

PODIUM EDITION

2027

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES**



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

**CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER
BYLAWS
MANUAL OF PROCEDURE
RITUAL**

As amended July 27, 2026
Effective August 28, 2026

2027

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER
BYLAWS
MANUAL OF PROCEDURE
RITUAL**

*As amended July 27, 2026
Effective August 28, 2026*

Published at
VFW National Headquarters
Kansas City, Missouri

Copyright© 2026 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
All Rights Reserved.

NOTE

The 127th National Convention approved amendments to the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual as follows:

National Bylaws— 203, 220, 503, 604, 615, 704, 903, Article XIII, and 1302

Manual of Procedure— 211, 218, 418, 518, 704, and Article XIII

Ritual— Plate Illustrations, Opening Post Ceremonies (p. 11), Closing Ceremonies – Post (p. 16), and Unserviceable Flag Ceremony (p. 106)

NOTE: The National Council of Administration approved an amendment to the Commemorative Dates (p. 3) of the Ritual.

NOTE: The Adjutant General approved administrative and conforming changes to Section 418 and the Ritual pursuant to the authority granted in Section 1401 of the National Bylaws.

Table of Contents

CONGRESSIONAL

CHARTER

Sec. 230101 - Organization	Page
Sec. 230102 - Purposes	7
Sec. 230103 - Membership	7
Sec. 230104 - Powers	8
Sec. 230105 - Exclusive Rights to Name, Seal, Emblems and Badges	8
Sec. 230106 - Service of Process	8
Sec. 230107 - Annual Report	8

BYLAWS AND MANUAL OF

PROCEDURE

ARTICLE I - MEMBERS

	BYLAWS Page	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE Page
Sec. 101 - Eligibility.....	9	58
Sec. 102 - Applications-Affiliation of New Members.....	9	63
Sec. 103 - Election.....	10	63
Sec. 104 - Member Dues.....	10	64
Sec. 105 - Members in Good Standing	10	64
Sec. 106 - Former Members.....	10	64
Sec. 107 - Transfers.....	10	64
Sec. 108 - Challenging Members Eligibility.....	11	64
Sec. 109 - Right of Appeal	11	65
Sec. 110 - Rights of Members.....	11	67
Sec. 111 - Life Members	11	67

ARTICLE II - POSTS

Sec.201 - Formation, Institution and Chartering	13	67
Sec.202 - Bylaws.....	13	68
Sec.203 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees	13	68
Sec.204 -	14	68
Sec.205 - Change of Location; Meeting Place, Day or Time.....	14	68
Sec.206 - Post Admission Fees and Dues.....	14	69
Sec.207 -	14	69
Sec.208 - Change of Name.....	14	69
Sec.209 - Consolidation of Posts.....	14	69
Sec.210 - Surrender of Charter.....	14	70
Sec.211 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.....	14	70
Sec.212 - Defunct Posts	15	71
Sec.213 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions	15	71
Sec.214 - Solicitation of Funds.....	15	71
Sec.215 - Eligibility to Office	15	72
Sec.216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.....	16	72
Sec.217 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office	16	72
Sec.218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations	16	73
Sec.219 - Relief Fund	16	76
Sec.220 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members	16	77
Sec.221 - Voting	17	78
Sec.222 - Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.....	17	78
Sec.223 - Commemorative Dates	17	78

ARTICLE III - COUNTY COUNCILS

BYLAWS
Page

MANUAL OF
PROCEDURE
Page

Sec.301 - Formation, Chartering.....	17	78
--------------------------------------	----	----

ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS

Sec. 401 - Formation, Institution and Chartering	18	78
Sec. 402 - Bylaws.....	18	79
Sec. 403 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees	18	79
Sec. 404 - Governing Body; Composition	18	79
Sec. 405 -	19	79
Sec. 406 - District Dues	19	79
Sec. 407 -	19	79
Sec. 408 -	19	79
Sec. 409 -	19	79
Sec. 410 - Surrender of Charter.....	19	79
Sec. 411 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.....	19	79
Sec. 412 - Defunct Districts.....	20	80
Sec. 413 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions	20	80
Sec. 414 - Solicitation of Funds	20	80
Sec. 415 - Eligibility to Office.....	20	81
Sec. 416 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees	20	81
Sec. 417 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office	21	81
Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations	21	82
Sec. 419 -	21	85
Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.....	21	85
Sec. 421 - Voting.....	21	85

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 501 - Formation, Institution and Chartering	22	86
Sec. 502 - Bylaws.....	22	86
Sec. 503 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.....	22	86
Sec. 504 - Governing Body; Composition.....	22	86
Sec. 505 -	23	86
Sec. 506 - Department Dues.....	23	86
Sec. 507 -	23	86
Sec. 508 -	23	86
Sec. 509 - Consolidation of Departments	23	86
Sec. 510 - Surrender of Charter.....	23	87
Sec. 511 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter	23	87
Sec. 512 - Defunct Departments.....	24	88
Sec. 513 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.....	24	88
Sec. 514 - Solicitation of Funds	24	88
Sec. 515 - Eligibility to Office.....	24	89
Sec. 516 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees	24	89
Sec. 517 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office	25	89
Sec. 518 - Officers: Duties and Obligations	25	90
Sec. 519 -	25	93
Sec. 520 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.....	25	93
Sec. 521 - Voting.....	25	94
Sec. 522 - Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties	26	94

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

	BYLAWS Page	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE Page
Sec. 601 - Formation.....	27	94
Sec. 602 - Bylaws.....	27	94
Sec. 603 - Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.....	27	94
Sec. 604 - Governing Body; Composition	28	95
Sec. 605 -	28	95
Sec. 606 - National Dues	28	95
Sec. 607 -	28	95
Sec. 608 -	28	95
Sec. 609 -	28	95
Sec. 610 -	28	95
Sec. 611 -	28	95
Sec. 612 -	28	95
Sec. 613 - National Headquarters.....	28	95
Sec. 614 - Solicitation of Funds	29	95
Sec. 615 - Eligibility to Office	29	95
Sec. 616 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees	29	95
Sec. 617 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.....	29	95
Sec. 618 - Officers: Duties and Obligations.....	29	96
Sec. 619 - National Committees	34	96
Sec. 620 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members	35	96
Sec. 621 - Voting	35	97
Sec. 622 - National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties	36	97
Sec. 623 - National Council of Administration, Department Members-Election, Vacancies and Removal	37	97
Sec. 624 -	38	

ARTICLE VII - MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 701 - Ritual, Distribution.....	38	97
Sec. 702 - Politics	38	97
Sec. 703 - Bonds.....	39	97
Sec. 704 -	39	98
Sec. 705 - Official Publication	39	98
Sec. 706 - National Home Funds	39	98
Sec. 707 -	39	98
Sec. 708 - Incorporation of Units and Other Activities.....	39	98
Sec. 709 - Control of Units.....	40	99
Sec. 710 - Inspection.....	41	99
Sec. 711 - Buddy Poppy.....	41	99
Sec. 712 - National Honor Guard.....	41	100
Sec. 713 - Language Prescribed.....	42	100
Sec. 714 - Control of Mailing Lists.....	42	100
Sec. 715 - Rebate on Sales	42	100
Sec. 716 - Title of Department Officers	42	100
Sec. 717 -	42	100
Sec. 718 -	42	100
Sec. 719 - Past Officers	42	100
Sec. 720 - Definitions.....	42	100

ARTICLE VIII - UNIFORMS, BADGES, ETC.

