into departments and these, in turn, into posts. There is one department in each state and the District of Columbia, and there may be one in each territory and insular possession of the United States (Puerto Rico). Each department may prescribe the constitution of its posts, and the department has supervision of the posts within its boundaries and the posts assigned to it by the National Executive Committee. There are also foreign departments in the Philippines, France and Mexico. In all, there are 55 departments.

National Headquarters

The top legislative body of The American Legion is the national convention. The National Executive Committee is vested with administrative authority between national conventions.

Through the offices of National Headquarters in Indianapolis and Washington, D.C., the policies of the Legion are clarified and its activities are centered and directed. Thus, the influence of nearly 14,000 posts is coordinated and directed along the lines of Legion policy.

Post officers

Commander

That you have ability is recognized by your election to the office of post commander. Now you must draw on your ability and past experience while developing new skills so that you will succeed in helping the post prosper.

The charge you have accepted, commander, is broad and difficult. How you respond will determine to a large degree the standing of The American Legion among your associates and within the community. Your own ability, the support of district and department officers, the information in this guide, and the help you will get from the post officers who form your team will together make the performance of your job possible. As you look to the overall operation of the post, you'll realize that you have stepped to another level. You may feel the step is too high, but as you proceed, following the suggestions and recommendations in this guide, you may find that your year as commander is the most rewarding of your life.

Planning post operations for the coming year

It's a rare group of new post officers who take office without enthusiasm and a desire for a successful year. In the charge you accepted at your installation, you were entrusted with the supervision of the duties of all other post officers. This does not mean that you will discourage them from using initiative and developing new ideas. What it does mean is that you will be judged by their effectiveness.

There are many ways to determine whether a post commander and their officers are enjoying a successful year. Judgments of the worth of a post are made by the members, the community, and by The American Legion itself. Like it or not, a gain or loss in membership is the measure most often used.

Actually, the membership record is a reliable barometer of what your post is doing. An active post where the members enjoy themselves often creates a "word of mouth" membership campaign. The members are proud to belong. It's natural for them to talk "Legion" to their friends, neighbors, relatives, coworkers and business associates. Since they enjoy belonging to the Legion, they want their friends to get in on a good thing, too.

However, whether it shows or not, a great deal of planning has probably gone into every successful membership campaign. But before salespeople can sell a product, they have to have a good product – something people want and will value. Programs, social activities, the opportunity to make new friends, even the post home itself – these are what a Legion salesperson has to sell.

Post executive committee

Early on, you will discover that running even a small post is more than a one-person job. This is why the post constitution provides for a full group of post officers, as well as an executive committee. They are elected to do specific jobs. It's up to you to get them to work together for the good of the post.

Start by calling an early meeting of your officers and executive committee. This can happen even before you are installed. Invite the outgoing post commander and adjutant to attend.

Before the meeting, you and your adjutant should know what post records are on hand, where they are kept, and how to use them.

Records, minutes and other materials

Does the post have all its membership records since it was chartered, or at least for recent years? Members are proud of their record of continuous membership. Keep these and all other membership records up to date.

Are the complete minutes of all meetings on file or bound? The keeping and reading of minutes may seem dull, but minutes can be extremely important. More than one legal case has turned on what some long-forgotten secretary or adjutant wrote in the minutes of a meeting years ago.

Does the checkbook balance? Where are the funds, and is all the money accounted for? Is the post incorporated under the state's not-for-profit laws? Where is a copy of the articles of incorporation? Have the necessary annual reports been filed and all fees paid? Is every officer who will be handling funds bonded? This is required by the Legion's national constitution.

Do you have a copy of the post's constitution and by-laws? With the changes in post officers from year to year, it's easy to see how vital records can be lost or misplaced. Make sure that all essential records are accessible, that they are where they should be (and not hiding in the desk of an adjutant who served a decade ago), and that you know, at least generally, their purpose.

Budget and fundraising

Anyone who asks people to attend a meeting should do them the courtesy of preparing an agenda – and doing it in advance. One of the first things on the agenda for this first gathering of new post officers should be money – your post's budget. The officers need to know what income is expected for the year and how it should be spent.

You'll have a good chance of staying out of money troubles if you follow these three general principles:

- First, make your dues high enough to meet fixed, administrative costs: postage, stationery, department dues, and in some cases, rent. These are costs that every post must meet to stay in business.

- Second, if the community is to benefit from an American Legion project, don't hesitate to solicit the community for funds – for example, an American Legion Baseball team, a community playground or a swimming pool. The post will actually add to its reputation with such projects, but a full public accounting needs to be made of all funds received and of how they are spent.

- Third, don't ask the public to give in the name of charity for any project that will be of benefit primarily to Legionnaires. A businessman may donate to send a young man to Boys State, but he probably wouldn't care to give money to buy a new cooler for your bar. Sometimes it is necessary to raise funds from outside for something that is strictly for the benefit of the post and its members. When this happens, make sure that the public receives full value.

Committee assignments

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

Handbooks, manuals and brochures exist for all of the Legion's premier programs: Boys State, American Legion Baseball, scholarships, and more **(see pages 156-159)**. You and your adjutant have probably received copies from department headquarters already. These publications have information and ideas that your committee chairs need. Take them to the first planning meeting and turn them over to the proper people.

Programs new and old

No post can stand still. New programs are needed to maintain interest and, especially, to keep up with the times. Every new activity or program offers the opportunity to interest new people in joining the post. Inactive members can be turned into active members the same way.

Just about every post has service programs and social activities that were started long ago and have become tradition. But organizations, like individuals, fall into ruts. Any program run exactly the same way year after year is going to grow stale. So, at your first planning meeting, take a look at the post's programs and activities. Decide which need some changes or a new look. A program won't happen, though, without someone to make it happen. Every program or activity needs to have a person in charge – usually a post officer or committee chair. If the selection is good, the program will succeed. Ask and, in fact, demand that each chairperson and officer build a timetable of events that can be fitted into an overall post calendar for your year.

First post meeting

At the first post meeting, expect others to compare you to previous commanders. This is the time to set the tone for the entire year. If changes are going to be made, start now. The basic framework for any post meeting is found in the *Manual of Ceremonies*. By following the prescribed ritual and order of business, even a person who has never before presided over a meeting can do an adequate job.

As a new commander, you might feel self-conscious about running a formal meeting, particularly in a post that has gotten away from the *Manual of Ceremonies*. Don't. The American Legion is a respected organization, and its meetings should be suitably formal and impressive. No time is saved by omitting parts of the ritual. Meetings, of course, can and should vary. But by following the prescribed ritual and order of business, you should be able to complete your agenda in no more than one hour.

Agenda

While the *Manual of Ceremonies* provides the framework or the skeleton for a meeting, the commander's agenda is what puts meat on the bones. Your agenda for the first and each succeeding meeting should list the exact committees scheduled to report. But before putting a chairperson's name on the agenda, ask that person if he or she is ready to report. This is an easy way to see if the chairperson is doing the job. If not, a little encouragement, a few suggestions or perhaps some prodding might be in order.

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 that applies to American Legion meetings and social functions, especially those to which dignitaries have been invited. This is the responsibility of the post commander, beginning with the planning of the event.

If the department commander is to be invited, this matter should be cleared promptly with department headquarters. In preliminary planning, it is advisable to have an alternate date in the event the department commander is already committed for the original date.

The invitation should list the time, place, whether or not the event is a dinner, significance of the event and any other pertinent information. Will it be a joint Legion-Auxiliary function? Will there be non-Legionnaire dignitaries present? Remember, this is your "home," and those you've invited deserve all the courtesies and considerations accorded such distinguished guests.

If the event is a dinner, 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 just to the right of the lectern. The master of ceremonies is seated just 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 and makes the introductions, beginning at the extreme left, continuing to the center of the table, and then starting at the extreme 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, treasurer or 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. A national executive committeeman or alternate national executive committeeman should be introduced immediately before the department commander.

Welcome committee

The first meeting is a great time to start a welcoming committee, if the post doesn't have one already. Ask two or three members – including the sergeant-at-arms – to take on the job of welcoming new members, guests or even older members who are not well acquainted, helping them feel at home and introducing them. An active welcome committee is a part of the post's public relations job.

Pageantry and honors

Pageantry and patriotic observances are something that the community expects of its American Legion post. A well-trained color guard and even a burial detail composed of members of the Legion family will help keep the local post visible.

Community projects

A good post commander will encourage members to actively participate in civic affairs. The entire post should be proud when a member is elected to the school board, heads up the United Way or gets a job promotion in a job – and will go out of the way to congratulate members on their accomplishments, whether in the Legion or in another field.

Saying ”thanks”

Plan, assign responsibilities, check back to see that the job is being done, and then say, “Thank you very much!” A post can express its appreciation in many ways, including awards, citations and recognition at a post meeting. But even a simple “thank you” note can mean a great deal. This is a simple courtesy that should never be forgotten.

Resolutions

If you have an idea that will improve The American Legion at any level, put that idea into words in the form of a resolution. First, work to have it passed by your local post, then by your district at its annual convention. All resolutions passed at a district convention are delivered to the resolutions committee at the next department convention. At the department convention, appear before the resolutions committee and plead for their passage of your resolution, and be prepared to speak for its passage on the floor of the department convention. All resolutions pertaining to the national organization that are passed by the department are forwarded to the national convention. For guidance on writing resolutions, see page 140.

Sources of help

A commander relies on a team of post officers and taps the potential of post members. But 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. But this group has a wealth of knowledge and ability. Don’t let it go to waste. Whether such a club is formally organized in your post or not, it is helpful to build a Commander’s Advisory Committee with your past commanders.
- **District officers** The post is a separate and distinct unit that functions independently. But the work of the post can be more effective when it is tightly linked to the department and national organization. District officers provide that link. The district commander is usually the elected representative of posts in the district, but an obligation to provide guidance and supervision is implied. Posts are charged with carrying out the Legion’s objectives and programs and to comply fully with the obligations assumed under the post, department and national constitutions. But if your post becomes inactive or falters, expect your district commander to start giving advice. The district commander has a position of respect in our organization. A visit to your post calls for something special. Make it a social event significant enough to draw a crowd. The dignity shown the office helps increase the importance of the office of post commander.
- **Department officers** Department officers are “show” people. A visit from one usually offers an opportunity for media coverage, and the type of Legion function that will attract your members and community leaders. These officers are your elected leaders and deserving of every respect. Not every post will receive annual visits from a department commander, but if your invitation is accepted, or there is occasion to visit you, 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 see that the post is involved. He or she should also study all instructions from department headquarters and see that they are passed on to the proper officer or committee for action. Finally, the post’s membership needs to be informed of any new activities initiated by the department.

- **National Headquarters** Nearly all your contacts with National Headquarters rightfully come through department headquarters. There is, however, one publication that should be faithfully read and kept, issue by issue: *The American Legion Dispatch*, which provides you the latest Legion news and information on which to base your programs. Post officers should also subscribe to *The American Legion Online Update*, an weekly email newsletter.

Auxiliary unit

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

Conventions

While your post could continue to operate without the district, department or national organization, it is more effective as a part of a team. You may have an idea that should be developed and expanded beyond your post. Certainly you want your post to have a voice in deciding the future programs and direction of the Legion. District, department and national conventions are where Legion policy is determined. Be certain that your post is represented by properly elected delegates, particularly on the district and department level.

The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI)

In 2012, The American Legion introduced an updated version of The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI). The online course is intended to educate and empower new or inactive American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members. As a multimedia training tool, ALEI is an opportunity to learn and discover the rich history, programs, policies, developments, positions and goals of our organization.

The 90-minute course has six modules: History and Organization, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism and Children & Youth, plus a course wrap-up and comprehensive final exam. ALEI centers on The American Legion's four pillars, each of which offers a variety of programs that benefit veterans, servicemembers, their families, America's youth and citizens.

To take the course, go to **www.legion.org/alei** or visit **myLegion.org**. The cost is $4.95 for members of the Legion and SAL, and $9.95 for others.

Program reminders

Post programs require intelligent planning. Each year the district and the department conduct seminars on both general operations and specific Legion programs. You can help reduce the risk of future leadership problems in your post by making certain that the post is represented at training sessions. Attendance at district and department functions also helps build the esprit de corps that makes for a good Legion post.

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

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

MARCH – Community Service Month Give priority to Boys State selection this month, or earlier. Close out the membership campaign, and mail dues and cards to the department. Recognize the anniversary of The American Legion's founding March 15-17. This is an occasion for post officers to focus on projecting the proper image of The American Legion in the community, in the programs sponsored and services provided, and also on the appearance of the post home and surrounding grounds. This can be perceived as a reflection of the attitude, initiative and civic awareness of the post membership. The post should be a pillar of the community, conscious that it represents the national organization to citizens in its community. Renewed attention to appearance doesn't require a capital improvement project, merely one of attention to detail and routine fix-ups, from signage to inside and outside improvements. This should be included on your annual Post Responsibility Audit **(see page 19)**. Between January and March, post leaders should consider forming a committee to host a post open house.

APRIL – Children & Youth Month. Coordinate Children & Youth activities and recognition with the post's Auxiliary unit. Obtain Children & Youth Guide from department headquarters. Plan election of new officers, summer Scouting activities and Boys State. How about an old timers' night? Community service will elevate your post's standing in the community. Put American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Week on the post calendar.

MAY This month marks the anniversary of the St. Louis Caucus, where organization of The American Legion was completed in 1919. Armed Forces Day, Mother's Day and Memorial 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. Does the post have a uniformed group? Do you decorate veterans' graves? Present school awards at the end of the semester. Kick off American Legion Baseball and summer athletic programs. Contact school officials to get Legion activities approved and on the calendar for next year: Oratorical Contest, Boys State, school awards, American Education Week.

JUNE Start planning a membership drive for next year, calling on past officers for assistance and guidance. Decide how to go about contacting new veterans. June 14 is Flag Day, so consider surveying people and businesses in the community, asking who flies flags on patriotic holidays. The history of Old Glory would make an excellent program for a post meeting. Summer youth programs need members' support and attendance. Community service is a great activity this month and every month.

JULY Host an old-fashioned community Fourth of July celebration. Certify new officers with department headquarters. Installation of officers makes an impressive ceremony at a post meeting. Continue efforts on behalf of summer youth programs.

AUGUST By now the post should have 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 Sept. 2 is V-J Day, so consider asking churches to ring their bells. 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. Provide schools with copies of "Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette." The third Friday of the month is National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Obtain ad materials for Veterans Day.

OCTOBER Launch an all-out membership campaign. Remember that dues for next year are payable by Oct. 20. Organize and participate in Halloween safety programs.

NOVEMBER Continue full speed ahead on the membership campaign by conducting membership roundups. Get them in before Dec. 31. Lead your community in observing Veterans Day and American Education Week. Remind members they need next year's card number when paying American Legion life insurance premiums. The deadline for payment is Dec. 31.

DECEMBER Don't let Dec. 7 go by without an acknowledgment of Pearl Harbor, "a day that will live in infamy." As the holiday season begins, encourage and support activities that bring Christmas cheer to needy families. How about a Christmas party? Work toward an all-time high in post membership. Keep plugging for renewals and new members. Visit veterans who are ill or in the hospital.

Adjutant

The adjutant has the same position in the post as the secretary of any other organized body, and a bit more. Like the first sergeant of a company, post activities revolve around the adjutant. Most posts find it wise to retain a good adjutant in office over a period of years. The adjutant may well provide continuity in the post. While the commander's duties are largely inspirational and executive, an adjutant's duties are administrative. The commander navigates the ship, but the adjutant is the engineer who runs the ship's machinery.

The adjutant is the personnel officer and personal point of contact for individual members of the post. He or she maintains membership records and minutes of meetings, checks up and assists the work of the other officers and committees, and publishes official orders, announcements and instructions.

Because all post records should be in the adjutant's custody, for easy access, it is to his or her interest to develop a comprehensive filing system.

The adjutant is primarily concerned with ways and means and, by virtue of a key position, can add effectiveness to all post activities. The office involves a great deal of work, and it is strongly recommended that some degree of compensation be paid the adjutant, particularly in large posts.

Suggestions for the new adjutant

The only indispensable qualifications for the job of adjutant are honesty and willingness. The adjutant should purchase a set of post account books from Emblem Sales. They require no special knowledge of bookkeeping.

He or she should go through all the post records at the first opportunity. The constitution, minutes of meetings, and reports of officers and committees will give insight into the post's policies and traditions. Communications from department headquarters will bring the adjutant up to date on instructions.

The *Post Adjutant's Manual* has full instructions on the handling and processing of the automated membership card system and other duties. Every adjutant should have a copy.

First vice commander

In the majority of posts, a first and second vice commander are elected, with membership the primary concern of the first vice commander.

Frequently, the success or failure of the membership record during his or her year determines the chances of advancing to the office of commander the next year. In a few posts, one or two membership go-getters will secure the majority of dues, but the possibility of death, illness or a change of residence makes for a weak foundation on which a vice commander and the post are staking the post's future. While each post is different, any membership campaign should cover certain fundamentals. Look at the methods used in the past. Were they successful? Do they need updated? Have new procedures been developed to improve the plans now being used?

In a successful post, a new commander is going to 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 also be decided.

The four W's of planning

- **WHERE** – Where do you want to go? What's the objective? (Or, for a membership campaign, how many members do you want?)
- **WHAT** – What steps have to be taken to reach the objective?
- **WHO** – Who's going to do what has to be done in each step necessary to reach the goal?
- **WHEN** – When is the work going to be done?

Only you and the members of your post know where you want to go, or how many members you want. But the steps to get there are much the same in every post. If you can answer the following questions for your post and for your membership campaign, you have your job analyzed and know what steps to take to reach your goal:

- Mailed dues notices will bring in about 85 percent of your current members' renewals. Who is going to contact those who do not respond?
- How are dropouts to be reinstated?
- How are you going to contact prospective members? Who's going to contact them? How will new recruits be brought into the post?
- What publicity will be needed?
- Who can be counted on to work at membership?
- 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 Legion birthday, etc.?

Other duties

Membership may be the primary assignment of a first vice commander, but during a normal Legion year, the first vice commander will have many other duties. He or she should become familiar with the ceremonial protocol for regular meetings. He or she will most likely have to conduct one or more meetings during the year. Knowing how to prepare a meaningful and fruitful agenda is very important, as well as good experience. The vice commander must be ready to fill in for the commander at a moment's notice.

Second vice commander

The second vice commander is responsible for building an "I like my post because …" atmosphere in which Legionnaires have fun while doing the work of the Legion.

The commander depends on the second vice commander to help run the programs that spice up meetings and attract attendance. The social calendar should be filled months in advance with activities that will bring out the active members, as well as those who are just card-carrying Legionnaires.

One of the second vice commander's first duties should be to contact other veterans and civic groups to see that each patriotic holiday and observance receives the attention it deserves. He or she will be concerned with the pageantry so closely associated with the Legion.

The second vice commander may not be in charge of the color guard or firing squad, but must promote it. He or she might not be part of the initiation team, but should make sure one is functioning. In the pursuit of "justice," the second vice commander is concerned with the welfare of all fellow veterans, and thus is interested in the work of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee. Likewise, the second vice will know how the Economic Committee is functioning.

Finance officer/treasurer

The finance officer/treasurer must be a person of proven integrity and experience in handling financial affairs. The post depends on finance, just as any other organization, and will do well to accept expert advice in formulating and administering its financial policy.

The finance officer/treasurer 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. Both officers must be covered by adequate bond. Department headquarters should be consulted for blanket bond arrangement. Post accounting forms are designed to meet the requirements of Legion posts in maintaining a correct and permanent membership and finance record. Because of their simplicity, they require no special knowledge of bookkeeping or accounting. Every post adjutant and finance officer/treasurer should insist upon being provided with a set of forms to save time and money for the post. Consult the Emblem Sales catalog for prices and detailed descriptions, or go online to **emblem.legion.org**.

Be prompt in remitting national and department dues, along with the department record card, to department headquarters. Note all payments and other transactions on the post membership register.

Service officer

A good service officer should be retained. The value of a post service officer increases with length of service. As the service officer's reputation grows, so will the prestige of the organization in your community. The job calls for a competent and dedicated person, preferably one who lives and works nearby and is readily available to those needing assistance. He or she is responsible for bringing to the attention of all veterans and their dependents the rights and benefits granted them by law – law The American Legion helped craft.

The service officer must know how to access and utilize the expert services available through Legion channels and other community agencies. The job requires timely submission of information to full-time professionals so that every veteran and his or her dependents are adequately represented. The service officer's report should be a standard part of every meeting.

Beyond the post, The American Legion maintains a full staff of appeals representatives in Washington. A small mobile staff of field representatives provides a constant flow of information concerning conditions in VA hospitals, domiciles and regional offices. Other Legion representatives assist veterans who petition Department of Defense boards for review of less than fully honorable discharges or dismissal from the military. They also help veterans obtain deserved decorations and medals.

Department service officers can provide necessary claims forms. Additional information comes through department publications, National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation bulletins, memorandums and VA pamphlets. Many departments conduct training schools for post service officers to add to their knowledge and contacts, and all have trained service officers in VA regional offices and hospitals.

With most of today's veterans population composed of those who served during the Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the work of the post service officer continues to be vital. Even more than older veterans, these men and women 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 visited 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 in the post's support of the national organization's efforts.

Chaplain

The chaplain need not necessarily be a clergyman, but must be a person capable of moral and intellectual leadership and one who gives dignity and respect to the office. The chaplain should be in close touch with the commander and other post officers of the post, and should attend all meetings of the post executive committee. The leadership in many post activities belongs by right to the chaplain, and when this office is filled by the right person, the post's usefulness to the community only increases.

The *Manual of Ceremonies* (see Section 2) gives an important place to the chaplain in the conduct of meetings, the observance of patriotic occasions, funeral services and dedication ceremonies. At all these events, the chaplain is the moral leader.

The chaplain should cooperate with the post historian on graves registration work and inspire the post to see that graves are decorated on Memorial Day. Besides officiating at post members' funerals when requested, the chaplain can also be of service to their bereaved families. The chaplain may also chair the post's Veterans Administration Voluntary Services (VAVS) Committee, which coordinates volunteer work at nearby VA facilities.

The American Legion's "Service to God and Country" handbook, available through department headquarters, offers guidance for the post chaplain and religious emphasis committee.

Sergeant-at-arms

The sergeant-at-arms knows how to arrange the meeting hall and assists the post commander and adjutant in preliminary arrangements for meetings, including leading the color detail during presentation and retirement ceremonies. He or she is the expert on flag etiquette and should know proper flag display and procedures in operating a meeting. The sergeant-at-arms should also play a leading role in the post color guard, burial detail and other pageantry.

The sergeant-at-arms is the logical person to chair a welcome committee, which can have a tremendous influence on the post's image, membership and relationship with members. Every Legionnaire wants to feel part of the group, particularly the new Legionnaire attending his or her first few meetings. The sergeant-at-arms must make certain new members are welcomed, introduced and made to feel they are important to the post. The welcome committee also encourages present 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 it in the hands of one person as long as it's being handled well. The office is a suitable position for a past post commander.

There should be close cooperation between the post adjutant and the historian. The former works with the 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 just before the department convention.

Copies of whatever is printed concerning 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 valuable records through fire or other calamity, as well as provide material for those looking for information about the Legion. An outline for a one-year post narrative history and yearbook is provided in the appendix **(see pages 145-154)**.

The post historian should attend department conventions and make a point of knowing what historians of neighboring posts are doing. The department historian can advise post historians on department and national post history contests, historians associations, and materials that will assist in doing a better job.

Judge advocate

The primary duty of the judge advocate is to supply professional advice in the conduct of post business or to procure proper counsel. He is the guardian of the constitutional form of post government. Your judge advocate can also supply valuable assistance to other post committees and officers – to the service officer for legal advice, for example, and to the Americanism committee on matters relating to education and naturalization laws. Any post committee can benefit from the judge advocate's contacts with local government officials.

The judge advocate and legal committee are charged by the suggested post constitution with the duty of auditing post financial accounts. This should be done annually just before the election of officers or more frequently at their discretion.

Executive committee

In the suggested post constitution and by-laws **(see pages 106-111)**, the government and management of the post is entrusted to the executive committee. It should meet regularly or as often as the commander deems necessary. The post executive committee is further charged with hiring such employees as may be necessary, authorizing and approving all expenditures, requiring adequate bonds from those with custody of post funds, hearing reports of post committee chairpersons, and generally managing post affairs.

Delegation of these functions to the executive committee is in no way intended to usurp the powers of the membership through regular post meetings. Rather, this allows the routine operational affairs of the post to be handled outside of post meetings. Committee reports of general interest to members should still be given at post meetings, though.

The key to interesting post meetings is using the executive committee effectively. The post meeting that becomes bogged down in arguments on petty details is interesting only to those doing the talking.

Standing committees

Listed below are committees found in most American Legion posts, with brief descriptions of their duties. Your post constitution and/or department constitution may require additional committees or have other names for some committees, so do not consider the list to be mandatory or complete for every American Legion post.

New programs are often needed, while old programs should be changed, revitalized or, in some cases, dropped. Officers should take time to review the post's long-standing programs and activities and consider changes or additions. Determine which committees are necessary. Next, take another look at the post's members and even eligible nonmembers, making a list of potential committee heads and members. Frequently, an eligible nonmember will consider joining a member of your post if it has an activity or is planning an activity in which he or she is interested. Whoever makes this must be able to point out the need for the program and the reason why this particular person is desired to assist. 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.

Here's the list of what might be called standard post committees and their usual duties:

Americanism This committee 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, Boy Scouts, Oratorical Contest, School Award Medals and American Legion Baseball.

Children and Youth This committee is charged with ensuring that any child of a veteran in need of care and protection shall receive proper and timely service and aid, strengthening the family unit, extending support to sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth, and maintaining a well-rounded program that meets the needs of the young people in the community.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation This committee assists veterans in pursuing claims, understanding their rights and obtaining their benefits. Committee members also visit comrades who are sick or disabled, and provide comfort to members' families in illness and bereavement. The head of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee may be the post service officer. In addition, the post chaplain may serve as chair of a visiting committee.

National Security This committee urges post members to assist in community emergency preparedness, and to support local and national civilian defense projects.

Membership & Post Activities This committee is responsible for obtaining, retaining and increasing post membership – specifically, renewals, enrollment of new members, transfers and reinstatements. The first vice commander often chairs the membership committee.

Public Relations This committee elevates awareness in the veterans community and the community at large of the Legion's advocacy of veterans issues, national security, Americanism, and children and youth. The American Legion is defined in the public eye by the values for which it stands. The committee accomplishes this in two ways: placing radio and TV advertisements and public service announcements produced by the National Public Relations Division where they can be seen and heard, and developing relationships with editors and journalists in the post's community so that 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 the Legion is "still serving America" is the question the post's public relations committee should answer in the media. Public relations is a membership multiplier.

Legislative This committee promotes the Legion's official legislative mandates, disseminates monthly legislative updates, organizes and promotes proactive grassroots lobbying activities, and establishes and maintains 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 a critical element of the electoral process, and posts are permitted to host town hall meetings, put on "meet the candidate" nights and 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. **Note:** If in doubt, contact the department judge advocate for clarification before proceeding.

Finance This committee supervises the receiving, disbursement and accounting of all post funds, prepares annual budget recommendations, and advises the post on all financial policies. The post finance officer usually chairs the finance committee.

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

House This committee 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 This committee is 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 also maintain contact with any members of the armed forces from the post's community. The post service officer may chair the committee; however, the responsibilities of the committee go beyond the day-to-day functions of a good service officer in filing claims.

Other committees

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

Sons of The American Legion This committee supervises the Sons of The American Legion squadron in its organization, activities, and recreational and educational programs.

American Legion Riders This committee mentors and supervises the post's American Legion Riders chapter for proper organizational structure, reporting requirements at monthly post meetings, and to record activities, fundraising, and recreational and scholarship programs.

Graves Registration and Memorials This committee 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 This committee organizes, trains, promotes and supervises uniformed groups, such as a burial detail, color guard, chorus or firing squad.

Visiting or VAVS Members of this committee give comfort and assistance to members and their families during illness or bereavement, and visit hospitalized veterans. It is recommended the post chaplain chair this committee, and all post members share in its work by taking turns as committee members.

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 that wants to participate in 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. If the natural bent of your post is toward youth activities, sponsor a junior unit of some type.

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 **www.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. The majority of 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 acceptance by the community and eligible veterans.

American Legion buildings

Activities usually take place at an American Legion post home, a familiar but varied sight across America. Some are country clubs. Others are community centers. Some are bars; 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 have a general appeal. Some are landscaped and painted. Others are just non-descript buildings.

For posts planning to build new facilities or improve their existing buildings, the *Post Operations Manual* has information relevant to a building program – standards, planning criteria, financing, related administration suggestions – and post success stories. Download a copy at **www.legion.org/publications**.

Clubroom

If post members decide they want a clubroom and/or bar, it must have the best possible operation. To assist the post officers charged with the supervision of clubroom facilities, the *Post Operations Manual* covers such topics as the duties of a club manager, labor costs, beverage control, food service and financial accounting. The *Post Operations Manual* is available online at **www.legion.org/publications**.

Analysis of post operations

President Abraham Lincoln is said to have remarked, "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 enough to carry on the work of the post – and it will be, for a post's activities cannot exceed what its membership can support. But before discussing a post's membership and how big the post ought to be, consider these questions:

- What does the post do that would make a veteran want to belong?
- Is the post looking to the future?
- What further activities could the post reasonably expect to carry out?
- How many members can the post expect to handle?
- How many members does the post actually want, and how many could it be expected to handle? Is it satisfied with its current membership?
- What kind of post is it or does it want to be?
- What is the reason for the post's existence?

The answers for every post will be different, revealing which posts are capable of membership growth and which must improve and modernize their programs before healthy membership growth can be supported.

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. Pick up department and national planning manuals for ideas on how to increase the number and contributions of active Legionnaires, and use this material as a base for your own presentation to make your post more effective.

Post Responsibility Audit (PRA)

A post responsibility audit, or PRA, anticipates that a post participates, through its members, in meaningful activities within the community where its members reside. The PRA is a helpful way to measure the results of these activities.

Over the decades, The American Legion and its posts have developed programs largely in response to pressure. These pressures can take many forms: a drop in membership, acceptance by the wider community, changing economic factors, or the return of a new generation of veterans from war. All these challenges, and others, must be faced head-on by the Legion. Unfortunately, some posts respond by reacting rather than acting. As individuals, and in our personal lives, we know the value of planning ahead. But when a person has been active in a post for a long time, "blinders" or "tunnel vision" can set in. You'll hear statements like, "Be active" or "Promote community service," but members may choose to react instead of act ahead of any emergency.

There are no precise standards developed to provide both a qualitative and quantitative post analysis, but one must start somewhere, and the accompanying PRA form can be used as a barometer to help measure a post's effectiveness.

The intent of the PRA is not necessarily to indicate how you can quickly rate your posts, although this could be a valuable tool. The primary purpose is to indicate how, by evaluating what the post is doing, you can see if it is fulfilling a useful function, attracting veterans and benefiting the community.

If you honestly evaluate your posts, you are going to be surprised. More important, such evaluations will indicate where improvement is most needed.

Perhaps the social aspects have been underplayed, although it would be easy to cover all such activities under the fifth item, "Post is a community center" or the eighth item, "Is a friendly place to be." If the PRA is used, there may need to be increased emphasis on planned social or recreational programs. In the meantime, do not lose sight of the fundamental question, "Is this post doing the things that justify its continued existence in the community or for your veterans?"

A score of 24 usually reflects a post that's doing a respectable job of hanging on to old members. But it's doubtful many are coming out to meetings, and it's more doubtful it would be attracting the necessary new blood to make the post grow.

Most average posts, with a bit of effort, can become outstanding posts. By improving in each area listed on the PRA, that can happen. One area in which a better performance is most visibly observed is in post meeting attendance. Others are members' enthusiasm and a brightening of the membership outlook.

Evaluate what the post is doing by using the following PRA form to audit post activities. Run a beginning audit with periodic follow-ups for comparison – perhaps quarterly – to see whether or not the post has made any improvements in specifically identified areas.

POST RESPONSIBILITY AUDIT

Rating schedule

0 - No participation
1 - Poor
2 - Below average
3 - Average
4 - Above average
5 - Excellent

	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Follows principles of Preamble	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. Has good youth programs	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. Members are interested and active	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. Is a real asset to the community	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. Post is a community center	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. Veterans needing help are helped	___	___	___	___	___	___
7. Has businesslike operation	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. Is a friendly place to be	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. Is well thought of by the community	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. Is well thought of by veterans	___	___	___	___	___	___

TOTAL POST SCORE _____

DATE OF AUDIT _____

Overall rating (assessment) from post total

0 - 4	Dead
5 - 14	Poor
15 - 24	Below average
25 - 34	Average
35 - 44	Above average
45 - 50	Excellent

POST ANALYSIS

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF _____

Post _____ # _____ Location _____

Date of visit _____ By _____ Title _____

Name of commander _____ Adjutant _____

COMMITTEES	Committee appointed		Committee functioning	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Americanism	__	__	__	__
Membership	__	__	__	__
Children & Youth	__	__	__	__
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	__	__	__	__
Veterans employment	__	__	__	__
Boys State	__	__	__	__
Legion Baseball	__	__	__	__
Oratorical	__	__	__	__
Other committees	__	__	__	__

MEMBERSHIP

Goal _____ To date _____ Last year _____ Gulf War/War on Terrorism veterans joined? _____

Describe the general conduct of the meeting. _____

_____

Total attendance _____ How often does post meet? _____ Dates _____

How often does the post executive committee meet? _____

In your opinion, what can be done to assist this post? _____

_____

_____

_____

Signed (post officer) _____ Title _____

Signed (department representative) _____ Title _____

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 Obtain post records and get new material from department headquarters to become familiar with the policies and traditions of the post, district, department and National Headquarters.

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. Estimated expenditures
   3. Possible methods of financing selected programs with other than post 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 your post
e. Initiate study of the post and community for new programs, conduct post analysis

Step III Activate committees.

a. Select chairperson and members
b. Make personal contact with each chair to determine willingness to serve
c. Arrange meeting of committees to formulate program
d. Instruct chairmen on programs, available materials, post reports and more
e. Build 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.
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 Legion programs.
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 your newspaper or bulletin informed.

Step VII Plan for a more informed membership.

a. Talks at post meetings
b. Give everyone a job.
c. Encourage enrollment and completion of The American Legion Extension Institute 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

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 Legion's work and ideals, they are eligible to receive a permanent post charter. Application forms for permanent charter may be obtained from department headquarters.

A post name must be adopted before a new post is issued a charter. Many posts choose to adopt the name of a departed comrade – 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 facts surrounding 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 that the incorporated post may avoid confusion over its proper name when dealing with the Internal Revenue Service.

Organizational meeting

A tentative draft should be made of a post constitution before the organizational meeting **(see pages 106-108)**. 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 organize a local post of The American Legion.
- The American Legion has posts in most U.S. county seats and many countries throughout the world.
- The American Legion includes veterans of World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf and the war on terrorism.
- Any soldier, sailor, Marine, airman, nurse, WAC, WAVE or SPAR of the United States who served honorably between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, June 25, 1950, and January 31, 1955, February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, August 24, 1982, and July 31, 1984, December 20, 1989, and January 31, 1990, or August 2, 1990, to 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 admitted.
- Fifteen members are usually required for the formal application for a charter; however, the actual minimum number is set by each department.
- Dues should be set sufficiently high to cover anticipated administrative expenses and collected either before or at the organizational meeting. 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 world wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf or the war on terrorism. You may also use the names of a deceased veteran of each war.

A list should be compiled of those in attendance, including full name, name of the last organization with which they served, date of separation from military service and current local address. 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 or National Headquarters.

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 any Legion post or department headquarters. It is preferable to have the officers sign first, in the order named above. When completed, the form should be turned over to the newly elected adjutant for recording 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 an amount covering the dues of the department and the national organization for all names appearing on the application – be forwarded 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 an organizational 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 The American Legion is not serving a particular community or neighborhood where there are sufficient veterans to support an active and growing post. Someone of stature from the district or the department must visit the area and find out where 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 teen 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, you can go a long way toward achieving the second step, which is the recruitment of 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 posts in other communities or other states who live within the boundaries where a new post is proposed.

Sometimes district officers will still lack a key person or group to form a new post. Make a list of places to look, starting with banks, insurance and real-estate offices, school principals, and local government.

Pay a visit to these places, explaining what you're attempting and why you believe an American Legion post will be an asset to the neighborhood or community. At each stop, request the names of any veterans who might be interested in getting 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.

In making the first contacts with a prospective new member or business, it is not necessary to offer a detailed explanation of the Legion. That can come later. Actually, a copy of *The American Legion Magazine* is a simple item of substance that makes the selling job easier. 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.

Several decisions must be made when starting a new post. Select a temporary name, set initial dues and, most importantly, identify three or four reasons why a new post is needed.

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 that have meaning to area residents.

Once you have recruited the minimum number of eligible veterans necessary to start a post, conduct a brief organizational meeting to elect a temporary chairman and secretary. There then exists an organization that can set the date for a second meeting, where the procedures outlined in Article IX, Section 4, of The American Legion Constitution should be followed to organize a post. This group should make sure proper publicity is given to the second meeting, and that those Legionnaires who have volunteered to assist the new post during its formation and the first few crucial months – including a service officer – are in attendance.

The work of dedicated Legionnaires who unselfishly devote time and effort to assuring the success of a new post should not go unrecognized. For this purpose, the National Membership & Post Activities 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. There are highly successful luncheon-type posts, made up primarily of business and professional members. Others 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.

Regardless of the post's type, there must be a legitimate, recognizable need to be served by establishing an American Legion post. Then, a core group of eligible members should be found or brought together, and they should be interested in taking the initiative to form a post. Finally, there must be help, encouragement and expertise from knowledgeable Legionnaires in a position to advise and inform the group.

Step-by-step procedures

When establishing a new American Legion post, a positive attitude is essential. Don't say, "if we form a post." It's "when we form a post." Remember, you'll be 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 veterans are without a readily available post.
2. Decide that a new post will be established to serve the selected area.
3. Communicate with the Legion's department headquarters and, if necessary, the district commander. (Others may already be working to establish a post in the area.)
4. Find out from the department the minimum number of members required for a post charter.
5. At the same time, 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 that the new post can carry out to meet local needs or aspirations.
7. Contact key people in the community and get their approval for a new post, along with suggestions for possible leaders and members. Ask the mayor, police officers, fire department officials, the school superintendent, teachers, bank managers, real-estate agents, insurance agents, barbers and business owners.
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. Pick a name for a post. (A post may not be named for any living person.)
10. Ask the department headquarters to assign a number to the post.
11. Establish post dues before the first organizational meeting, keeping them in line with neighboring posts.
12. Designate a secretary/treasurer to serve during the organizational period.
13. Open a bank account for the post. (Two signatures should be required on all checks.)
14. Start signing members. (Be familiar with eligibility requirements.)
15. Set a time and place for an organizational meeting.
16. Get the required number of signatures on the application for a temporary charter.
17. Notify all members in writing of the time and place of the organizational meeting.
18. Publicize the post's formation and organizational meeting through local press, social media, notices on shopping center bulletin boards and other outlets.
19. Check to make sure you have signatures of all members on the charter application and that the form is fully completed with necessary copies.
20. Do not overwhelm members and prospective officers with literature or too much information. Take it one step at a time.
21. Select one or two needed community projects. Emphasize how The American Legion can help meet the needs of veterans and the community.

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.