Sec. 801 - Adoption of Seals, Emblems, Badges and Insignia	43	101
Sec. 802 - Colors of Units	44	101
Sec. 803 - Manufacture and Use of Seals, Emblems, Badges, Insignia and Uniforms	44	101

	BYLAWS Page	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE Page
Sec. 804 - Official Name.....	44	102
Sec. 805 - Trademarks; Service Marks, Publications	45	102

ARTICLE IX - DISCIPLINE

Sec. 901 - Discipline of Members.....	45	102
Sec. 902 - Offenses.....	45	102
Sec. 903 - Procedure for Disciplinary Actions	46	102
Sec. 904 - Appeal	49	106
Sec. 905 - Suspension from Office.....	49	108
Sec. 906 - Prima Facie Case.....	50	108
Sec. 907 - Penalties.....	50	108
Sec. 908 - Administrative Actions	50	108

ARTICLE X - RULES OF ORDER

Sec. 1001 - Rules of Order Governing All Meetings.....	50	108
Sec. 1002 - Order of Business-National and Department Conventions.....		112
Sec. 1003 - Order of Business-Districts.....		112
Sec. 1004 - Order of Business-Posts.....		113
Sec. 1005 - Title of Address.....		113

ARTICLE XI - AUXILIARY

Sec. 1101 - Organization, Disbandment and Transition of Auxiliaries.....	50	114
Sec. 1102 - Eligibility	51	117
Sec. 1103 - Ritual, Bylaws and Regulations.....	51	117
Sec. 1104 - Incorporation	52	117

ARTICLE XII - MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

Sec. 1201 - Formation.....	52	118
Sec. 1202 - Eligibility	53	121
Sec. 1203 - Bylaws, Ritual.....	53	121
Sec. 1204 - Incorporation	53	121

ARTICLE XIII – NATIONAL VFW RIDERS GROUP

Sec. 1301 - Formation.....	54	122
Sec. 1302 - Eligibility	54	125
Sec. 1303 - Bylaws, Ritual.....	54	125
Sec. 1304 - Incorporation	54	125

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Sec. 1401 - Amendments.....	55	126
-----------------------------	----	-----

APPENDIX (Article IX Forms)

CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Incorporated May 28, 1936 (Public—No. 630—74th Congress) (H. R. 11454)
(Chapter 471, Sections 1 to 10, 49 Stat. 1390, 1391)
(Title 36, U.S.C. Chapter 7A, Sections 111 to 120)
(Amended 83rd Congress, May 29, 1953; 104th Congress, March 7, 1995; 107th Congress October 16, 2002; 109th Congress January 2, 2006)

The Charter was amended December 4, 2014 by the 113th Congress, Title 36 United States Code, Chapter 2301, Sections 230101 and 230102 as follows:

Sec. 230101 - Organization.

- (a) **Federal Charter.** Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (in this chapter, the "corporation"), a national association of veterans who as soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen served this Nation in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters, is a federally chartered corporation.
- (b) **Perpetual Existence.** Except as otherwise provided, the corporation has perpetual existence.

Sec. 230102 - Purposes.

The purposes of the corporation are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational, and are:

1. to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members;
2. to assist worthy comrades;
3. to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans;
4. to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws;
5. to foster true patriotism;
6. to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and
7. to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.

Sec. 230103 - Membership.

An individual is eligible for membership in the corporation only if the individual served honorably as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States-

1. in a foreign war, insurrection, or expedition in service that—
 - a. has been recognized as campaign-medal service; and
 - b. is governed by the authorization of the award of a campaign badge by the United States Government;
2. on the Korean peninsula or in territorial waters for at least 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 days, after June 30, 1949; or
3. in an area which entitled the individual to receive special pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger under section 310 of title 37.

Sec. 230104 - Powers.

The corporation may –

1. adopt and amend a constitution, Bylaws, and regulations to carry out the purposes of the corporation;
2. adopt and alter a corporate seal;
3. establish and maintain offices to conduct its activities;
4. make contracts;
5. acquire, own, lease, encumber, and transfer property as necessary and appropriate to carry out the purposes of the corporation;
6. establish, regulate, and discontinue subordinate State and territorial subdivisions and local chapters or posts;
7. publish a magazine and other publications;
8. sue and be sued; and
9. do any other act necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of the corporation.

Sec. 230105 - Exclusive Right to Name, Seal, Emblems, and Badges.

The corporation has the exclusive right to use the name "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" and its corporate seal and to manufacture and use emblems and badges the corporation adopts.

Sec. 230106 - Service of Process.

As a condition to the exercise of any power or privilege granted by this chapter, 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.

Sec. 230107 - 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 fiscal year. The report may not be printed as a public document.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - MEMBERS

Sec. 101 - Eligibility.

An individual is eligible for membership in the corporation only if the individual is serving or has served honorably as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States:

- (1) in a foreign war, insurrection, or expedition, which service has been recognized as campaign medal service and is governed by the authorization of the award of a campaign badge by the Government of the United States; or
- (2) on the Korean peninsula or in its territorial waters for not less than 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 days, after June 30, 1949; or
- (3) while a member of the Armed Forces serving in an area which entitled the individual to receive special pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger.

Refer to Section 101 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 102 - Applications-Affiliation of New Members.

Every application for membership shall comply with the rules and regulations as prescribed in Section 102 of the Manual of Procedure.

Except as otherwise provided herein, with respect to Members-at-Large, each eligible member shall be a member of a Post. Membership in more than one Post at one time is prohibited. Any person who is or becomes a member of more than one Post shall elect to remain in the Post of their choice and surrender membership in any other Post. In the event no election is made, the Commander-in-Chief or designee shall assign the member to a Post.

Any membership application erroneously accepted by a Post shall be a nullity and no person shall obtain any right or privilege of membership by reason of erroneous acceptance of an application or admission to membership.

Members-at-Large.

A. National Member-at-Large.

1. An individual who is eligible for membership who chooses not to join a Post and Department may become a "National Member-at-Large", for up to two (2) years.
2. To become a National Member-at-Large, the individual must submit the following to the Adjutant General's office:
 - (a) Completed membership application; and
 - (b) Proof of eligibility; and
 - (c) Payment of annual membership dues.
3. Annual dues required for National Membership-at-Large shall be forty-five dollars \$45.00, unless a different amount is established by the National Council of Administration.
4. Annual dues received by the Quartermaster General under this section shall be distributed as follows:
 - (a) National shall retain fifty percent (50%) of the annual membership dues received; and
 - (b) The Quartermaster General shall deliver the remaining fifty percent (50%) to the appropriate Department, as directed by the National Membership Department.
5. Upon the two (2)-year anniversary of becoming a National Member-at-Large; or, upon upgrading to Life Membership; the Adjutant General shall transfer the Member

to the Department in which their home address of record is located.

B. Department Member-at-Large

1. An individual who is eligible for membership and chooses not to join a Post but wishes to join a Department (as permitted by these Bylaws), may become a "Department Member-at-Large" on an annual basis.
2. To become a Department Member-at-Large, the individual must submit the following to the State Adjutant for the identified Department:
 - (a) Completed membership application; and
 - (b) Proof of eligibility; and
 - (c) Payment of annual membership dues.
3. Annual dues required for Department Membership-at-Large shall be forty-five dollars \$45.00, \$26.00 of which shall be National Organization dues which shall be transmitted to the Quartermaster General monthly on a consolidated report and \$19.00 of which shall be Department dues, provided the Department Council of Administration may establish some other amount as Department dues.

Sec. 103 - Election.

Applicants shall be elected, notified and obligated as prescribed in Section 103 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 104 - Member Dues.

National, Department and Posts may establish annual dues in the manner prescribed in these Bylaws. In the event a member surrenders their membership or their membership is terminated in accordance with the National Bylaws, there shall be no refund of annual dues.

Sec. 105 - Members in Good Standing.

A member whose current dues are paid through their anniversary date is in good standing and, unless suspended or terminated, is entitled to all membership rights in accordance with the National Bylaws.

A member whose dues are unpaid after their anniversary date ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Sec. 106 - Former Members.