Project Stay Active

Project Stay Active helps local posts maintain contact with members who move into your area. National Headquarters prints a summary of the veteran's membership on a 3x5 card, including both new and old addresses, the member's department, the post number, the number of continuous years, and the date the card was printed. If the member is a life member, it is noted. The card is printed in ZIP code order and mailed to department adjutants for distribution to the post most accessible to the member. This post is then asked to contact and welcome the member to the area. This is an ideal time to offer assistance and to invite the member to visit your post.

In many cases, the Legionnaire may wish to transfer membership to a post in the community. As may be expected, some of these Legionnaires are involved in temporary moves, some may have a life membership "back home," and others may have sentimental feelings toward their hometown post. However, many of them will be receptive to an offer to transfer to your post when asked.

Departments actively participating in Project Stay Active generally distribute the cards each month through district or county commanders.

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. Thereafter, the code letter "c" will appear in a column after the member's ZIP code in the post membership register. 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 that do not participate 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. All 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 **www.legion.org/renew**. Upon renewal, a member can print a temporary membership card to send to his or her post to receive a permanent membership card. Posts using **myLegion.org** can see which post members have renewed online. Otherwise, posts will be notified through their departments so that they can send membership cards.

Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) membership

These members pay a one-time fee or can utilize a time payment plan option to gain lifetime membership in The American Legion. These Legionnaires have voluntarily chosen to become Paid-Up-For-Life members under the national plan. A Legionnaire must be in good standing to become a PUFL member. To be in good standing, the member must have a valid membership card for the current Legion year. Obtain PUFL application forms from department headquarters, National Headquarters or online at **www.legion.org/join/pufl**.

Consolidated Post Reports (CPR)

Post adjutants are the key to how well The American Legion as a whole will be able to report to the American people its actual accomplishments for the past year.

Each post receives a three-part, snap-out CPR report 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 basic programs: Americanism, Children & Youth, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Economic and National Security. Other requested items are the number of funeral honors provided for deceased members, and whether the post sponsors a uniformed group or distributes a regular publication to members. Don't be discouraged if the post doesn't have something to report in every blank on the CPR. Very few posts have every Legion program. Many outstanding posts devote their energies and resources to just two or three programs or activities, more than justifying their existence.

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.

Include details in narrative

Posts should confine answers to the allotted spaces. If they wish to go into a subject in further detail, 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 annual report, 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.

myLegion.org

National Headquarters has a secure website to assist post officers in their day-to-day membership processing duties. To register, the post adjutant must first complete and submit an authorization form at **www.mylegion.org**.

- View member information for post and squadron data.
- Track members who have renewed online.
- Submit Member Data Form changes electronically, with the exception of adding new members, processing renewals and transferring members. Those three processes must continue to be transmitted to the department. All member data changes submitted electronically through myLegion are submitted to department headquarters in a weekly file from National Headquarters, eliminating the need to complete or mail paper forms for address changes, phone number updates, deceased notifications, etc.
- Generate rosters for current, expired, deceased and undeliverable members. Data is also available in CSV file format allowing users to work with the data in other applications.
- Submit Consolidated Post Report (CPR) electronically.
- Search for headquarters post and expired members in a specified area to help grow your post membership.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (CWF)

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (CWF) was created in 1954 to:

- Contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth through the dissemination of knowledge about new and innovative organizations and/or their programs designed to benefit youth.
- Contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth through the dissemination of knowledge already possessed by well-established organizations, to the end that such information can be more adequately used by society.

CWF's primary source of revenue is members of the Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Eight & 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 their cumulative donations made during the current contribution year (June 1-May 31):

	Cumulative donations	**Award**
Century Club	$100	Gold pin with amethyst
Foundation Partner	$250	Gold pin with blue sapphire
President's Circle	$500	Gold pin with one diamond
Foundation Ambassadors	$1,000	Gold pin with five diamonds

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

Caretaker	$500	Bronze plaque
Advocate	$750	Silver plaque
Guardian	$1,000	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 through the 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.
- Your department gets credit for your support on CWF's national report to Congress.

Suggestions

- When a member of the post or unit passes away, suggest that contributions be sent to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation in their memory to provide meaningful grants that will help children.
- 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)

Temporary Financial Assistance is the landmark program of the Legion's National Commission on Children & Youth. Started in 1925 as a form of direct aid to children, TFA is still unique in the field of social work today.

Through TFA, a post can call upon the national organization to provide cash assistance to help meet the basic needs of veterans' children when it is evident there are no other resources available to provide the required assistance. These payments, as indicated by the program's name, are temporary, and this cash assistance is in the form of a grant.

The post and department are expected to make every effort to secure assistance for needy veterans' children from its own resources, or those of other organizations or agencies within the community whose purpose it is to meet the need. Payments from the program may be made to, or on behalf of, the family for a variety of expenses necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the children involved.

A maintenance grant may be used for food, shelter (rent or mortgage payment, utilities and educational expense. It cannot be used for debts incurred prior to the date of application for TFA. Credit-card payments, bank notes (other than home mortgage loans), auto loans and other installment-type payments are considered to be "prior debts." The only exceptions to this policy are utilities and shelter payments.

A medical grant requires a written statement from a doctor outlining the program, the treatment and the estimated costs. It may be used for medical care, surgery, dental care, pharmaceuticals, dietary needs, hospitalization, nursing and convalescent care, and other needs as specified.

A medical grant cannot cover previous expenses or care. A family must meet two criteria to be eligible:

- The veteran must have served a portion of active duty during one of these periods: August 2, 1990, to present (or the cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S. government); December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; or December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946.

- There must be children in the home younger than 18 (younger than 21 if still in high school or physically handicapped). These children may be legitimate, stepchildren, legally adopted or illegitimate with necessary proof of relationship provided.

Note: The veteran does not need to be a member of The American Legion to receive assistance.

Requests for assistance must be submitted on an official application form, available from department headquarters. Each application has instructions to guide the local investigator through the procedure of filing. For more information about TFA, request a brochure from your department adjutant or the National Americanism and Children & Youth Division by calling **(317) 630-1203** or sending an email to **acy@legion.org**.

National Emergency Fund (NEF)

The National Emergency Fund 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 $9 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 your post can provide immediate and responsive care to members affected.

Eligibility

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

- Must be a current-year paid member of The American Legion or SAL
- Must be a member in good standing with their post or squadron
- 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) 630-1330**, or online at **www.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 and adjutant determine the grant amount, which is not to exceed $1,500 for individuals and $5,000 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 or SAL member in need. There are no administrative or fulfillment costs. To learn how to donate, visit **www.legion.org/emergency**.

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 l, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon/Grenada, Panama, the Gulf War or the war on terrorism during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section l, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, are eligible for membership in Sons of The American Legion.

Since SAL eligibility begins at date of birth, a squadron's activities and programs should be determined by age groupings of eligible members, the apparent needs of young eligibles, the community's need for programs and activities that could be provided by SAL, and the capabilities of those serving as SAL leaders and advisers.

New members should be initiated with full ceremony. A member's first impression is often the most lasting. Also, distribute copies of the SAL Squadron Handbook available 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 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. Through various programs, the Auxiliary also educates citizens, mentors youth, and promotes patriotism, citizenship, peace and security. Membership is open to wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, granddaughters and great-granddaughters of veterans who served during wartime; some Auxiliary members are veterans themselves.

- If an applicant is joining on her own service record, the Auxiliary unit to which she is applying for membership will be responsible for verification of her eligibility for membership.
- If 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.
- If an applicant wishes to join a unit or a post other than the one to which her Legionnaire relative belongs, the unit to which she is applying for membership should check the eligibility with the post of her relative.
- 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.

SECTION 2

Manual of Ceremonies

Adopted by The American Legion in 1921

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 may not be the same as those used by other groups or organizations, but it does not mean the Legion is right and others are wrong.

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. Comrades shall be careful never to pass between the flags and the station of the commander.

4. A member entering the hall after the meeting has begun shall advance to the center of the room, salute the colors and be seated.

5. 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.

6. 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 ritual assigned to that particular office, and the printed ritual should not be read during any ceremony.

7. 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.

8. Each officer shall be equipped with the official overseas cap and with the proper official badge of the respective office. Such badges may be purchased in sets by the post or singly by the individual officer through Emblem Sales.

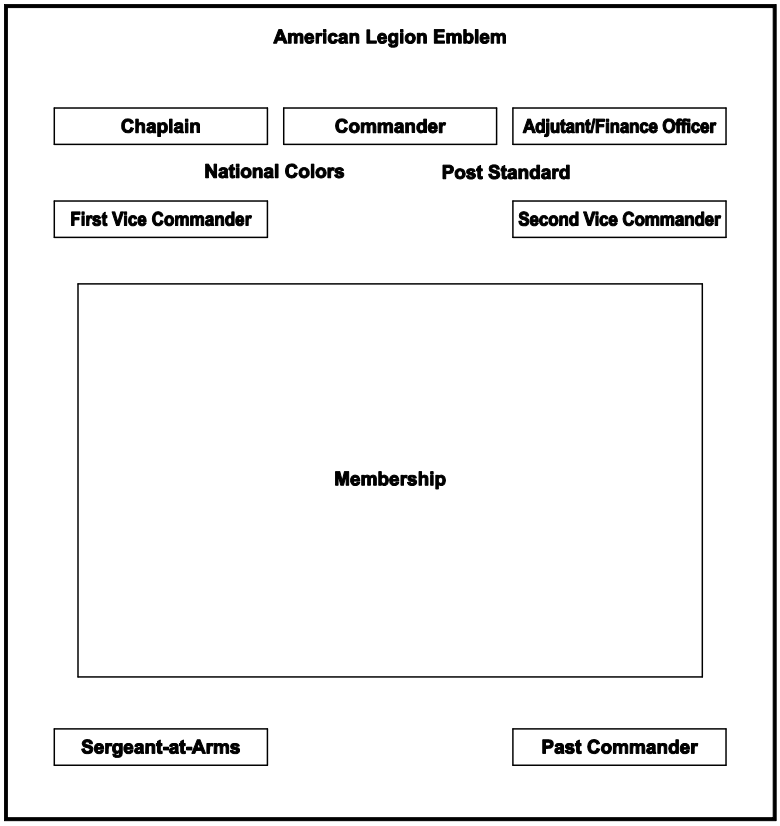
9. Legionnaires standing in silent tribute in memory of departed comrades during meetings or ceremonies will face the U.S. flag. According to Resolution No. 33, passed by the National Executive Committee in May 1971, The American Legion "shall, at functions within Legion buildings and at all levels, cease all activities whatsoever" for a period of 60 seconds as a tribute to comrades 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.

10. In addressing an officer of The American Legion, preface the title with the word "Comrade."

11. 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," "district," "division," "department" or "national" may be inserted to fit a specific occasion.

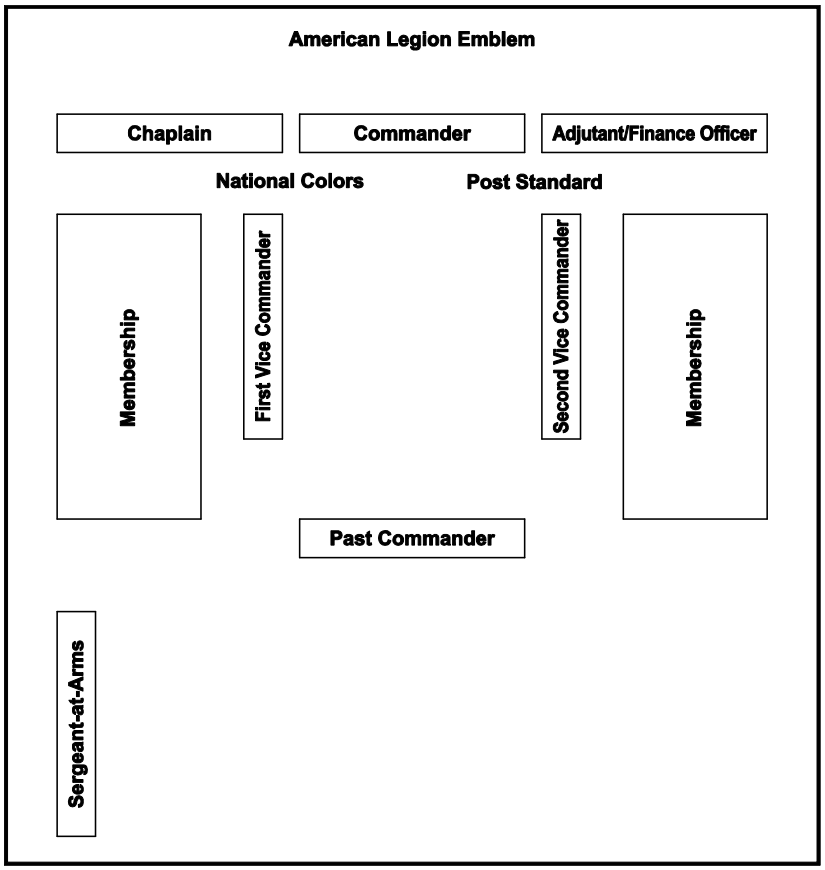
Plan of post meeting room

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.



Wearing the American Legion cap, uniform and regalia

1. The 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 by individuals when officially representing The American Legion on public occasions. For all ceremonies, the uniforms adopted by a department are recommended. However, an official American Legion cap, dark blue or black civilian coat, dark trousers, white shirt, black four-in-hand tie, black shoes and socks make an attractive uniform. A Legionnaire is considered to be in uniform if wearing an official American Legion cap. Therefore, it is not proper to wear a Legion cap while eating a meal at an official American Legion or civic luncheon or dinner.
2. The cap should be worn in a place of worship only by the guard of honor, color guard and commander of the same while in marching order or standing guard. When one is seated, the cap should be removed.
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 as one approaches 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. 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.
5. 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 doffed.
6. In meetings, the cap should be worn except during the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer and while standing in silent reverence in memory of departed comrades, when it should be held with the right hand over the heart.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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) – "Illinois" (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) – "Minneapolis, Minn." (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 overseas 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, treasurer, 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.

How to organize a ritual 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 numbering 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

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 of the same length and general tenor.

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 for our comrades 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 comrades 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 World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and other conflicts. Resolution 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 the thousands of 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 the Great 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.

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 together 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."

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.

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 40-41)**.

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 in 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 the Great 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 the Great 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 our sick and disabled comrades, 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 and introduces each newly obligated member to the membership and requests the sergeant-at-arms to seat them with their comrades.

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: "My comrades, you have been chosen by your comrades 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 our disabled comrades; 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, _____, 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 comrades 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, my comrade, 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 comrade. 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 comrades have 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: "My comrade, 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 and every one of them. You are the teacher of democracy."

The installing officer turns to the retiring commander.

Installing officer: "My comrade, 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 comrades 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 comrades 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, comrade, 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 comrade 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 comrades 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 comrades, 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: "My comrades, 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, _____, 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."

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 name and number), 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 our comrades 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 comrades, who showed their loyalty in their lives and sealed it with their deaths. We pray especially for our comrades 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 #), 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. Comrades, you will 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 #), 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 the comrades 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 our disabled comrades; 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 #), 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.

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. As a result, the Legion has adopted certain ways and means that may differ from other groups. This does not mean they are wrong or improper – just different.

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.

The following represents DoD guidance on the rendering of military funeral honors. By law, the military funeral honors detail will consist of at least two uniformed members of the military, with the detail leader from the parent service of the deceased. When requested by the next of kin, the ceremonial paying of respect and gratitude to those who have faithfully defended our nation must include the following**:**

- The sounding of Taps
- Ceremonial folding and presentation of the U.S. flag (always presented by the detail leader)

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

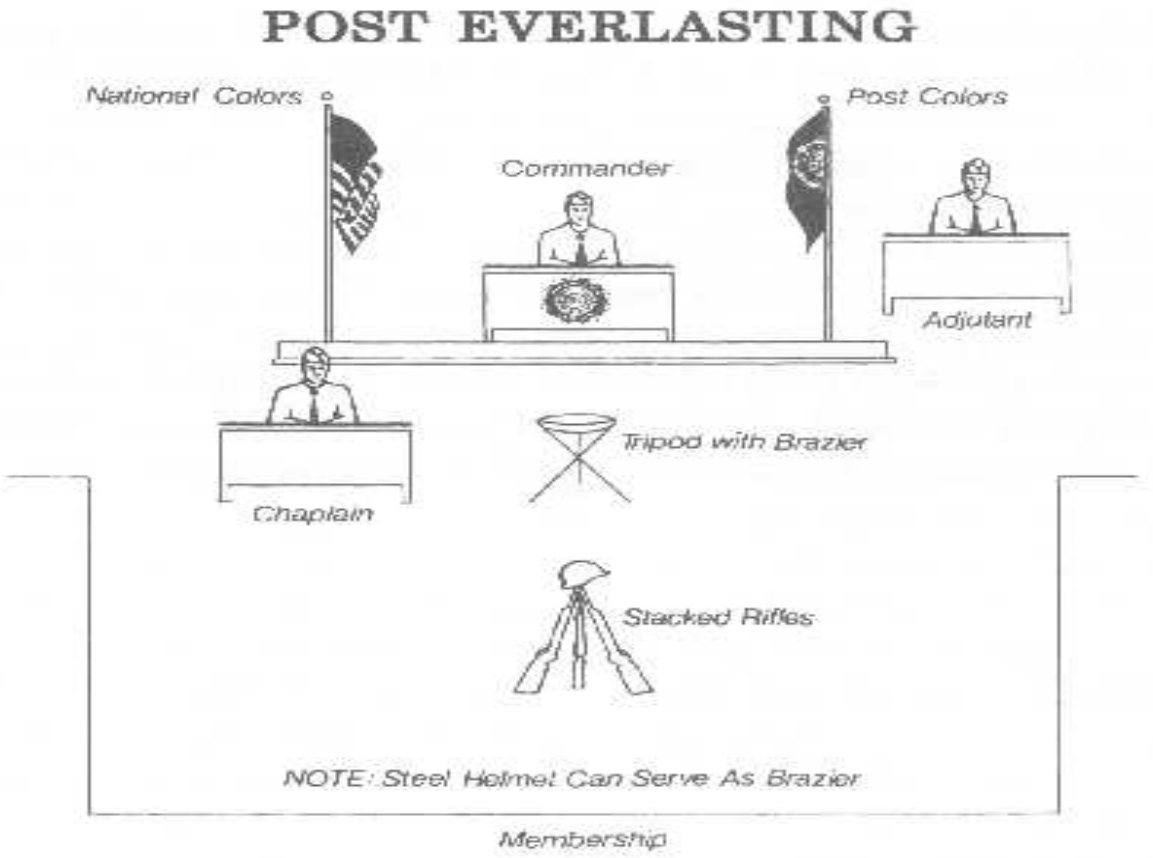
1. The order of the ceremony is the sounding of Taps, the folding of the flag, and the presentation of the flag to the family. If there is a firing party, the volleys are fired *before* the sounding of Taps. The detail leader is responsible for ensuring each step in the ceremony is executed properly, 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 comrades.
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, established Legion protocol and tradition found in the *Manual of Ceremonies* may be followed in rendering honors to a veteran who served in the U.S. Armed Forces.



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 Comrade _____ 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 Comrade _____." 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 comrade with the brazier. The commander returns the salute.

Sergeant-at-arms: "The equipment is properly arranged, comrade 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 comrades."

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: "The adjutant will place an American Legion cap on the rifles in remembrance of Comrade _____'s service to our country in the (Army / Marine Corps / Navy / Air Force / Coast Guard) 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 comrade chaplain will offer prayer."

Chaplain: "Our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom has transferred Comrade _____ to the jurisdiction of Post Everlasting of The American Legion. May your soul rest in peace. Amen."

Commander: "Comrade adjutant, enter the name of Comrade _____ 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: "Comrade adjutant, hand me the letter containing the service and Legion records of Comrade _____, which we will transmit to Post Everlasting of The American Legion."

The commander then reads a letter.