A member whose dues are unpaid ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A former member may be restored to membership as prescribed in Section 106 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 107 - Transfers.

A member may transfer from one Post to another Post as prescribed in Section 107 of the Manual of Procedure.

In the event that a transfer to another Post or Member-at-Large has been effected and it is subsequently determined that the conditions of the Member Declaration have not been satisfied, then the Department Commander, with respect to transfers within the Department,

or the Commander-in-Chief, with respect to transfers between Departments, may revoke, suspend or cancel such transfer.

Sec. 108 - Challenging Members Eligibility.

A member's eligibility may be challenged as prescribed in Section 108 of the Manual of Procedure.

The Commander-in-Chief, in the performance of duty, shall enforce the provisions of the National Bylaws regarding eligibility to membership and, on determining a member to be ineligible, shall issue an order removing the member from the membership rolls.

Sec. 109 - Right of Appeal.

Except with respect to those matters for which other provisions for appeal are made in Article IX, the member, Post, District or Department aggrieved by any acts or decisions may appeal the rights afforded by these Bylaws to the next higher authority as prescribed in Section 109 of the Manual of Procedure.

The determination of the Department Commander shall have full force and effect unless and until reversed by competent authority. The member aggrieved by the acts or decisions of a Department Commander, the Department Council of Administration or the Department Convention shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall have full force and effect unless and until reversed by the National Council of Administration. The member aggrieved by the acts or decisions of the Commander-in-Chief may make a final appeal to the National Council of Administration.

Sec. 110 - Rights of Members.

No member (person listed on the membership rolls of this organization) shall be deprived of membership or suspended from membership, except for nonpayment of dues, and no elected officer may be relieved of office, except for nonpayment of dues or expiration of term of office (unless said office has been declared vacant in accordance with Sections 220, 420, 520 or 620 of these Bylaws), unless the member shall have first been sentenced in accordance with the provisions of Article IX of these Bylaws or removed from the membership rolls as prescribed in Section 108.

Sec. 111 - Life Members.

- (a) Life Members:** Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of any admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and the payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. With respect to Members-at-Large, the application and fee shall be submitted in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

- (b) Life Membership Fees:** Plan E Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan E fee schedule effective January 1, 2007:

<u>Attained Age</u>	<u>Plan E Life Member Fee</u>
Through 30	\$425
31-40	\$410
41-50	\$375
51-60	\$335
61-70	\$290
71-80	\$225
81 & over	\$170

The applicable fee from the effective life membership fee schedule will be determined using the applicant's attained age as of December 31st of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted, regardless of actual date of birth.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies or life membership fees of any kind and are entitled to all membership rights, unless suspended or terminated in accordance with the National Bylaws. An individual who is found to be ineligible for membership shall forfeit such life membership and will be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. An individual who is discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action or is eligible but wishes to voluntarily resign their membership shall forfeit their life membership and will not be entitled to any refund of fees paid.

- (c) Life Membership Committee:** The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund. The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds, to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

- (d) Annual Payment:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members of each respective Plan recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, that payments to the Post to which the member belongs, Department and National Headquarters shall never total less than:

Plan A, B & C	\$10.50
Plan D	\$16.50
Plan E	\$27.00

In the event that professional actuaries advise that Plan assets are insufficient to support the payout specified above for any such Plan, the Life Membership Committee, with the concurrence of the National Council of Administration, may authorize a lesser payout with respect to such Plan, consistent with the actuaries' recommendations.

Death of a life member following issuance of the checks paying the member's annual payment for the next calendar year to Post, Department and National Headquarters, shall not be a cause for a refund of such payment for that calendar year.

(End of Article I)

ARTICLE II - POSTS

Sec. 201 - Formation, Institution and Chartering.

Formation. A Post may be formed by completing a charter application consisting of twenty-five (25) eligible veterans, of which at least ten (10) must be new members, submitted through proper channels to the Commander-in-Chief.