Commander: "Comrade chaplain, transmit this letter containing the service and Legion records of Comrade _____ 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 Comrade _____ and in memory of all the comrades 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: "Comrade 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 departed comrade.

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), 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 comrade 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 comrade 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 comrade 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, Legionnaire and comrade."

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 squad. 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.

Firing squad commander: "Present … arms."

After the casket is placed in the hearse, the final command is given.

Firing squad commander: "Order … arms."

Procedure at cemetery

Once the column is opposite the grave, the firing squad 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.

Firing squad commander: "Present … arms."

The firing squad presents arms. The casket having been placed over the grave, arms are brought to the order.

Firing squad commander: "Parade rest."

The officer in charge of the firing squad 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 cometh forth as a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not**.** Forasmuch as God hath taken out of the world the soul of our departed comrade, we therefore commit (his or her) body to the ground to sleep and (his or her) soul to endless peace to rest. The dust returneth to earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it."

The chaplain offers a benediction (if desired). At the conclusion of the chaplain's service, two pallbearers remove the U.S. flag from the casket, fold it in the traditional manner ***(see page 75)****, and place it on the arm of the chaplain, who will present the flag to the nearest kin.*

Firing squad commander: "Salute our departed comrade(s)."

The officer in charge of the firing squad gives order according to infantry drill regulations in force at the time. The squad fires three rounds of blank cartridges, the muzzles of the pieces being elevated. The bugler plays Taps.

The escort forms a column, marches in quick time to where it first assembled, and dismissed.

American Legion military funeral escorts

A full American Legion military funeral requires 21 Legionnaires in uniform: one chaplain, two color guards, eight firing squad members, one bugler, one commander, six pallbearers, and two color bearers of the firing squad. The firing squad commander is in charge of all details and movements. The firing squad should be composed of members who are familiar with handling a rifle. The squad 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 firing squad 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 firing squad commander calls members to attention.

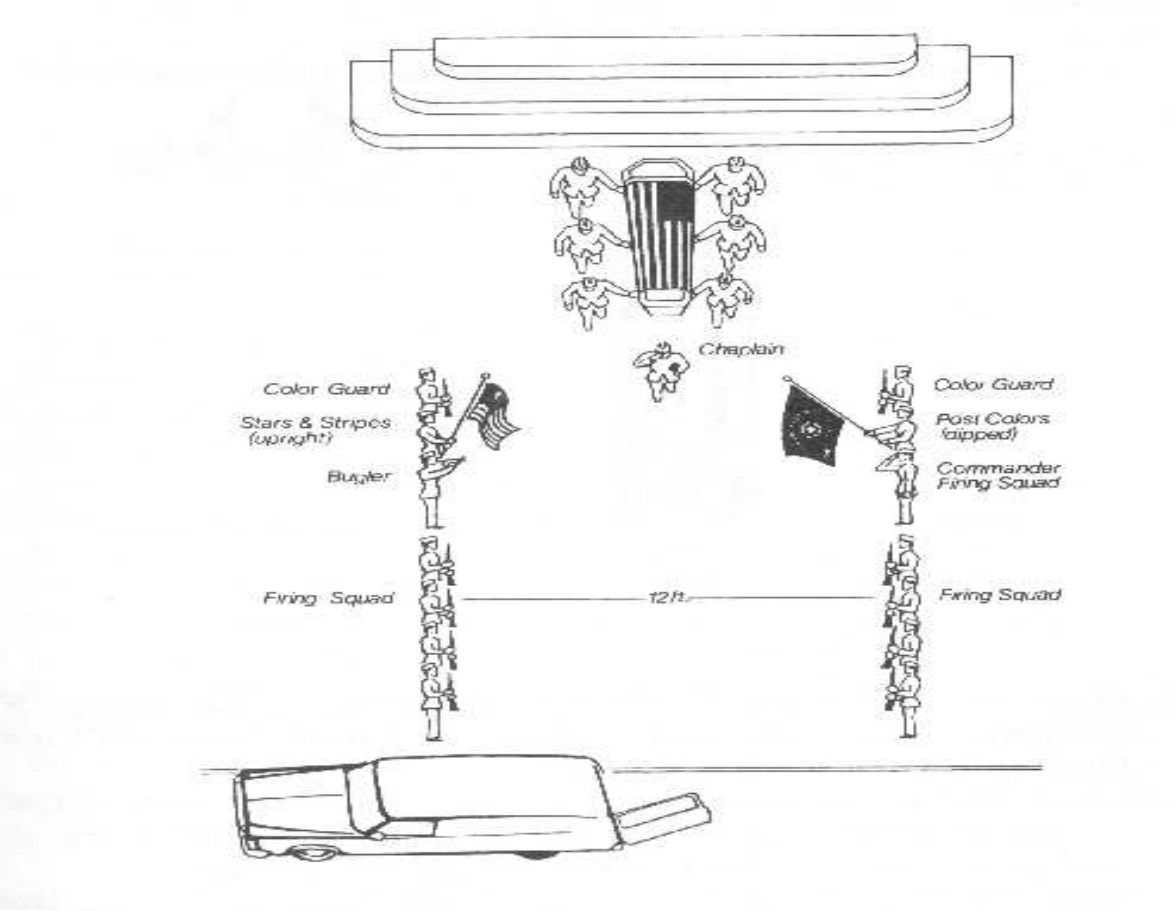
Firing squad commander: "Escort, attention."

Firing squad 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 firing squad remains at "present arms" until the casket is in the hearse and the doors are closed.

Firing squad commander: "Order arms."

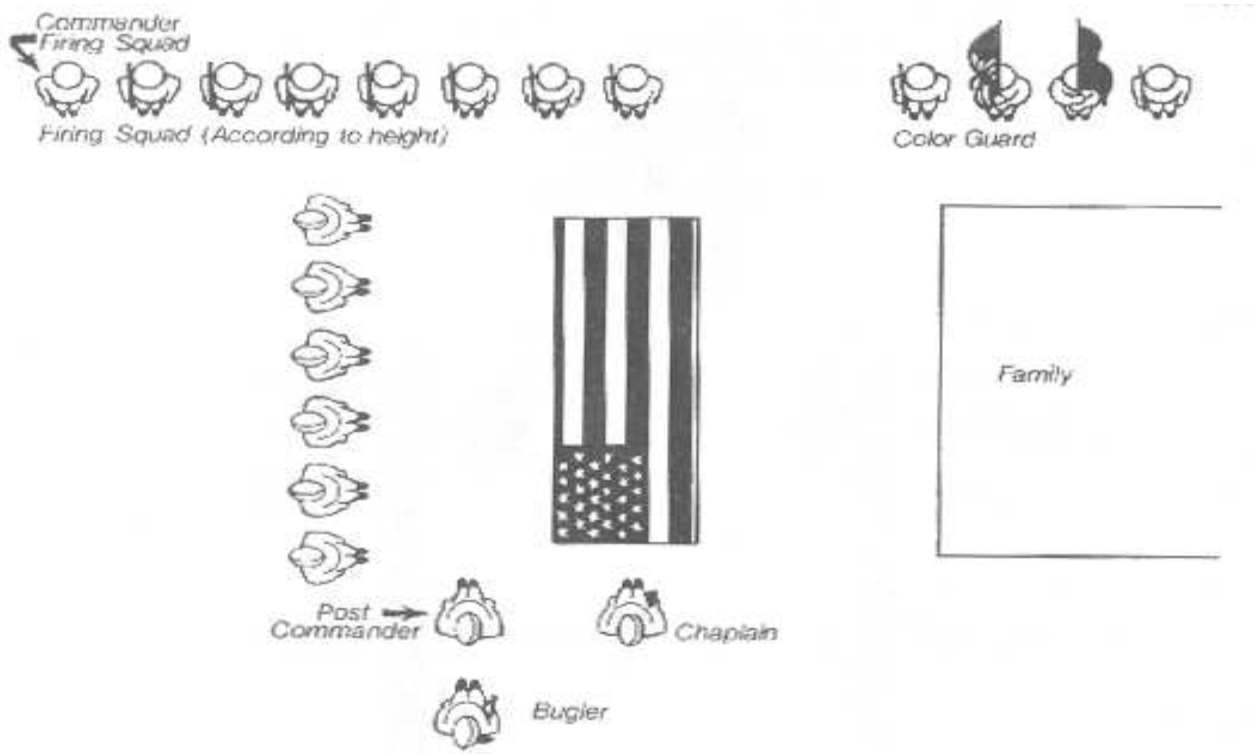
Escort leaving the chapel and heading toward the hearse



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 squad, 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 squad 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, the following general plan is satisfactory:



As the chaplain begins the graveside service, the commander brings the firing squad and pallbearers to parade rest, holds position until the chaplain's services are completed, then says, "Escort, attention."

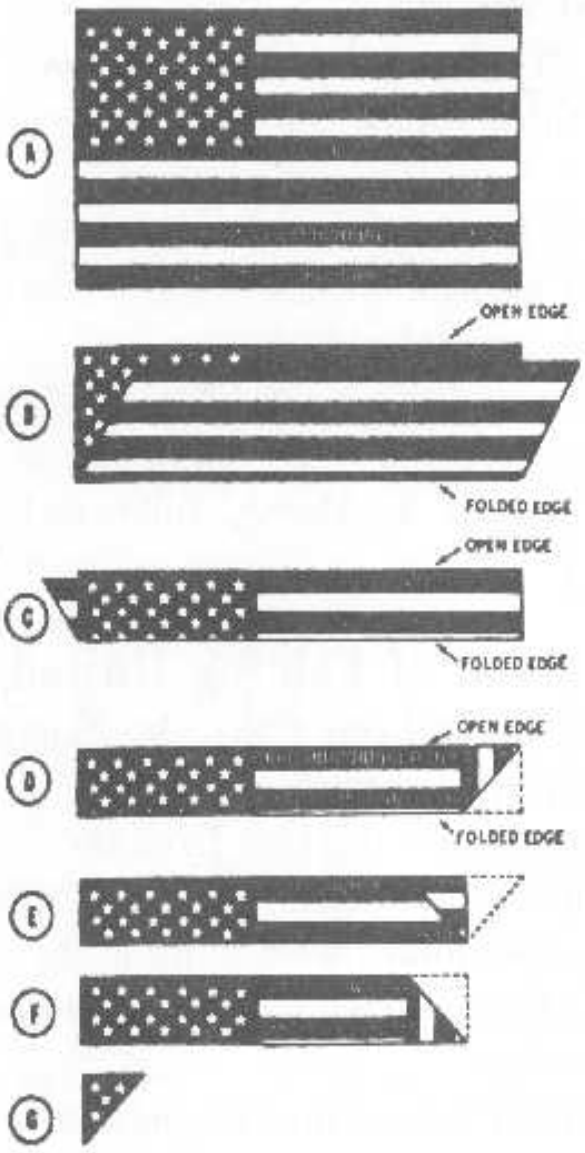
At the conclusion of the chaplain's service, two pallbearers remove the flag from the casket, fold it in the traditional manner and place it on the arm of chaplain, who will give flag to the nearest kin following the service.

Chaplain: "The government of the United States presents to you, through The American Legion, the flag under which our comrade served."

- As soon as the flag is presented, the firing squad fires three volleys.
- At the commander's order, "Ready," bring the rifle so that the muzzle of 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 squad says, "Order arms."
- 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.



Funeral/cemetery procedure

American Legion practice	**Military Field Manual 22-5**
1. Flag is removed from the casket	1. Secure flag and hold it waist-high off casket
2. Flag is folded and given to the chaplain	2. Fire volley by firing squad
3. Flag is presented to the family	3. Taps is sounded
4. Fire volley by firing squad	4. Flag is folded
5. Taps is sounded	5. Flag is presented to the family

The main concern is that an appropriate ceremony is conducted to honor the deceased veteran.

The funeral service may vary in accordance with the religious beliefs of the deceased comrade.

There are subtle differences between American Legion protocol and military protocol on the steps followed at the gravesite of a deceased veteran. A post may choose to use practices adopted over the years by the Legion, or it may utilize cemetery practices as outlined in the Military Field Manual 22-5. The same commands are completed, but the order of sequence is different. The following illustrates this variation.

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 Comrade (or Comrades) _____ 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 Comrade (Comrades) _____. 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 Comrade (Comrades) _____ 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 Comrade (Comrades). 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 comrade (comrades). 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.

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 comrades 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."

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: "Comrades, 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 those 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 comrades. 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 of the same length and general tenor.

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 comrades; 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 our comrades 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.

"Comrades, 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) firing squad, 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: "Comrades, attend the 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 our comrades died. Amen."

The following floral ceremony may be omitted.

Commander: "Sergeant-at-arms (or other comrade designated), you will deposit upon the monument *(or graves)* of our comrades 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 firing squad)*:* "Salute the dead!"

The officer in charge of the firing squad 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: "Comrades and 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 the Great 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 a personal one of the same length and tenor. 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 in 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

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 89. A small fire is burning opposite the commander and beyond the rows of members.

Sergeant-at-arms: “Comrade commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable flags of our country for inspection and disposal.”

Commander*:* “Comrade 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: “Comrade 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 comrades and the dead soldiers, sailors, and airmen 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: “Comrade 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: “Comrade 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: “Comrade second vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?”

Second vice commander: “Comrade commander, these flags became unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend they be honorably retired from further service.”

Commander: “Comrade first vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?”

First vice commander: “Comrade commander, since these flags have become faded and worn in a tribute of service and love, I also recommend they be fittingly destroyed.”

Commander: “Comrades, 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 and our comrades 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 soldier, sailor, Marine or airman 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."

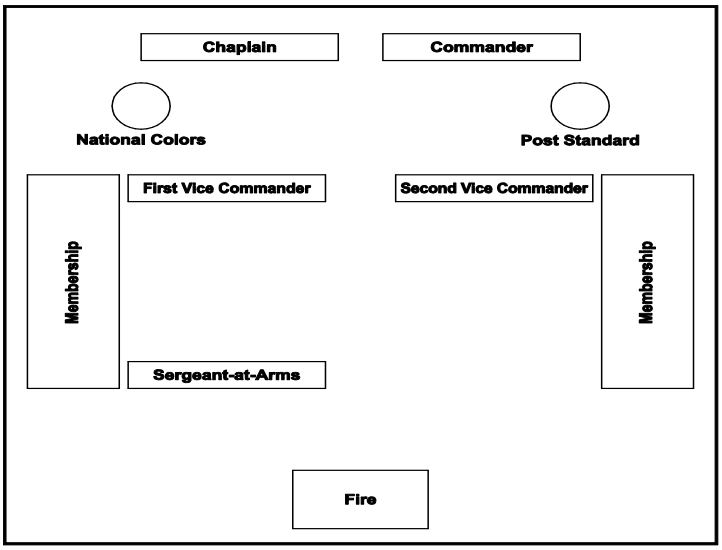
Commander: "Hand salute."

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: "Two."

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 75).** 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 comrade. 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."

APPENDIX

Meaning of the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution

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 the great 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.

U.S. CODE ANNOTATED
TITLE 36 CHAPTER 21701-21708
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Created by Act of Congress
Washington, DC on September 16, 1919

§ 21701. Organization

(a) Federal charter.–The American Legion (in this chapter [36 U.S.C.A. § 21701 et seq.], the "corporation") is a federally chartered corporation.
(b) Perpetual existence. –Except as otherwise provided, the corporation has perpetual existence.--

§ 21702. Purposes

The purposes of the corporation are–
(1) to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States;
(2) to promote peace and good will among the peoples of the United States and all the nations of the Earth;
(3) to preserve the memories and the incidents of the 2 World Wars and the other great hostilities fought to uphold democracy;
(4) to cement the ties and comradeship born of service; and
(5) to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country.

§ 21703. Membership

An individual is eligible for membership in the corporation only if the individual–
(1) has served in the Armed Forces of–
(A) the United States at any time during any period from–
(i) April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918;
(ii) December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946
(iii) June 25, 1950, through January 31, 1955;
(iv) February 28, 1961, through May 7, 1975;
(v) August 24, 1982, through July 31, 1984;
(vi) December 20, 1989, through January 31, 1990; or
(vii) August 2, 1990, through the date of cessation of hostilities, as decided by the United States Government; or
(B) a government associated with the United States during a period referred to in subclause (A) of this clause and was a citizen of the United States when the individual entered that service; and
(2) was honorably discharged or separated from that service or continues to serve honorably during or after that period.

§ 21704. Powers

The corporation may–
(1) adopt a constitution, by laws, and regulations to carry ou 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 such organizations and local chapters; [1]
(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 prposes of the corporation.

§21705. Exclusive right to name, emblems, and badges

The corporation and its State and local subdivisions have the exclusive right to use the name "The American Legion" or "American Legion." The corporation has the exclusive right to use, manufacture, and control the right to manufacture, emblems and badges the corporation adopts.

§ 21706. Political activities

The corporation shall be nonpolitical and may not promote the candidacy of an individual seeking public office.

§ 21707. Service of process

As a condition to the exercise of any power or privilege granted by this chapter [36 U.S.C.A. § 21701 et seq.], the corporation shall file, with the secretary of state or other designated official of each State, the name and address of an agent in that State on whom legal process or demands against the corporation may be served.

§ 21708. Annual report

Not later than January 1 of each year, the corporation shall submit a report to Congress on the activities of the corporation during the prior calendar year. The report may not be printed as a public document.

[1] Added December 13, 2011. Title 36 U.S. Code rewritten in 1998. The language above is the current version as amended.

CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

PREAMBLE

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 the Great 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.

ARTICLE I

NAME

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be THE AMERICAN LEGION.

Section 2. The National Headquarters of THE AMERICAN LEGION shall be located at the site of the Indiana World War Memorial in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana.

ARTICLE II

NATURE

Section 1. THE AMERICAN LEGION is a civilian organization; membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service. Rank does not exist in the Legion; no member shall be addressed by his military or naval title in any convention or meeting of the Legion.

Section 2. THE AMERICAN LEGION shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.

ARTICLE III
ORGANIZATION

Section 1. THE AMERICAN LEGION shall be organized in Departments and these in turn in Posts. There shall be one Department in each state, in the District of Columbia, and there may be one Department in each territory and insular possessions of the United States. The National Executive Committee may establish Posts in the territorial and insular possessions of the United States and foreign countries, and shall designate the Department under whose jurisdiction they shall function, but this shall in no way affect the status of Departments already established.

ARTICLE IV
ELIGIBILITY

Section 1. Any person shall be eligible for membership in THE AMERICAN LEGION who was a member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Air Force of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of his entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the Governments associated with the United States during any of said periods; provided, however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably *during or* 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.

Section 2. There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership, and dues shall be paid annually or for life.

Section 3. No person may be a member at any one time of more than one Post.

Section 4. No person, who has been expelled by a Post, 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, he 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.

ARTICLE V
NATIONAL CONVENTION

Section 1. The legislative body of THE AMERICAN LEGION shall be the National Convention, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. The time and place of the National Conventions shall be determined by the National Executive Committee, which shall have authority to change such time and place for sufficient reasons to it appearing.

Section 3. In the National Convention each Department shall be entitled to five delegates and one additional delegate for each one thousand members, or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the meeting of said convention, and whose registration fees, as fixed by the National Executive Committee, for its total authorized delegate strength, have been paid; and to one alternate for each delegate. The delegates shall be chosen not less than two weeks before the National Convention at Department Conventions or in any other manner specified by any Department Constitution.

Section 4. Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote. The vote of any registered delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present from his Department. Alternates for registered delegates shall have all the privileges of registered delegates, except that of voting. A registered delegate is one who has received his credentials after his registration fee has been paid.

Section 5. A quorum shall exist at a National Convention when sixty percent of the Departments are represented as provided above.

Section 6. The National Executive Committee shall provide a Uniform Code of Procedure for the orderly organization and operation of National Conventions with continuing power of revision, and said Code shall be applicable at all National Conventions unless it is amended, suspended, or repealed by a majority vote of the total authorized representation at a National Convention.

ARTICLE VI

NATIONAL OFFICERS

Section 1. The National Convention shall elect a National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders, who shall serve without seniority. No two Vice Commanders shall be chosen from the same Department. No persons shall be eligible for re-election to the office of National Commander or National Vice Commander.

Section 2. Such officers shall serve until the adjournment of the succeeding National Convention following their election and thereafter until their successors are chosen. Vacancies in these offices occurring between National Conventions shall be filled by election by the National Executive Committee, and any member of THE AMERICAN LEGION, in good standing, shall be eligible for election to such vacancy. Provided, however, that no Past National Commander, or Past National Vice Commander shall be elected to fill any vacancy in these respective offices.

Section 3. The National Executive Committee at its first meeting following the National Convention shall appoint the National Adjutant, National Treasurer, National Judge Advocate, National Chaplain, and National Historian, such officers to hold office at the pleasure of the appointing power. All persons having the custody of funds shall give adequate bonds, which shall be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. All Past National Commanders, while in good standing in their respective Posts, shall be members for life of the National Executive Committee, without vote, and shall also be life delegates to all National Conventions of THE AMERICAN LEGION, with vote, to be exercised by them with their respective Departments.

ARTICLE VII

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Between National Conventions, the administrative power shall be vested in the National Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the National Commander, the National Vice Commanders, and one National Executive Committeeman and one alternate from each Department to be elected as such Department shall determine, the alternate to act only in the absence of the National Executive Committeeman.

Section 2. The term of office of such National Executive Committeemen and alternates shall be two years. The term of office of each National Executive Committeeman and alternate shall commence immediately upon the adjournment of the National Convention next ensuing after their election and shall end at the adjournment of the second next succeeding annual National Convention.

Section 3. Members of the National Executive Committee shall be delegates to the National Convention with vote, which vote shall be exercised with their respective Departments, except that the vote of the National Commander shall be exercised only in his capacity as chairman of the National Convention.

ARTICLE VIII

DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Departments shall be chartered by the National Executive Committee and shall be composed of the Posts within their respective areas, and such other Posts as the National Executive Committee may approve. Each Department charter shall be signed by the National Commander and National Adjutant.

Section 2. Each Department shall have a Department Commander, one or more Department Vice Commanders, a Department Adjutant and a Department Executive Committee, and may have a Chaplain and such other officers as the Department shall determine.

Section 3. Departments shall have authority to create and charter intermediate bodies between the Posts and Department to act as a liaison between such organizations and for the purpose of promoting the programs of THE AMERICAN LEGION.

Section 4. The Department Executive Committee shall define the powers of such intermediate groups, but in no event shall such powers invade the prerogatives now vested either in the Post or Department or National Organization.

Section 5. Such intermediate bodies now existing within the Departments and heretofore authorized or recognized by such Department are hereby officially recognized to the extent of the powers herein granted.

ARTICLE IX
POST ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Those who desire to form a Post shall make application for a temporary charter to the Commander of the Department in which they reside. The temporary charter shall be issued by the National Commander and National Adjutant upon receipt of the application properly executed by the charter members of the projected Post, but only when such application is approved by the Commander of the Department or by the Department Executive Committee.

Section 2. The minimum membership of a Post shall be determined by the Executive Committee of the Department in whose area it lies.

Section 3. No Post shall be named after any living person.

Section 4. A temporary charter shall be granted and shall state that it is granted on the recommendation of the Department and on the following terms and conditions:

1. All acts heretofore duly and properly taken for the formation of the above named Post are recognized and confirmed by the National Executive Committee.

2. The above named Post shall uphold the declared principles of THE AMERICAN LEGION and shall conform to and abide by the regulations and decisions of the Department and of the National Executive Committee, or other duly constituted national governing body of THE AMERICAN LEGION.

3. This charter is subject to revocation by the National Executive Committee on the recommendation of the Department, or by such authority that may hereafter be established by the National Convention.

Section 5. After a temporary charter has been in effect for a probationary period of at least ninety days, application for a permanent charter may be made. Such probationary period shall not exceed one year upon the termination of which the Department shall determine whether or not a permanent charter shall be issued or denied and the action of the Department shall be final.

Section 6. All charters shall be countersigned by the Commander and the Adjutant of the Department.

Section 7. Each Department may prescribe the Constitution of its Posts. Permanent charters may be suspended, cancelled or revoked by the Department Executive Committee as provided in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE X
FINANCE

Section 1. The revenue of THE AMERICAN LEGION shall be derived from annual membership dues and from such other sources as may be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Section 2. The amount of such annual dues shall be determined by each National Convention for the ensuing year.

Section 3. The annual dues shall be collected by each Post and transmitted promptly through the Department to the National Treasurer. Departments are designated agents for collection for THE AMERICAN LEGION with respect to such annual dues and upon the receipt thereof shall remit them promptly to THE AMERICAN LEGION. In no event shall the period transpiring between the receipt of such annual dues by a Department and the remittance thereof to THE AMERICAN LEGION exceed thirty (30) days.

Section 3.2**.** The annual dues shall be collected in such alternate method(s) as determined by the National Executive Committee from time to time and thereafter communicated to the Departments for communications to the Posts provided that (a) in no instance shall the National Organization or the Departments be empowered to retain, or withhold, more than each ones published amount of per capita dues; (b) in no event shall the period transpiring between the receipt of such annual dues by the National Organization and the remittance thereof to the Departments exceed thirty (30) days; and (c) any such alternative method shall be in addition to and not in substitution for method 3.1 above.

Section 4. Annual dues shall be payable October 20 of each year, for the succeeding calendar year.

ARTICLE XI
DISCIPLINE

Section 1. The National Executive Committee, after notice and a hearing before a subcommittee as hereinafter provided, may cancel, suspend or revoke the charter of a Department for any good and sufficient cause to it appearing.

Section 2. The National Executive Committee may designate, appoint and authorize a 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 charter of any Department of THE AMERICAN LEGION after said Department shall have received due and proper notice of said hearing and trial. Said subcommittee shall make its written findings and recommendations to the National Executive Committee for its approval or rejection, and the action of said National Executive Committee upon such findings and recommendations shall be final and conclusive.

Section 3. The hearing and trial of any cause involving the cancellation, suspension, or revocation of the charter of any Department in THE AMERICAN LEGION shall be had and held under rules of procedure to be adopted by the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. Upon suspension of the charter of any Department of THE AMERICAN LEGION, the National Executive Committee is authorized, empowered and directed, by and through its duly authorized agents, to take possession, custody and control of all of the records, property and assets of and belonging to such Department, and to provide for the government and administration of such Department during said suspension.

Section 5. Upon cancellation or revocation of the charter of any Department of THE AMERICAN LEGION, the National Executive Committee is authorized, empowered and directed, by and through its duly authorized agents, to take possession, custody and control of all of the records, property and assets of such Department, and to take all necessary and proper steps and proceedings to conclude and close the affairs of such Department, and said National Executive Committee may provide for such continued recognition and activities of Posts in said Departments as it may deem proper.

ARTICLE XII
CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

Section 1. Any member in good standing in a Post removing from his Department shall be entitled to a certificate from his Post stating his membership and the duration thereof.

ARTICLE XIII
AUXILIARIES

Section 1. THE AMERICAN LEGION recognizes an auxiliary organization, known as the American Legion Auxiliary.

Section 2. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of members of THE AMERICAN LEGION, and to the mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States; all dates inclusive, or who, being citizens 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 any of said periods, and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in THE AMERICAN LEGION.

Section 3. The Auxiliary shall be governed in each Department of THE AMERICAN LEGION by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the National Executive Committee and thereafter approved by such Department of THE AMERICAN LEGION.

ARTICLE XIV
RATIFICATION

Section 1. All acts performed and charters heretofore granted by the temporary organization to THE AMERICAN LEGION are hereby ratified and confirmed.

ARTICLE XV
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Constitution may be amended at any National Convention by a vote of two-thirds of the total authorized representation thereat, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted through the National Adjutant to the several Departments and members of the National Executive Committee by mailing same to them at least twenty (20) days prior to the convening of the next National Convention; any such proposed amendment may be amended without further notice by a two-thirds vote of the total authorized representation thereat, provided it does not increase the modification proposed by the amendment and it has received the approval of the Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments; and, provided further, it may be amended by unanimous vote at any National Convention without notice.

Section 2. That no proposed amendment shall be submitted through the National Adjutant to the several Departments and members of the National Executive Committee, as provided in Section 1 of this article, unless said proposed amendment shall have been first submitted by a Department Convention, Department Executive Committee, or the National Executive Committee.

ARTICLE XVI
NATIONAL INCORPORATION

This Constitution is adopted conformably to the Act of Congress of the United States of America of September 16, 1919, and all amendatory acts thereto.

ARTICLE XVII

In the event the Congress of the United States shall amend the eligibility clause in the Act creating THE AMERICAN LEGION, this Constitution shall be deemed amended in conformance therewith, but subject to all consistent limitations and restrictions in this Constitution contained.

BY-LAWS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

ARTICLE I
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. In case of death, resignation or removal by his respective Department of any National Executive Committeeman or alternate to the National Executive Committee, the successor shall be selected as such Department shall determine and shall serve for the remainder of such unexpired term.

Section 2. The National Executive Committee shall meet within twenty-four hours before and after each National Convention and within forty-five days following its adjournment, provided however, that the National Commander shall have authority to extend said forty-five-day period for sufficient reasons to him appearing, upon approval by the National Executive Committee, and in May of each year. Special meetings may be held upon reasonable notice at the call of the National Commander. The National Commander shall call a meeting of the National Executive Committee upon the written request of National Executive Committeemen from fifteen or more Departments.

Section 3. Twenty-five members shall constitute a quorum of the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. The National Commander shall name such committees as he shall deem advisable, subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee at its next meeting succeeding the appointment.

Section 5. The National Executive Committee shall appoint, upon nomination by the National Commander, a National Finance Commission to be composed of seven (7) members. Of the seven members appointed following the National Convention (1945) at which this amendment is adopted, two shall be appointed to serve for a term of one year, two shall be appointed to serve for a term of two years, and three shall be appointed to serve for a term of three years; thereafter each succeeding appointee shall serve for a term of three years or until removed by the majority vote of the National Executive Committee. The National Commander and the National Treasurer shall be ex officio members of said commission and the National Adjutant shall be ex officio secretary of the said commission. The National Finance Commission shall be

charged with the preparation of the yearly budget and the handling of funds under that budget, and such other duties as shall be prescribed by the National Executive Committee, subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee.

Section 6. There shall be the following standing commissions: National Americanism Commission, National Commission on Children and Youth, National Convention Commission, National Economic Commission, National Finance Commission, National Foreign Relations Commission, National Internal Affairs Commission, National Legislative Commission, The American Legion Magazine Commission, National Public Relations Commission, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, National Security Commission.

The commissions shall consist of such number of members of THE AMERICAN LEGION as the National Executive Committee may from time to time determine. Appointments to such commissions shall be made by the National Executive Committee upon nomination by the National Commander. The National Executive Committee is empowered to assign duties and responsibilities to all standing commissions and committees and to group standing committees with commissions for the purpose of efficient supervision and coordination of activities.

Section 7. The National Executive Committee shall provide for the appointment and employment of such subordinate officers and employees as may be needed for the administration of the affairs of THE AMERICAN LEGION, and prescribe their duties and emoluments.

Section 8. All questions affecting the election, eligibility and conduct of national officers shall be referred to and determined by the National Executive Committee. All questions affecting the election, eligibility and conduct of the National Executive Committeeman from any Department, or of Department officers, or members of Department Executive Committees, shall be referred to and determined by the Executive Committee of the Department involved, which shall be the final authority thereon.

ARTICLE II

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. NATIONAL COMMANDER: The National Commander shall be the executive head of THE AMERICAN LEGION with full power to enforce the provisions of the National Constitution, National By-Laws, and the will of the National Convention. He shall be the chairman of the National Convention and the National Executive Committee. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 2. NATIONAL VICE COMMANDERS: The National Vice Commanders shall act as representatives of the National Commander on all matters referred to them by him, and shall, on his request, preside over the meetings of the National Convention or National Executive Committee, and perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 3. NATIONAL ADJUTANT: The National Adjutant shall be charged with the administration of the policies and mandates of the National Convention, the National Executive Committee, and of the National Commander. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office. He shall also be authorized, in event of the death or resignation of the National Commander, to summon the National Executive Committee for the election of a successor, and in event the National Adjutant shall fail, refuse or neglect, within fifteen days after said death or resignation, to issue a call for said meeting of the National Executive Committee to be held within thirty days after said death or resignation, then said meeting for the purpose of electing a successor may be held upon the written demand therefore signed by representatives from fifteen or more Departments, giving fifteen days' notice thereof.

Section 4. NATIONAL TREASURER: The National Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the National Organization. He shall sign all checks disbursing the funds of the National Organization, and shall make reports upon the condition of the national treasury when called for by the National Commander. The National Treasurer shall furnish a surety bond as hereinafter prescribed. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 5. NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE: The National Judge Advocate shall advise the national officers and the National Executive Committee on all legal matters, including the construction and interpretation of the National Constitution and By-Laws, and shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 6. NATIONAL CHAPLAIN: The National Chaplain shall perform such divine and nonsectarian services as may be necessary, adhering to such ceremonial rituals as may be recommended by National Headquarters from time to time.

Section 7. NATIONAL HISTORIAN: The National Historian shall collect from year to year all records and data of value and interest for the National Headquarters of THE AMERICAN LEGION, and shall compile during his term of office a complete history of the year's activities. He shall also assist Department and Post historians so as to coordinate and unify the work of these officials, and shall have such other duties as the National Executive Committee shall prescribe.

ARTICLE III
CHARTERS

Section 1. The Department Executive Committee may suspend, cancel or revoke a Post Charter. The action taken by the Department Executive Committee shall be final and conclusive unless an appeal is taken to the National Executive Committee within thirty days from the date of said suspension, cancellation or revocation. The action taken by the National Executive Committee upon appeal shall be final.

Section 2. Any Post failing to meet the obligations imposed upon it by the Constitution and By-Laws, or ceasing to function for six months as an American Legion Post, or voluntarily ceasing to function as a Post, or merging with one or more other Posts, or refusing to pay the Department and National per capita dues, or under such other conditions as might make such action necessary shall, upon order of the Department Executive Committee, surrender its charter for cancellation. Upon failure to surrender such charter, immediate steps may be taken for its revocation, suspension or cancellation.

Section 3. Upon revocation, cancellation or suspension of the charter of a Post in any Department of THE AMERICAN LEGION, said Post shall immediately cease operations and upon revocation or cancellation shall turn over its charter to its Department Commander or Department Executive Committee, and the Department Executive Committee is authorized, empowered and directed by and through its duly authorized agent to take possession, custody and control of all the records, property and assets of said Post; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed as requiring any Department to take over or assume any financial responsibility as to such property. Said Department Executive Committee may provide for the transfer of the members in said Post to other Posts of their choice, subject to the approval of such other Post.

Section 4. The National Executive Committee shall provide a uniform code defining the procedure to be followed in the revocation, cancellation or suspension of Post charters and providing for a method of appeal and further providing a code of procedure for the revocation, cancellation or suspension of Department charters with continuing power to revise said code, provided, however, that the procedure now in effect shall continue until such code is so adopted.

ARTICLE IV
DISCIPLINE OF POST AND POST MEMBERS

Section 1. Each Post of THE AMERICAN LEGION shall be the judge of its own membership, subject to the restrictions of the Constitution and By-Laws, except that no person who is a member of an organization which has for its aim the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence, or who subscribes to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government, shall be eligible to become or remain a member of THE AMERICAN LEGION.

Section 2. Members may be suspended or expelled from the Legion only upon a proper showing of cause. Charges shall be based upon disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty and 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 his membership until given a fair trial by the Post or Department in such manner and form as the Department By-Laws and Department Executive Committee shall prescribe.

Section 3. Any member who has been suspended or expelled has the right of appeal to his 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.

Section 4. A member whose dues for the current year have not been paid by January first shall be classed as delinquent. If his dues are paid on or before February first, he shall be automatically reinstated. If he is still delinquent after February first, he shall be suspended from all privileges. If he is still under such suspension on June thirtieth of such year, his membership in THE AMERICAN LEGION shall be forfeited. A member so suspended or whose membership has been so forfeited may be reinstated to active membership in good standing by vote of the Post and payment of current dues for the year in which the reinstatement occurs. Provided, however, that the Posts, Departments and the National Organization may waive the provisions hereof, upon payment of dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs, with reference to former members who have been prevented from the payment of dues by reason of active military service.

ARTICLE V
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in THE AMERICAN LEGION is membership in the National Organization of THE AMERICAN LEGION by affiliation with Posts.

ARTICLE VI
MONIES AND COLLECTIONS

Section 1. All National, Department and Post officials handling THE AMERICAN LEGION monies shall be properly bonded with a good and solvent bonding and surety company, as surety, to cover double the average amount of money handled in a single year. In case of delinquencies in the payments of amounts due Department or National Headquarters, action shall be taken at once by the proper officials to bring about a speedy and complete settlement. The bonds provided by national officials shall be approved by the National Judge Advocate and the National Executive Committee, and those provided by the Department officials shall be approved by the Department Judge Advocate and the Department Executive Committee, and those provided by the Post officials shall be approved by the Post Legal Officer and the Post Executive Committee, or such other official or officials as the Department may designate.

Section 2. National Headquarters shall, should it be deemed advisable, detail special auditors to investigate the membership roll and financial statement of any Department, and should that Department so desire, assist in a similar audit of Posts within that Department.

ARTICLE VII
TRANSFER OF POSTS

Section 1. Posts of THE AMERICAN LEGION formed within units of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps or other organizations liable to transfer from one place to another, and which are organized under the Department in which they are then located, may transfer to another Department in a manner similar to the transfer of individuals from one Post to another.

Section 2. Any existing Post in the territorial or insular possession of the United States or in foreign countries, which is not under the jurisdiction of a present existing Department, shall within one year following the adoption hereof, unless extended by the National Executive Committee, request the National Executive Committee to place it under the jurisdiction of a Department to be selected by such Post. Said request shall have attached thereto the formal consent of such Department. Should a Post fail or refuse to make such request or be unable to obtain the consent of a Department, then the National Executive Committee shall designate the Department.

ARTICLE VIII
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended at any National Convention by a vote of two-thirds of the total authorized representation thereat, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted through the National Adjutant to the several Departments and members of the National Executive Committee by mailing same to them at least twenty (20) days prior to the convening of the next National Convention; any such proposed amendment may be amended without further notice by a two-thirds vote of the total authorized representation thereat, provided it does not increase the modification proposed by the amendment and it has received the approval of the Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments; and, provided further, it may be amended by unanimous vote at any National Convention without notice.

Section 2. That no proposed amendment shall be submitted through the National Adjutant to the several Departments and members of the National Executive Committee, as provided in Section 1 of this article, unless said proposed amendment shall have been first submitted by a Department Convention, Department Executive Committee, or the National Executive Committee.

APPENDIX TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Amendments to the Charter of THE AMERICAN LEGION enacted by Congress, October 29, 1942, Public Act 767; July 9, 1946, Public Act 495; December 28, 1950, Public Act 895; June 26, 1953, Public Act 80; July 26, 1955, Public Act 178; September 1, 1966, Public Act 89-550; December 27, 1974, Public Act 93-557; August 17, 1978, Public Act 95-346; December 21, 1979, Public Act 96-155; October 30, 1990, Public Act 101-478; December 3, 1991, Public Act 102-179; November 20, 1997, Public Act 105-110; August 12, 1998, Public Act 105-225; November 3, 1998, Public Act 105-354; December 2, 2002, Public Act 107-309.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Section 3 of the Act entitled "An Act to Incorporate THE AMERICAN LEGION," approved September 16, 1919 (41 Stat. 285, Title 36, U.S.C., Sec. 43, amended to Title 36, U.S.C., Sec. 21702), is hereby further amended to read as follows:

ORIGINAL SECTION

Section 3. That the purpose of the corporation shall be: To promote peace and good will among the peoples of the United States and all the nations of the earth; to preserve the memories and incidents of the Great War of 1917-1918; to cement the ties of love and comradeship born of service; and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country.