Institution. Each new Post shall be instituted within sixty (60) days of the date the charter application is approved by the Commander-in-Chief. If not instituted within sixty days from the date of approval, said approval may be rescinded.

Chartering. The charter of an instituted Post shall include the name, date of muster, location and list of members. The charter shall remain open for ninety (90) days from the date of institution of the Post.

Sec. 202 - Bylaws.

Posts shall, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting adopt Bylaws provided each member has been notified at least twenty (20) days in advance and, upon request has been provided a copy of the proposed Bylaws.

Bylaws approved by a Post shall be forwarded as provided in the Manual of Procedure prior to becoming effective.

Amendments. Unless otherwise provided in the Post Bylaws, the Post Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting provided each member has been notified at least twenty (20) days in advance and, upon request has been provided a copy of the proposed amendments.

Sec. 203 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Regular Meetings. Posts shall hold at least one regular meeting each month.

Special Meetings. Special meetings will be called in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Manual of Procedure.

Committee Meetings. Meetings called by Post Committee Chairmen, or as authorized by the Post Bylaws, for the purpose of conducting the business of that committee.

Quorum. The Post Bylaws may specify the minimum number of members required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a regular or special meeting, provided that in no case shall the quorum be less than five (5) members.

Electronic Attendance. Any of the above stated meetings may be conducted or attended electronically that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.

Authorized Attendees. Any member of the Post and those on official business shall be recognized by the Post Commander for the conduct of business.

Guests. With the approval of the Post Commander/Committee Chairman, any visiting member or guest may attend a Post/Committee meeting. Such visiting member or guest shall have no voice unless recognized by the Post Commander/Committee Chairman, and shall have no voting privileges.

Sec. 204

Sec. 205 - Change of Location, Meeting Place, Day or Time.

A Post may change its chartered location, meeting place, meeting day or time as prescribed in Section 205 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 206 - Post Admission Fees and Dues.

Each Post shall determine its annual dues and establish an admission fee to be charged its new members as prescribed in the Department and National Bylaws. At least monthly, each Post shall transmit all dues collected as prescribed in the Department and National Bylaws. Admission fees and dues collected for the Department and National Organization are, and become, the property of the respective Department or the National Organization upon receipt by the Post.

Sec. 207

Sec. 208 - Change of Name.

A Post may change its chartered name as prescribed in Section 208 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 209 - Consolidation of Posts.

Two or more Posts may consolidate by authority of the Commander-in-Chief as prescribed in Section 209 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 210 - Surrender of Charter.

A Post may surrender its charter only upon a vote of its members as prescribed in Section 210 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 211 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.

Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Suspension. The Commander-in-Chief may suspend a Post Charter for a period of up to six (6) months for violations of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Establishment of an Administrative Committee. Upon the imposition of any suspension under this section, the Department Commander shall establish an administrative committee as prescribed in Section 211 of the Manual of Procedure.

Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Revocation. The Commander-in-Chief may revoke a Post Charter.

Actions by the Department Commander—Suspension. The Department Commander may suspend a Post Charter for a period of up to three (3) months.

Sec. 212 - Defunct Posts.

Any Post with less than ten (10) members, or, while under suspension the Post fails to establish a meeting quorum or elect the required officers, its charter shall be revoked and declared defunct with the issuance of a special order by the Commander-in-Chief.

Disposition of Property. In all cases of surrender, revocation or forfeiture of a charter, title to all real and personal property shall immediately pass to the Department who shall take possession and control for disposition as directed by the Department Council of Administration for the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter. In addition, the books and records of the Post shall be recovered by the Department.

In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, the Department Council of Administration in the case of trust funds or trust property, or both, shall carry out the intent and purpose of such trust to the extent of such funds or property, or both.

Sec. 213 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.

Any Post in arrears for any financial obligations to County Council (if applicable), District, Department and National for fees, dues, poppy money, supply money, failing to have the office of Quartermaster properly bonded in accordance with Section 703, failing to ensure that the Post is properly insured in accordance with Section 709, failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit, Post Election Report for the ensuing year, or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation in County Council and District meetings; County Council, District, Department and National Conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

Sec. 214 - Solicitation of Funds.