AMENDED SECTION

"Sect. 21702. *That the purpose of this corporation shall be: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to promote peace and good will among the peoples of the United States and all the nations of the earth; to preserve the memories and incidents of the two World Wars and the other great hostilities fought to uphold democracy; to cement the ties and comradeship born of service; and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country."*

That Section 5 of such Act of September 16, 1919 (41 Stat. 285, Title 36, U.S.C., Sec. 45, amended to Title 36, U.S.C., Sec. 21703) is hereby further amended to read as follows:

ORIGINAL SECTION

Section 5. *That no person shall be a member* of this corporation unless he served in the naval or military service of the United States at some time during the period between April 6, 1917, and November 11, 1918, both dates inclusive, or who, being citizens of the United States at the time of enlistment, served in the military or naval services of any of the governments associated with the United States during the Great War.

AMENDED SECTION

"Sec.21703. *That no person shall be a member of this corporation unless such person has served in the naval or military services of the United States at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of entry therein, served in the military or naval service of any of the governments associated with the United States during said wars or hostilities: Provided, however, that such person shall have an honorable discharge or separation from such service or continues to serve honorably during or after any of the aforesaid terminal dates."*

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 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.

SUGGESTED FORM FOR POST CONSTITUTION

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 or not 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.

PREAMBLE

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 the Great 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.

ARTICLE I
NAME

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be (post name and number), The American Legion, Department of _____.

ARTICLE II
OBJECTS

Section 1. The objectives and purposes of this Post shall be to promote the principles and policies as set forth in the foregoing preamble, and the National and Departmental Constitutions of The American Legion.

ARTICLE III
NATURE

Section 1. This Post is a civilian organization and membership therein does not affect or increase liability for military or police service.

Section 2. This organization shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.

Section 3. Rank does not exist in The American Legion; no member shall be addressed by his military or naval title in any meeting of this Post.

ARTICLE IV
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility to membership in this Post shall be as prescribed by the National Constitution of The American Legion.

Section. 2. Application for membership shall be made in writing under such regulations as may from time to time be prescribed by the Post Executive Committee.

Section 3. All applications for membership shall be acted upon at the next Post meeting following the making of such application, and shall at such meeting, be accepted, rejected or referred for further investigation and consideration. If a majority of the members cast their vote against the acceptance of said application, then such application shall be recorded as rejected.

Section 4. Any member of this Post may be expelled for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee after charges are preferred under oath in writing, and a fair trial had upon the same. *

Section 5. A member who has been expelled or suspended from this Post for any cause may be reinstated to membership by a two-thirds vote of the membership present in Post meeting, and the payment of current dues for the year in which the reinstatement occurs.

Section 6. No person who has been expelled by a Post shall be admitted to membership in this Post, without the consent of the expelling Post, except that where such consent has been asked for and denied by such Post, may then appeal to the state Executive Committee of the Department of the expelling Post for permission to apply for membership in this Post, and shall be ineligible for membership until such permission is granted.

* Before proceeding under this section, Posts should make inquiry as to whether or not the Department Constitution and By-Laws has provided a different procedure, which should be followed.

ARTICLE V
OFFICERS

Section 1. The administrative affairs of this Post of The American Legion shall, except as may be otherwise provided by the By-Laws, be under the supervision of an Executive Committee which shall consist of _____ members in addition to the officers of the Post. The term of office of members of the Executive Committee shall be for one year. This Post, by its By-Laws, may provide for such other standing committees as the business of the organization may require.

Section 2. The officers of this Post shall be a commander, a vice-commander, an adjutant, a finance officer, a Post historian, a Post chaplain, Post service officer and a sergeant-at-arms, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary by this organization, who shall be nominated from the floor at the meeting preceding the annual election.

Section 3. All officers and executive committeemen shall be elected annually, and they shall hold office until their successors are duly installed or as otherwise provided. Any officer or executive committeeman may be removed for inefficiency by the Executive Committee, a two-thirds vote of said committee being necessary to effect such removal.

Section 4. Every member of this Post in good standing shall be eligible to hold office in this Post.

Section 5. The duties of officers and the executive committee shall be those usually appertaining to such officers or committee and as further provided in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE VI
FINANCE

Section 1. The revenue of this Post shall be derived from membership or initiation fees, from annual membership dues and from such other sources as may be approved by the Post Executive Committee.

Section 2. The amount of such membership or initiation fees and the amount of such annual Post dues shall be fixed and determined by this Post.

Section 3. The Post shall pay to Departmental headquarters the National and Departmental annual membership dues for every member of the Post.

ARTICLE VII
CHARTER MEMBERS

Section 1. Members who joined this Post prior to November 11, 1919 (or members who joined this Post prior to the issuance of charter) shall be known as charter members.

Note: The matter of charter members for the permanent charter is left to the decision of the Post members.

ARTICLE VIII
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Section 1. This Post recognizes an auxiliary organization to be known as the Auxiliary Unit of (post name and number), The American Legion.

Section 2. Membership in the Auxiliary shall be as prescribed by the National Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary.

ARTICLE VIII
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Constitution is adopted subject to the provisions of the national Constitution of The American Legion and of the Department Constitution of the Department of _____, The American Legion. Any amendment to said National Constitution or Department Constitution which is in conflict with any provisions hereof shall be regarded as automatically repealing or modifying the provisions of this Constitution to the extent of such conflict.

Section 2. This Constitution may be amended at any regular Post meeting by vote of two-thirds of the members of said Post attending such regular meeting, providing the proposed amendment shall have been submitted in writing and read at the next preceding regular meeting of said Post, and providing, further, written notice shall have been given to all members at least _____ days in advance of the date when such amendment is to be voted upon, notifying said members that at such meeting a proposal to amend the Constitution is to be voted upon.

SUGGESTED FORM OF POST BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

Section 1. The Post existing under these By-Laws is to be known as (post name and number), The American Legion, Department of _____.

Section 2. The objectives of this Post are as set forth in the Constitution.

ARTICLE II
MANAGEMENT

Section 1. The government and management of the Post is entrusted to an Executive Committee of _____ members, to be known as the "Executive Committee."

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall consist of ____ members in addition to the officers of the Post and together with the other officers of this Post shall be elected annually on _____ and take office at the meeting next following that of the election. All elections of officers and executive committeemen shall be by ballot and the candidate or candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected to the respective office or offices for which they are candidates.

Section 3. All vacancies existing in the Executive Committee, or in any office of the Post from any cause other than the expiration of the term, shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining members of the committee, and a person so appointed shall hold office for the unexpired term of the member of the committee or officer who succeeded. A vacancy shall exist when a member or officer is absent from the Post for a continuous period considered detrimental to the interest of the Post by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE III
POST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Post Executive Committee shall meet for organization and such other business as may come before it at the call of the Post commander within 10 days after the installation of the new officers. Thereafter the Post Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the commander at least every _____ and as often as said commander may deem necessary. The commander shall call a meeting of the Post Executive Committee upon the joint written request of three or more members of said Post Executive Committee, _____ members of the committee shall constitute a quorum thereof.

Section 2. The Post Executive Committee shall hire such employees as may be necessary; shall authorize and approve all expenditures; shall require adequate bonds from all persons having the custody of Post funds; shall hear the reports of Post committee chairs; and generally shall have charge of and be responsible for the management of the affairs of this Post.

ARTICLE IV
DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. *Duties of Post Commander.* It shall be the duty of the Post commander to preside at all meetings of the Post and to have general supervision over the business and affairs of the Post, and such officer shall be the chief executive officer of the Post. The commander shall approve all orders directing the disbursement of funds and shall make an annual report covering the business of the Post for the year, and recommendations for the ensuing year, which shall be read at the annual meeting and a copy thereof immediately forwarded to the Department adjutant. The commander shall perform such other duties as directed by the Post.

Section 2. *Duties of Vice-Commander.* The vice-commander shall assume and discharge the duties of the office of commander in the absence or disability of, or when called upon by the Post commander.

Section 3. *Duties of Post Adjutant.* The adjutant shall have charge of and keep a full and correct record of all proceedings of all meetings, keep such records as the Department and National Organizations may require, render reports of membership annually or when called upon at a meeting, and under direction of the commander handle all correspondence of the Post.

Section 4. *Duties of the Finance Officer/Treasurer.* The finance officer/treasurer of the Post shall have charge of all finances and see that they are safely deposited in some local bank or banks and shall report once a month to the Executive Committee the condition of the finances of the Post, with such recommendations as may deem expedient or necessary for raising funds with which to carry on the activities of the Post. The finance officer/treasurer shall sign all checks disbursing the monies of the Post, and shall furnish such surety bonds in such sum as shall be fixed by the Post Executive Committee.

Section 5. *Duties of Post Historian.* The Post historian shall be charged with the individual records and incidents of the Post and Post members, and shall perform such other duties as may properly pertain to the office as may be determined by the Post or the Executive Committee.

Section 6. *Duties of Post Chaplain.* The Post chaplain shall be charged with the spiritual welfare of the Post comrades and will offer divine but nonsectarian service in the event of dedications, funerals, public functions, etc., adhere to such ceremonial rituals as are recommended by the National or Department headquarters from time to time.

Section 7. *Duties of Sergeant-at-Arms.* The sergeant-at-arms shall preserve order at meetings and shall perform such other duties as may be from time to time assigned by the Post Executive Committee.

ARTICLE V
DELEGATES

Section 1. Delegates and alternates to a Department convention shall be elected by ballot by the Post at a regular meeting of the Post to be held at least 20 days prior to the date of such convention.

ARTICLE VI
APPOINTMENTS

Section 1. The Post commander, immediately upon taking office each year, shall appoint the following standing committees: Americanism, Ceremonials, Children and Youth, Economic, Finance, Foreign Relations, Graves Registration and Memorial, House and Entertainment, Legislative, Membership, Public Relations, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Sons of The American Legion and Visiting or VAVS. Such standing committees shall consist of such members, and the chair thereof, as shall be designated by the Post commander.

Section 2. *Americanism Committee.* The Americanism Committee shall be charged with the inspiration of patriotism and good citizenship by arrangements for proper observance of patriotic occasions; encouragement of patriotic and civic phases of instruction in schools; Americanization of aliens; combating anti-American propaganda by education of the general public in American ideals through public forums, etc., and activities for community and civic betterment.

Section 3. *Ceremonials Committee.* The principal duty of the Ceremonials Committee is to insure all new members are properly initiated. The committee also concerns itself with proper presentation of other rituals outlined in the Manual of Ceremonies—burial detail and the wearing of Legion regalia.

Section 4. *Children and Youth Committee.* Shall be charged with aid and service to children of veterans, cooperating with other established agencies in the community; laboring for the betterment of child conditions and in coordinating

services and agencies in the community for the above purposes. To act as intermediary for the needy child of a veteran in obtaining the fulfillment of the Legion's pledge that "no child of a war veteran shall be in need of the necessities of life" and "a square deal for every child."

Section 5. *Economic Committee.* The Post Economic Committee is primarily concerned with local employment programs, Veterans' preference, government employment and re-employment rights.

Section 6. *Finance Committee.* The Finance Committee shall be charged with the administration of the financial policy, preparation of budget recommendations and supervision of receiving, disbursing and accounting of all Post funds.

Section 7. *Foreign Relations.* This committee has become active as America has recognized its responsibility as a world leader. Maintaining and securing world peace and friendship abroad through community endeavors have become as essential as any aspect of treaty law.

Section 8. *Graves Registration and Memorial Committee.* The duties of this committee involve recording of grave sites and complete information on veterans' burial in cemeteries assigned to the Post. Special assistance can be given the service officer in providing flags, headstones or proper interment in national cemeteries.

Section 9. *House and Entertainment Committee.* The House and Entertainment quarters promotion of club advantages and arrangement for social activities.

Section 10. *Legislative Committee.* The Legislative Committee needs to have a knowledge of what is going on in Congress—what we favor or oppose, and should be ready to initiate action in support of our position when requested by the national or Department organization.

Section 11. *Membership Committee.* The Membership Committee shall have charge of all matters pertaining to the membership of the Post, including the procuring of new members, reinstatements and eligibility of members.

Section 12. *Public Relations Committee.* The Public Relations Committee shall be charged with the promotion of public support of the Legion's programs by the establishment of proper contact with The American Legion Magazine, Department and national Legion news service and by local publicity of Post programs and activities.

Section 13. *Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee.* The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation committee shall supervise all matters pertaining to service to comrades in the prosecution of all just claims against the United States or state government, employment, relief, etc.

Section 14. *Security Committee.* The Security Committee shall work with and coordinate Legion efforts with the local Civil Defense Council on matters pertaining to national, civilian and home defenses. It shall assist the armed forces of the United States in recruiting efforts and in every way be active in community activities for the defense of the nation and the security of the American home.

Section 15. *Sons of The American Legion Committee.* This committee shall have supervision over the operations of the Post's squadron of the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 16. *Visiting or VAVS Committee.* This committee is charged with visiting and comforting members and their families when sick or bereaved, and with visiting ex-service personnel in hospitals.

ARTICLE VII

RESOLUTIONS

Section 1. All resolutions of state or national scope presented to this Post by a member or reported to this Post by a committee shall merely embody the opinion of this Post on the subject and copy of same shall be forwarded to the Department headquarters for approval before any publicity is given or action other than mere passage by the Post is taken.

ARTICLE VIII

MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular meeting of the Post shall be held at the club rooms on _____, at which may be transacted such business as may properly be brought up for action; such meetings may be converted into entertainment meetings, as may be deemed advisable by the officers of the Post.

Section 2. The Post commander or a majority of the Executive Committee shall have power to call a special meeting of the Post at any time.

Section 3. Upon the written request of _____ members, the committee shall call a special meeting of the Post.
Section 4. _____ members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE IX
NOTICES

Section 1. Every member shall furnish the Post adjutant with an address for mailing.
Section 2. The Post adjutant shall cause notice of the annual election to be given at least two weeks prior thereto.

ARTICLE X
RULES OF ORDER

Section 1. All proceedings of this Post shall be conducted under and pursuant to Roberts' Rules of Order, except as herein otherwise provided.

ARTICLE XI
LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITIES

Section 1. The Post shall incur, or cause to be incurred, no liability nor obligation whatever which shall subject to liability any other Post, subdivision, members of The American Legion, or other individuals, corporations or organizations.

ARTICLE XII
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended at any regular Post meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the members of said Post attending such regular meeting; Provided that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted in writing and read at the next preceding regular meeting of said Post; and, provided, further, that written notice shall have been given to all members at least _____ days in advance of the date when such amendment is to be voted upon, notifying said members that at such meeting a proposal to amend the By-Laws is to be voted upon.

Delinquency, resignation and transfer

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 your judge advocate.

Constitutional eligibility requirements

All who served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Air Force 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 Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or Air Force of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990, 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 discharge, but 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.

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 status)	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, U.S. (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 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
Blue	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
Over age	Eligible
Special Order (under honorable conditions)	Eligible
Transfer to enlisted reserve	Eligible
Undesirable	Ineligible
Unfavorable	Ineligible
Unsuitability (under honorable conditions)	Eligible
Enemy nations	Ineligible
Honorary membership	Prohibited
Indifferent discharge	Eligible
Industrial Guards	Ineligible
Length of service (not a prerequisite)	Eligible
Marine Corps, U.S.	Eligible

SERVICE	OPINION
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	Prohibited
Honorary	Prohibited
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
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
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
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

World War II

The 24th National Convention of The American Legion, September 19-21, 1942, Kansas City, Missouri, and the 27th National Convention, November 18-21, 1945, Chicago, Illinois, authorized the amendment of the national charter to include the eligibility dates covering World War II service (December 7, 1941, to September 2, 1945). Public Laws 767 and 495, approved October 29, 1942, and July 9, 1946, respectively, effected the change. The 56th National Convention, August 16-22, 1974, Miami Beach, Florida, authorized the amendment of the national charter to change the terminal eligibility date for World War II service to December 31, 1946, and Public Law 93-557, approved December 27, 1974, effected the change.

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.

Korean War

The 32nd National Convention, October 9-12, 1950, Los Angeles, California, and the 36th National Convention, August 30-September 2, 1954, Washington, D.C., authorized the amendment of the national charter to include the eligibility dates covering the Korean War (June 25, 1950, to July 27, 1953). Public Laws 895 and 178, approved December 28, 1950, and July 26, 1955, respectively, effected the change. The 56th National Convention, August 16-22, 1974, Miami Beach, Florida, authorized the amendment of the national charter to change the terminal eligibility date for Korean War service to January 31, 1955, and Public Law 93-557, approved December 27, 1974, effected the change. Area where service performed is not a determining factor.

Two-week annual training periods do not fulfill eligibility requirements, as such training periods represent nothing more than similar active-duty excursions demanded from component branches of the Army during peacetime as well as during the period of hostilities.

An individual ordered to active duty for the purpose of undergoing physical examination, subsequently returning to his home and reverting to inactive status, is not eligible.

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

Vietnam War

The 48th National Convention of The American Legion, August 30-September 1, 1966, Washington D.C., and the 56th National Convention, August 20-22, 1974, Miami Beach, Fla., and the 59th National Convention, August 23-25, 1977, Denver, Colorado, authorized the amendment of the national charter to include the eligibility dates covering the Vietnam War (August 5, 1964, to May 7, 1975), and Public Law 89-550, approved September 1, 1966, and Public Law 93-557, approved December 27, 1974, and Public Law 95-346, approved August 18, 1978, effected the change.

During the 61st National Convention, August 21-23, 1979, Houston, Texas, the NEC passed a resolution to amend the Vietnam War dates to begin on December 22, 1961, pursuant to congressional approval.

On December 21, 1979, President Carter signed S-1874, which became Public Law 96-155 and changed American Legion eligibility dates for the Vietnam War to December 22, 1961 to May 7, 1975.

The national charter of The American Legion was amended by delegates at the 79th National Convention, September 2-4, 1997, Orlando, Florida. This amendment requested a change to the beginning eligibility date for American Legion membership for the Vietnam War period to February 28, 1961. In November 1997, Public Law 105-110 effected this change.

Status of those in service defined

With the establishment of a terminal date for Vietnam War service, eligibility for American Legion membership is extended to the individual who served on active duty during the Vietnam War (February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975), and remained on active duty after the terminal date. (See Article IV, Section 1, National Constitution: "...or continued honorably after any of said periods ...")

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.

Lebanon and Grenada

The 72nd National Convention of The American Legion, August 28-30, 1990, Indianapolis, Indiana, authorized amendment of the national charter to include the eligibility dates covering U.S. operations in Lebanon (August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984). Public Law 101-478, approved October 30, 1990, effected the change. This time period included operations in Grenada.

Panama

The 72nd National Convention of The American Legion, August 28-30, 1990, Indianapolis, Indiana, authorized amendment of the national charter to include the eligibility dates covering U.S. operations in Panama (December 20, 1989, through January 31, 1990). Public Law 101-478, approved October 30, 1990, effected the change.

Gulf War/War on Terrorism

The 73rd National Convention of The American Legion, September 3-5, 1991, Phoenix, Arizona, authorized amendment of the national charter to include the eligibility dates covering Persian Gulf operations. Public Law 102-179, approved December 3, 1991, effected the change. The time period for Persian Gulf operations, as stated in the National Constitution, is "August 2, 1990, to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States." When the date of cessation of hostilities is determined by the U.S. government, The American Legion wall be informed and will transmit the information.

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

* Honorable service during periods of eligibility

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 Godwin Study on membership eligibility

In 1985, the Membership Eligibility Study Committee conducted the detailed "Godwin Study" on membership eligibility. The committee was charged with the following:

- Study the history and precedents of all past eligibility studies and changes.
- To evaluate the revised service functions to possibly include a different class of veterans.
- To estimate the timing requirements to effect the change in the Legion's congressional charter.
- To analyze the ultimate change in The American Legion's longstanding history of being an organization of "war veterans" and the impact of any change of the principles established at its founding.

The study's bottom line, and the conclusion adopted by the National Executive Committee, was that The American Legion would remain an organization of "wartime veterans," and that place of service does not affect eligibility, i.e., service in a combat zone is not a requirement for membership. As far as aiding veterans not eligible for Legion membership, the Legion's service officers will assist them with any issue just as they do Legion members. It makes no difference if they are a member or not. This study provides the most detailed and thorough review of eligibility issues to date.

Every national convention since the study, excepting two, has faced the issue of a proposed change in eligibility. Resolutions received were reviewed by the Convention Committee, consisting of delegates from the 55 departments, and their actions were confirmed by nearly 3,000 convention delegates. All proposed changes to eligibility went through this process; all proposals to open eligibility were rejected. Hence, the considerations reviewed by the Godwin Study committee in context are still applicable to The American Legion today because of the number of reviews to which it has been subjected.

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. TREASURER OR FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT – The commander calls for the treasurer'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. The maker of the motion has the right to open and close the debate.

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.

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**.

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 retaxed as the National Executive Committee shall deem just and equitable.

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: *"Members may be suspended or expelled from the Legion only upon a proper showing of cause. Charges shall be based upon disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty and 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 his membership until given a fair trial in such manner and form as the Department by-laws and 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 his 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 by a Post 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, he 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."*

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 **1-888-453-4466**.

Additionally, The American Legion Emblem Sales has been delegated, by the national adjutant, the task of administering use of the emblem on manufactured goods. The name and emblem 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. 71 passed in May 1947, the national organization may grant permission to use the name and emblem in accordance with Resolution No. 71, other resolutions and U.S. trademark law.

For permission to be granted, a request must be submitted in writing through the department adjutant, who will forward the request to Emblem Sales. The following information must be included with the request: 1) name and address of requesting post, 2) name and address of manufacturer, 3) description of item to be manufactured, 4) quantity to be manufactured, 5) cost of each, 6) assurances that the item is made in the United States, and 7) purpose for which the item is to be used (post use, not purchased for re-sale). Authority may then be granted on a one-time basis only; additional orders require new authority, and the manufacturer must not produce more items than that being ordered.

Use of The American Legion emblem

Individuals The use of the emblem 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 are may only use the emblem or reproduction of the emblem 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” or the emblem shall be subject to the approval of the national adjutant, in accordance with Resolution No. 71.

Trademark law compliance All programs, associations and corporations using the name and emblem 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 and emblem of The American Legion must satisfy the “constant and continuous control requirement” of U.S. Trademark Law. The following rules apply to all programs, associations and corporations using the name and emblem of The American Legion, including Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders:

- All officers, directors, trustees, etc., must be named by the department/post (usually nominated by the department/post commander and confirmed by the executive committee).
- All vacancies in the subsidiary program, association or corporation must be filled by the department/post.
- The subsidiary program, association or corporation must report to the department/post, no less frequently than monthly. These reports must include financial reports.
- The department treasurer, finance officer or fiscal officer must be a signatory on all accounts.
- All amendments to articles of incorporation or by-laws must be approved by the department/post. (If the current text has not been approved by the department/post, it too must be so approved.)

Note: The Sons of The American Legion entity is a squadron and the American Legion Riders entity is a chapter. They too are subject to these rules.

Request for use of The American Legion name or emblem on merchandise

The name and emblem 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. 71, passed in May 1947, the national adjutant or designated representative (Emblem Sales director) may grant limited permission to use the name and emblem in accordance with Res. No. 71, other resolutions and U.S. trademark law.

To gain permission for limited use of the name or emblem, complete the form on page 135 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.

If you want to order an outdoor sign for the post, contact J.M. Stewart Co., the only licensed manufacturer of American Legion post outdoor signs, at **1-800-237-3928** or online at **www.stewartsigns.com**.

Purchaser information	Manufacturer information
Post name and number _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Contact person _____ Member ID # _____ Telephone #_____ Evening _____ Email Address _____ Product description _____ _____ Quantity _____ Price _____ Purpose/use of product _____ _____	Name of business _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Contact person _____ Telephone number _____ Product in all parts made in United States? Yes _____ No _____ If no, attach an explanation. Imprint instructions. Provide a rough sketch below or attach artwork.

DEPARTMENT USE

- ❑ **Recommend approval**
- ❑ **Recommend denial**

Department adjutant

NATIONAL USE

- ❑ **Approved**
- ❑ **Referred**
- ❑ **Denied**

National adjutant or designated representative (Emblem Sales)

THIS FORM MAY BE REPRODUCED LOCALLY. FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

Military equipment

Regulations, procedures and prices for obtaining blank ammunition, surplus rifles and other military equipment available for donation are subject to change without notice.

Be advised that all requests for surplus military equipment must first go through The American Legion's Washington office to verify the legitimacy of the post making the request.

The Washington office is authorized to only handle requests from chartered American Legion posts in good standing. Once verification is complete, it sends requests 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 Washington office, as two different 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.

Requests are to be typed on post letterhead and contain the following:

- Post name and number, address (not a P.O. Box number)
- Signature of post commander or adjutant

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, causing 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 U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command (TACOM).

Posts receiving surplus equipment, rifles, static display items and more can expect periodic inspections to assure accuracy of donor information and compliance with the terms of this conditional deed of gift, proper storage and handling, etc. (Ceremonial rifle inventories are conducted at the time of issue and every three years or as requested; static displays are conducted at the time of issue and every year or as requested.) This program is to be 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.

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:

1. Direct a letter of request on post letterhead with an address (not a P.O. Box number), an email address if available, and a telephone number to Executive Director, American Legion National Headquarters, 1608 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20006.

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

3. 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 (and a P.O. Box number if applicable) 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.

4. 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.

5. Upon receipt of the above information from a post, the 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. Presently, it cannot be estimated how long it will take for ammunition requests to be filled. Requests will be handled in turn as to when received and when ammunition is available.

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: This office will only respond to requests for caliber .30 blank ammunition or clips from an officer of the organization.

Your request for forms to order blank ammunition and/or clips can be by letter, fax, phone call or email. Request for forms must provide a home mailing address, the officer's phone number, post number, and the post's city and state. 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.

Address your request for issue of AMSJM Form 725-2 to:

Commander
Joint Munitions Command
Attn: AMSJM-CDS
Email: dawn.l.folland.civ@mail.mil
1 Rock Island Arsenal
Rock Island, IL 61299-6000
(309) 782-4608 or toll free 877-233-2515
Fax: (309) 782-7292 or (309) 782-1776

- Prefer 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.

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

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), 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 Legion posts in good standing. The Army Donations Program Office in Warren, Mich., is responsible for issue and management of rifles 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 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 should forward its request through the Legion's Washington office. The request should be on post letterhead with an 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. 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 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**. Call the donations office at **(586) 467-6302** or send an email to **usarmy.detroit.tacom.mbx.ilsc-donations@mail.mil**. Email requests cannot be processed, as the signed original document must be forwarded.

Once TACOM receives the endorsed request, forwarded by the Legion's Washington office, processing will begin and an eligibility package will be sent to the post. This 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.

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 provide prepaid shipping labels 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 or upon request from the date of issue. 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 Depot at **(941) 475-2020** or **www.amherst-depot.com**, or Fulton Armory at **(301) 490-9485 or www.fulton-armory.com**.

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 compleyed Certificate of Arms Storage form submitted and on file. 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.

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 under the provisions of Public Law 100-456, Title 10 USC 2572. Equipment is for static display only and is not issued in working condition. This program does not have jeeps or vans for driving. Jeeps are no longer available to the public.

All requests for tanks, field artillery pieces, mortars, etc., should be directed to **The American Legion, 1608 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006**. This office is only authorized to process requests from American Legion posts. Requests are to be made on post letterhead and list the post name and number, address (not a P.O. Box number), telephone number, name of contact person, number of members in the post, and the signature of the post commander or adjutant.

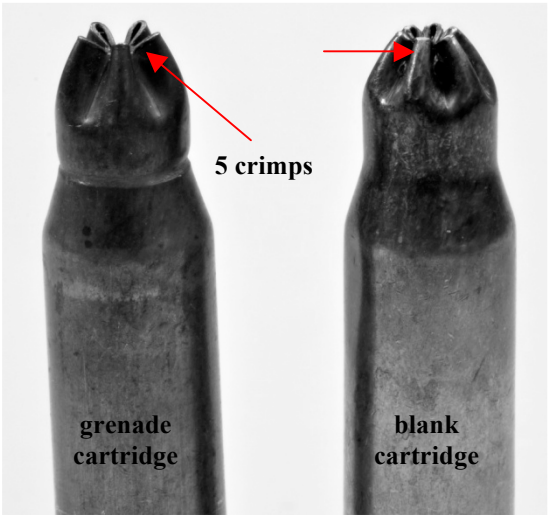
Conditional donations of obsolete, condemned combat equipment for display are made at no expense to the government. The costs for construction of a display site, limited demilitarization, removal of radiological material (when applicable), release and transportation must be paid by the requesting organization. **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.

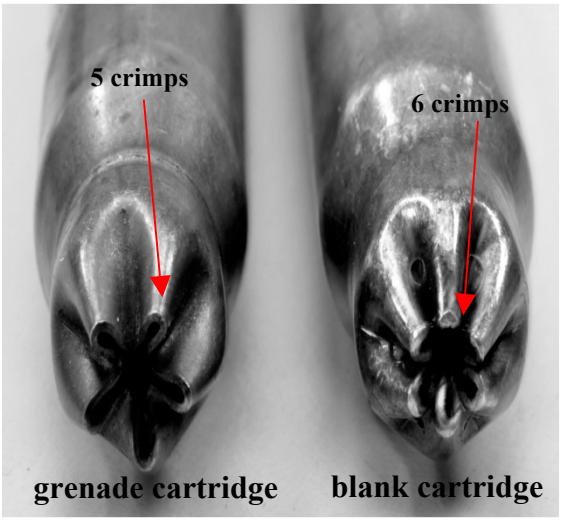
Once TACOM receives a request, it prepares an official packet and sends it to the post. The post then reviews all rules, regulations and requirements and makes a final decision if the equipment is still desired. Unfortunately, at this time, Army equipment is not readily obtainable for use as a conditional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

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.





- **Do not fire .30 caliber grenade cartridges in the M1 Garand rifle.**
- **Only .30 caliber blank ammunition received from the 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 to Robert Weissman, U.S. Army ARDEC, at **(973) 724-3056** or **robert.j.weissman.civ@mail.mil**.

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 and 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 Legion and American Legion Auxiliary program, this campaign provides multiple benefits to veterans and their communities.

Resolution No. 20, "The American Legion Poppy Program," passed May 8-9, 2013, outlines the proper use, manufacture and distribution of the 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 in the manufacture of poppies.

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

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.

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 (Res. 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 NEC 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) the 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 (or colon), 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.

Veteran of the Month

At the 75th National Convention in Pittsburgh in 1993, The 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. For details, visit **www.legion.org/publications**.

Post histories

The American Legion strongly encourages the preparation of post histories. Such information on the post's activities will be of considerable value in years to come.

National Headquarters is aware that a professional historian does not fill the position of historian in most posts. This need not prevent a proper recording of the post's activities. The scope of the information included is the main consideration, keeping in mind, however, comprehensiveness, readability and arrangement, so as to make the history both an interesting account of the post and a reference source.

At the start of the new post year, the historian begin making a permanent record of the organization for the year ahead, from the installation of officers up to and including the installation of next year's officers. To help gather specific details concerning the post, ask the post adjutant for a copy of the most recent Consolidated Post Report. The statistical summary will indicate the type and amount of activity that can help you put together as complete a picture as possible. Make plans to compile a complete post history since its founding, but focus, for the moment, on a one-year history. Then go back to the files and gradually write up the back story.

The national historian will conduct an annual one-year narrative history and yearbook (pictorial) history contest at the post level. These ongoing national contests will give stability and continuity to the recording of post events for future generations of Legionnaires. The department historian will notify posts of any national contest changes that may occur.

Included in this guide are comprehensive outlines to compile a one-year narrative history or yearbook with their respective judging standards for competition in the national contests.

To be eligible for the national contests, an entry in either category must be a first-place winner in the department's contest and must be certified as such by the department historian and forwarded to the national historian to arrive in Indianapolis by Sept. 15. Department historians or adjutants need to contact the national historian or National Headquarters' Library and Museum director for exceptions.

Upon completion of the national contest, all entries will be returned to their respective posts unless otherwise instructed for different shipping arrangements.

The work of collecting, preserving and recording the activities of The American Legion is an important endeavor and demands much detail work; hopefully you will find it inspiring and rewarding. Contact the department historian for additional ideas and information regarding department contest qualifications.

Outline for a one-year post narrative history

This outline has been developed to be helpful to the historian. It would be advantageous to check any compilation against this outline so as to include as much of the material suggested here as possible.

Part I – Format

(1) Cover A standard three-ring binder, or similar type, to accommodate 8 ½ x 11 bond paper must be used with The American Legion emblem centered (left to right) on the cover with the name and number of the post. Binders with embossed American Legion emblems are available through Emblem Sales.

Each book is not to exceed three inches between the front and back cover. If you submit two or more binders, you must indicate on the cover and title page the wording "Volume 1," "Volume 2," etc.

(2) Name/address of compiler The full name and complete mailing address of the history author should appear on the inside front cover in the lower left corner. It will be neatly typed or computer generated and centered on a 3x5 index card.

(3) Title page This will be the first page facing the reader as the history book is opened. It should be centered on the page (left to right, top to bottom) and in a logical arrangement with double spacing or more and contain as a minimum the following:

History of
(Name of post) **Post No.** _____ (Number of post)
The American Legion
(city and state)
For 20_____ to 20____
By (person compiling history)

(4) Introduction Every history should include a forward or introduction setting forth the reasons for the organization and may include:

- Mention of the national organization's founding with a tie-in of the department and post. (See **www.legion.org/history** or "Capsule History of The American Legion," listed later, as a possible beginning, and see your department historian for a capsule history of the department.)
- Selection of the post name. If named for a departed comrade or comrades, include a short biographical sketch of their lives and include available photographs.
- If possible, a brief résumé of your community's history, especially the part played by that locality in furnishing men and women during wars and conflicts.
- A photograph of the post and street address, if your post has a post home.
- Acknowledgment of any assistance or contributions used in compiling the history.

(5) Table of contents This is a "must" for any good history, which will list the pages of the chapters and appendices and should be in the front of the history immediately following the introduction. If there is more than one volume, each volume should contain a complete table of contents.

(6) Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion Identifying the principal aims of The American Legion, the preamble is a fitting introduction and should follow the table of contents. It should be centered on the page and spaced in a neat and logical arrangement. Multicolored 8½ x 11 prints of the preamble may be purchased through Emblem Sales.

(7) Index The alphabetical index is a "must" for any good history. This comprehensive index of names, places and events mentioned in your history, with page references, shall be at the end of the history following the appendices. Be sure to include every person and activity in the history. If a person has a title, put that in with a cross-reference to the name. If there is more than one volume, each volume should have a complete index.

(8) Page numbering Do not forget to number the pages. Be consistent in placing page numbers, either at top or bottom of pages. Numbering will start with the title page.

Order of page numbering The above pages should appear in order with Arabic numerals or Roman numerals:

Title Page	1 or i
Introduction	2 or ii
Table of Contents	3 or iii
Preamble	4 or iv

List each page in consecutive order using Arabic numerals. If you use Arabic numerals, the next number will follow your last number (e.g. if the preamble is 4, the first page of the history is 5). If you use Roman numerals, then the first page of the history is 1 (e.g. if the Preamble is iv, then the first page of the history is 1).

Chapters

Following the preamble, the chapters may be sequenced in this suggested manner:

Chapter 1 – Roster of Post Officers Photographs of current post officers should be included in the history. If it is not possible to obtain photographs of every officer, make a special effort to include photographs of the commander and the adjutant.

Chapter 2 – Roster of Post Chairmen Include a roster of post chairs with photographs, if available.

Chapter 3 – One-Year Post History This should be a one-year post chronicle. The history is to cover one year, beginning with the installation of officers, up to and including the installation of the next year's officers. This timeframe may vary in some departments. This is the most important chapter in your history, and must be as complete as possible with a graphic account of the post and its activities. The historian should relate in narrative form, and in chronological order, all important events and programs conducted during the year by the post or events conducted jointly with the Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, or county, district, department and national levels. (Remember, this is the post's history, not the department or National Headquarters.)

Historians may use information from the minutes of meetings as a basis for information about the post's activities. Then contact members who were chairs of the committees for further details. Include anything that you deem a special attribute of the post, setting it apart from all others.

Do not use any photographs or newspaper articles in this chapter of your narrative history. However, photographs may be included in dedicated committee chapters and newspaper articles in the appendices.

Other chapters While many American Legion programs and post projects are of a continuing nature and may run through several administrations, such activities might be better covered in a separate chapter following those devoted to the individual administration.

The activities of all standing post committees should be given considerable coverage, particularly if one committee performs an outstanding service. You may want to include each committee in separate chapters: Americanism, Membership, Boys State, School Award Medals, Oratorical Contest, Junior Shooting Sports, Baseball, Children & Youth, Sons of The American Legion, patriotic observances, post parties, Boy Scout troops and other sponsored groups, to name a few. Collect and record for posterity all post activities.

Including photographs in the committee chapters adds to the attractiveness of the entry. Give attention to the arrangement of illustrations in relation to the text and use of captions (identification) under each photograph.

Appendices

Appendices are pages of statistical data that should be carried at the end of the history, following the chapters and before the index, and might include:

- Organization of the post with a list of charter members and dates of temporary and permanent charters.
- A roster of all past post commanders and adjutants since the charter date with their years served.
- If the post is not too large, add a roster of members listed in alphabetical order. This may include, after each member's name, the member's branch of service or the date he or she joined the post.
- A record of the post's citations and awards received, as well as awards presented by the post.
- A list of members who served as delegates to the national and department conventions, or national and department officers and commission and committee appointees, including the county and district.
- Complete records of annual elections showing all nominations and votes received by various nominees.
- The post's membership standings by year since the charter date; a list of new members for the current year; a list of life members and Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) members; "In Memoriam," also known as Taps or Post Everlasting, listings for the current year; the post's constitution and by-laws; the annual post budget; and any other important statistics.

Part II – Graphic Account / Readability

The emphasis should be on the narrative rather than the statistical style of presentation. Use your imagination, and be original in thought and presentation.

A high degree of literary style is not essential to success, but the method of presentation should be pleasing to the general reader. The reader must be able to follow the post's story without difficulty or confusion.

The most common error is in not writing in the third person. This means you should write as an observer, not as a participant. The history should be written as a chronological and detailed account of events arranged in order of time without any analysis or interpretation.

Statistics are of great value but should be included in the appendix rather than being placed indiscriminately throughout the book.

Part III – Illustrations

All photographs must be identified by occasion, individuals, date and place of event with the exception of individual photographs of post officers and chairs (name and title/committee only). Provide left-to-right subject identification, and if necessary, by row.

Be sure all photographs are clear, as blurry prints will not aid materially and will take away from rather than enhance your history. Proper arrangement with the text is a must to achieve an eye-catching history book. Avoid using pictures with alcohol or cigarettes in them.

Part IV – Judges Option / Originality

Under this category, judges will consider a number of qualities or items of content in the history that are not readily cataloged under the preceding headings. Some histories, for example, have a complete roster of members. In other words, judges will determine features that make a history especially attractive or useful, i.e. a spine label, etc. By the same token, if inaccuracies come to the judges' attention, they would have a negative scoring effect.

Page format suggestions

Use plain and unruled 8½ x 11 white and/or colored bond paper for your history binder filler.

The history should be typed or computer generated on one side of the paper using black ribbon or print. Single sheets of paper may be placed back-to-back using transparent plastic protective covers.

Margins are a must for neatness, readability and standardization. Use a 1-inch margin on all sides (except one inch from the perforation side of paper, if necessary).

Where feasible, provide double-spaced copy on pages with a three- to six-space indention for new paragraphs and single-spaced lines for photograph identifications.

If you have any doubt of the spelling of a word, use a dictionary. Also double-check the spelling of all names.

Some entries would have a better chance in the contests as a yearbook, even though they were submitted as narratives. Consider your entry. Is it a narrative or a yearbook? There is a difference. Read the outlines for each category.

National judging standards

You will note that Part I, Part II, Part III and Part IV, as identified, coincide with the categories of the national judging standards. The "etc." listed after several of the scoring elements shows that there are additional requirements necessary to achieve total score points. It is suggested that you re-examine the outline, using the standards as a checklist, before submitting your contest entry.

PART I – FORMAT (40 POINTS)		
(1) COVER Standard three-ring binder for 8½ x 11 bond paper, emblem, etc.	(5)	
(2) NAME/ADDRESS OF COMPILER Inside front cover/lower left corner, etc.	(3)	
(3) TITLE PAGE Centered in logical arrangement/double spacing plus, etc.	(5)	
(4) INTRODUCTION Post background, tie-in with department and national, community, etc.	(5)	
(5) TABLE OF CONTENTS Page reference of chapters, appendices, etc.	(5)	
(6) PREAMBLE Includes Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion, etc.	(2)	
(7) INDEX Comprehensive alphabetical listing at end of history book, etc.	(10)	
(8) PAGE NUMBERING Table of contents, chapters, appendices and index, etc.	(5)	
Subtotal	(40)	
PART II – GRAPHIC ACCOUNT/READABILITY (30 POINTS)		
(1) NARRATIVE Rather than a statistical style of presentation	(10)	
(2) PRESENTATION Chronological order and in third person, not to detract from general readability	(10)	
(3) CLEAR/GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT Pleasing to the general reader	(10)	
Subtotal	(30)	
PART III – ILLUSTRATIONS (10 POINTS)		
(1) IDENTIFICATION All photographs must have names, occasions, sources, dates, etc. Provide proper left-to-right identifications.	(5)	
(2) CLEAR PHOTOGRAPHS Blurry or foggy prints detract from presentation, etc.	(5)	
Subtotal	(10)	
PART IV – JUDGES OPTION / ORIGINALITY (10 POINTS)		
(1) JUDGES WILL CONSIDER a number of qualities or items of content in the history not readily cataloged under the preceding headings. **(2) JUDGES WILL DETERMINE** features that make a history especially attractive or useful as a source of reference and historic value.	(10)	
TOTAL POINTS OF ENTRY	(90)	

Postscripts

- Consider making a copy of your entry in the event it should become a national contest winner. With your permission, it will be retained in the library archives of The American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis for visitors to view.
- In the event that your post records are missing and there is no history, the post historian may search the local newspaper files and interview past commanders, adjutants and older members. Many important post events can be found using these methods.
- Information about the post charter can be obtained by writing to the Charter Clerk, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.
- Many departments have organized department historian associations, patterned after the National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion (NADHAL). These groups render assistance in carrying out a successful historian's program. Ask if your department has such an organization and join in its activities. If there is no such department organization, consult your department historian.
- The serious post historian will find informative and interesting any one of the following published histories about The American Legion: Michael J. Bennett's "When Dreams Come True: The GI Bill and the Making of Modern America" *(*Brassey's, 1996); Thomas A. Rumer's "The American Legion: An Official History" (M. Evans, 1990); Raymond Moley's "The American Legion Story," (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1966); Richard Jones' "A History of The American Legion" (Bobbs-Merrill, 1946); and Marquis James' "A History of The American Legion" (William Green, 1923).
- Where possible, use digital voice recorders or video cameras to record oral histories and interviews of American Legion post founders and leaders to capture firsthand information about the post's history.

Capsule history of The American Legion

A group of 20 officers who served in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in France during World War I is credited with founding the Legion. AEF Headquarters asked the officers to suggest ideas on how to improve troop morale. One officer, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt Jr., proposed an organization of veterans. In February 1919, the group formed a temporary committee and selected several hundred officers who had the confidence and respect of the whole army.

About 1,000 officers and enlisted men attended the Paris Caucus in March 1919. They adopted a temporary constitution and the name The American Legion. The group also elected an executive committee to complete the organization's work. It considered each soldier of the AEF a member of the Legion. The executive committee named a subcommittee to organize veterans at home in the United States.

In May 1919, the Legion held a second organizing caucus in St. Louis. It completed the constitution and made plans for a permanent organization, setting up a temporary headquarters in New York City and beginning its relief, employment and Americanism programs.

Congress granted the Legion a national charter in September 1919. The first national convention convened in Minneapolis on November 10-12, 1919, adopting a permanent constitution and electing officers to head the organization. Delegates also voted to locate the Legion's national headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Legion continues to support the four pillars of service and advocacy upon which it was founded: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

Outline for a one-year post yearbook

A post yearbook is a pictorial history of the post's annual activities. Remember, though, that this is a permanent record that will be seen by others for years to come, so the suggested outline should be followed as closely as possible. It would be advantageous to check any compilation against this outline so as to include as much of the material suggested here as possible.

Part I – Format

(1) Cover The size of the yearbook cover must not be smaller than a standard three-ring binder or larger than 12x15 inches, with The American Legion emblem centered (left to right) on the cover with the post's name and number. Each book is not to exceed three inches between the front and back cover.

If two or more binders are submitted, you must indicate on the cover and title page the wording "Volume 1," "Volume 2," etc. Acceptable yearbook binders and standard three-ring binders with the American Legion emblem embossed on the cover are available from Emblem Sales.

(2) Name/address of compiler The full name and complete mailing address of the yearbook author should appear on the inside front cover on the lower left corner. It will be neatly typed or computer generated and centered on a 3x5 index card.

(3) Title page This should be the first page facing the reader as the yearbook is opened. It should be centered on the page (left to right, top to bottom) and be in a logical arrangement with double spacing or more and contain as a minimum the following:

Yearbook of
(Name of post) **Post No.** _____ (Number of post)
The American Legion
(city and state)
For 20____ - 20____
By (person compiling yearbook)

(4) Introduction Every yearbook should have a forward or introduction, setting forth the reasons for the organization, and may include:

- Mention of the national organization's founding with a tie-in of the department and post. (See **www.legion.org/history** or "Capsule History of The American Legion," listed earlier, as a possible beginning, and see your department historian for a capsule history of the department.)
- Selection of the post name. If named for a departed comrade or comrades, include a short biographical sketch of their lives and include available photographs.
- If possible, a brief résumé of your community's history, especially the part played by that locality in furnishing men and women during wars and conflicts.
- A photograph of the post and street address, if your post has a post home.
- A biographical background of the current post commander and/or the author of the history with photographs included.
- Acknowledgment of any assistance or contributions used in compiling the history.

(5) Table of contents This is a "must" for any good history, which will list the pages of the chapters and appendices and should be in the front of the history immediately following the introduction. If there is more than one volume, each should contain a complete table of contents.

(6) Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion Identifying the principal aims of The American Legion, the preamble is a fitting introduction and should follow the table of contents. It should be centered on the page and spaced in a neat and logical arrangement. Multicolored 8½ x 11 prints of the preamble may be purchased through Emblem Sales.

(7) Index The alphabetical index is a "must" for any good history. This comprehensive index of names, places and events mentioned in your history, with page references, shall be at the end of the history following the appendices. Be sure to include every person and activity in the history. If there is more than one volume, each volume should contain a complete index.

(8) Page numbering Do not forget to number the pages. Be consistent in placing page numbers, either at top or bottom of pages. Numbering will start with the title page.

Order of page numbering The above pages should appear in order with Arabic or Roman numerals:

Title Page	1 or i
Introduction	2 or ii
Table of Contents	3 or iii
Preamble	4 or iv

The following units will list each page in consecutive order using Arabic numerals. If you use Arabic numerals, the next number will follow your last number (e.g. if the preamble is 4, the first page of the history is 5). If you use Roman numerals, then the first page of the history is 1 (e.g. if the Preamble is iv, then the first page of the history is 1).

Part II – Programs and Activities / Readability

The yearbook material for your post programs and activities will follow the preamble and precede the index.

The yearbook is to cover one year, from the installation of officers up to and including the installation of the next year's officers. This timeframe may vary in some departments.

Chapters

Following the preamble, the chapters may be sequenced in this suggested manner:

Chapter 1 – Roster of Post Officers Photographs of current post officers should be included in the history. If it is not possible to obtain photographs of every officer, make a special effort to include photographs of the commander and the adjutant.

Chapter 2 – Roster of Post Chairmen Include a roster of post chairs with photographs, if available.

Chapter 3 – One-Year Post History This should be a one-year post history.

A record as vitally important as the history itself is a complete and accurate yearbook containing all newspaper clippings, photographs, copies of programs, tickets, badges and other items pertaining to the post and its activities.

All material recorded in the yearbook must be in chronological order with a systematic and logical arrangement. The reader must be able to follow the meaning of the illustrations (news clippings, photographs, etc.) with little difficulty and confusion.

All newspaper clippings must include the name and date of the publication. Individuals in photographs must be identified by full proper names (nicknames in brackets), from left to right. Captions should also identify the occasion, dates and source. You may know who is in the photograph and why, but the reader may not.

Be sure all photographs are clear and sharp, as blurry or fuzzy prints will take away from rather than enhance your yearbook. Proper arrangement with captions is a "must" for an eye-catching yearbook. Avoid using pictures with alcohol or cigarettes in them.

Neatness and originality are even more important for the yearbook than the narrative history, since all the material in the yearbook must be properly identified to make it worthwhile.

If the compiler cannot type or print well, he or she should have an experienced person do the printing or type inserts.

Part III – Judges Option / Originality

Judges will consider a number of qualities or items of content in the yearbook that are not readily catalogued under the preceding headings. Some yearbooks have features that make them especially attractive, useful and of historic value.

By the same token, if inaccuracies should come to the attention of the judges, they will have a negative scoring effect on your entry.

National judging standards

You will note that Part I, Part II and Part III, as identified, coincide with the categories of the national judging standards. The "etc." listed after several of the scoring elements shows that there are additional requirements necessary to achieve total score points. It is suggested that you re-examine the outline, using the standards as a checklist, before submitting your contest entry.

PART I – FORMAT (40 POINTS)		
(1) COVER Size of 12x15 inches, emblem, etc.	(5)	
(2) NAME/ADDRESS OF COMPILER Inside front cover and lower left corner, etc.	(3)	
(3) TITLE PAGE Centered in logical arrangement, double spacing plus, etc.	(5)	
(4) INTRODUCTION Post background, tie-in to department and national, community, etc.	(5)	
(5) TABLE OF CONTENTS Page references covering programs and events	(5)	
(6) PREAMBLE Includes Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion, etc.	(2)	
(7) INDEX Comprehensive alphabetical listing carried at end of yearbook	(10)	
(8) PAGE NUMBERING Carried on post memorabilia pages and index	(5)	
Subtotal	(40)	
PART II – PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES/READABILITY – 40 POINTS		
(1) ARRANGEMENT Systematic and logical arrangement, with material recorded in chronological order. Readers must be able to follow the illustrations (pictures, clippings, copies of programs, tickets, badges, etc.) with little difficulty or confusion.	(20)	
(2) IDENTIFICATION All clippings and/or photographs must have names, occasions, sources, dates, etc., listed to properly identify the subject matter. Provide proper left-to-right identifications.	(10)	
(3) CLEAR PHOTOGRAPHS Blurry or fuzzy prints will detract from presentation	(10)	
Subtotal	(40)	
PART III – JUDGES OPTION/ORIGINALITY – 10 POINTS		
JUDGES WILL CONSIDER a number of qualities or items of content in the yearbook not readily catalogued under the preceding headings. They may determine that some yearbooks include items and features that make them attractive and especially useful.	(10)	
TOTAL POINTS OF ENTRY	(90)	

Helpful hints for district/county historians

Some departments use the district and county structures, and historians at both levels must make a team effort to accomplish their respective responsibilities to posts in their jurisdiction. If you have been elected or appointed district/county historian, your primary duty is to coordinate the records of post activities within your district/county to ensure the preservation and accessibility of such records at all times.

Some departments conduct comprehensive spring and fall district meetings. If this is the case in your department, make every effort to be allotted time on the program. Travel to posts within your district with the district commander and his or her staff whenever possible, and speak at post meetings. Use the spring meetings as your vantage point for administering a final "morale booster" to the work-shy in your district. Emphasize the importance of adequate records and of giving all possible help and encouragement to post historians.

Many district historians have had no experience in this type of work. In addition, many posts have never tried to keep a history of any kind. You will have to begin by researching and compiling as much information as possible from past records, then focus on keeping your own records current.

Be sure that every post in your district has a post historian and that they are kept informed of the latest developments and material. It is your duty to give all possible aid to post historians within your district. If your department conducts an annual post narrative history or yearbook contest, encourage the historians to enter.

Outline for a one-year district/county narrative history or yearbook

Your department may conduct an annual district/county narrative history or yearbook contest in addition to those sponsored at the post level. Use the outlines for the one-year post narrative history and yearbook to compile district or county narrative histories or yearbooks. When using the post outlines as a guide, change the cover title, title page and text references to read "district" or "county." Naturally, some material suggested for the post entries would not be appropriate for district or county books.

Department narrative history and yearbook contests

The national historian will conduct annual one-year narrative history and yearbook history contests at the department level. These contests add continuity to the recording of department events for future generations. Comprehensive records are of significant historic value.

Department historians are encouraged to use the same format as posts for their one-year department narrative history and one-year department yearbook. Where the outlines say "post," insert "department," and determine if the suggested item fits the context for your narrative history or yearbook.

Judging of department entries for both the narrative and yearbook categories is based on the department's history covering one year, beginning with the installation of department officers up to and including the annual department convention and installation of the next year's officers.

To participate in the national contest, department histories must be "certified" by the department adjutant and forwarded to the national historian to arrive in Indianapolis by Sept. 15. Department adjutants need to contact the national historian or National Headquarters' Library and Museum director for exceptions.

The American Legion 100th Anniversary Celebration History

As part of The American Legion's upcoming 100th anniversary celebration, a special website has been created: **www.legion.org/centennial**. Each post is encouraged to add its history. Post pictures and histories are important to share with other posts, departments, and the community. Ideally, every post will be listed on the centennial website.

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. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute.

§ 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.

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 online at **www.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.) General publications of The American Legion include:

- *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 *Dispatch* is published online and as a print monthly newsletter. An annual subscription is $15 a year. Complimentary issues are mailed to post commanders (mailed to post adjutants); district and county commanders; department commanders, adjutants and senior officers; department commission and committee chairmen; members of all national commissions and committees; National Executive Committee members and alternate members; and Auxiliary and SAL national officers.
- A copy of the *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies* is sent free to each post and available online at **www.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 **www.legion.org/publications**.

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The Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies can also be downloaded free at **www.legion.org/publications**.

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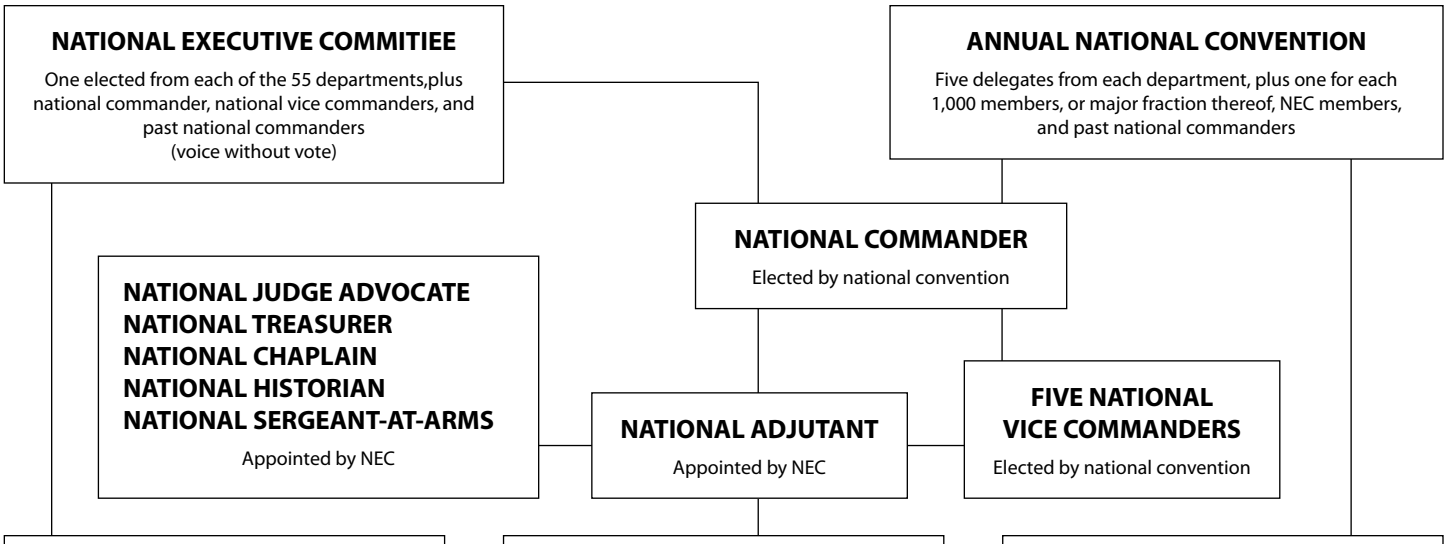
ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



NATIONAL COMMISSIONS AND COMMITIEES

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

- Americanism Commission
  - Committee on Children & Youth
  - Committee on Youth Education
  - Americanism Council
- Convention Commission
- Finance Commission
  - American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc
  - The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation
  - Emblem Committee
  - Marketing Committee
  - Overseas Graves Decoration Trust
  - Revenue Enhancement Committee
- Internal Affairs Commission
  - Constitution & By-Laws Committee
  - Membership & Post Activities Committee
  - National Convention Resolutions Assignment Committee
- Legislative Commission
  - Legislative Council
- 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
  - Health Administration Committee
  - National Cemetery Committee
  - Veterans Benefits Committee
  - Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Council
- 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 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN

- Administrative Services
  - Human Resources
  - Library and Museum
  - Purchasing/Document Processing
  - Information Technology Network Operations
- Americanism/Children & Youth Division
- Finance Division
- Media & Communications Division
- Internal Affairs Division
- Membership Division
- National Convention & Meetings Division

John H. Geiger Operations Center

5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN

- Emblem Sales
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Washington, D.C., Office

1608 K St. N.W., Washinglon, DC

- Administrative Services
- Veterans Employment & Education Division
- Legislative Division
- National Security & Foreign Relations Division

Various Field Stations

- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitaion

CONVENTION COMMITIEES

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

- Americanism (1 delegate)
  - Children & Youth (1 delegate)
- Constitutional Amendments (1 delegate)
- Credentials & Rules (1 delegate)
- Finance (1 delegate)
- Internal Affairs
  - Membership (1 delegate)
  - Other Internal Matters (1 delegate)
- Legislation (1 delegate)
- National Security
  - Aerospace (1 delegate)
  - Conventional Armed Forces (1 delegate)
  - Foreign Relations (1 delegate)
  - Law and Order & Homeland Security (1 delegate)
  - Military Benefits & Quality of Life (1 delegate)
  - National Guard & Reserve Forces (1 delegate)
  - Unconventional Forces & Intelligence (1 delegate)
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
  - Health Administration (1 delegate)
  - National Cemetery (1 delegate)
  - Veterans Benefits (1 delegate)
- Veterans Employment & Education
  - Employment & Veterans Preference (1 delegate)
  - Veterans Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness (1 delegate)

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