Posts shall be permitted to solicit funds or donations only as prescribed in Section 214 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 215 - Eligibility to Office.

All members shall be eligible to hold any office in the Post provided that proof of eligibility has been submitted and verified by the Post Commander and Adjutant prior to the installation. No member shall hold two elected Post offices at the same time but may hold one elected and one or more appointed offices. Elected Committee members are not Post Officers and accordingly may concurrently hold an elected Post office as provided for in Section 216 of these Bylaws. Post officers, elected or appointed, may be eligible to hold office in a higher body and such offices may be held concurrently.

Post Trustees shall not be eligible to serve on committees or as officers having to do with the receipt and expenditure of Post funds whose records and accounts are audited by the trustees.

Any officer or committee member whose membership is not in good standing by reason of failure to pay current dues by their anniversary date shall forfeit eligibility to hold any office in that administrative year.

Any member who is suspended from membership pursuant to Article IX, shall forfeit eligibility to hold any office or committee membership during the period of suspension.

Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The Post shall elect the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, and three Trustees.
- (b) The Commander shall appoint an Adjutant and Chaplain.
- (c) The Post may elect or the Post Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Officer of the Day and/or Guard if required by Post Bylaws.
- (d) The Post Commander may appoint a Benefits Advisor and such other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Post or as may be required by Post Bylaws.

Sec. 217 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Post officers shall be nominated, elected and installed as prescribed in Section 217 of the Manual of Procedure.

An officer elected and assuming the duties of an office shall continue to hold office for the period for which elected and until a successor assumes the duties of the office, unless the office is declared vacant under the provisions of Sections 216 or 220 of these Bylaws. Except as may be otherwise provided in Post Bylaws, chairmen and members of committees shall cease to hold office at the end of the administrative year.

Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.

Post officers, elected and appointed, and chairmen, shall have such duties as are prescribed in these Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual.

Sec. 219 - Relief Fund

A relief fund will be established and maintained by the Posts. In this fund shall be credited the net proceeds of the distribution of Buddy Poppies and such other monies as may be solicited or donated for veteran's relief purposes. Expenditures from the relief fund shall be as prescribed in Section 219 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 220 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.

Vacancies. All vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the Post shall be filled in accordance with Section 220 of the Manual of Procedure at the next regular or special meeting as prescribed in Section 203 of the Manual of Procedure.

Removal. Elected officers or elected committee members may be removed for just cause by the Post or the Department Commander as prescribed in Section 220 of the Manual of Procedure. If elected officers and committee members removed in accordance with this section hold more than one elected office and there is cause to remove them from additional offices, each removal shall be treated separately by issuance of a unique Special Order.

Any Post officer or committee member removed, by reason of failure to pay current dues or under the provisions of this section shall not be eligible to serve in any Post office

or committee in the same administrative year in which the officer or committee member is removed.

Sec. 221 - Voting.

Each Post member in good standing shall be entitled to one vote. Only Post members of the Post shall be entitled to vote at Post meetings.

Voting shall be as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 222 - Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.

- (a) Delegate strength shall be one for every thirty members or fraction thereof in good standing. Delegates and alternates shall be elected in accordance with the Manual of Procedure.
- (b) Delegates elected under this section shall not be considered instructed and may exercise full authority in the duty to be performed.
- (c) Each Post will pay, in accordance with its Department Bylaws, a delegate registration fee for each and every delegate to which the Post shall be entitled.
- (d) Each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee.

Sec. 223 - Commemorative Dates.

Each Post shall properly observe commemorative dates, as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure and Ritual.

(End of Article II)

ARTICLE III - COUNTY COUNCILS

Sec. 301 - Formation, Chartering.

A Department, if the Bylaws of the Department having jurisdiction so provide, may form County Councils.

(End of Article III)

ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS

Sec. 401 - Formation, Institution and Chartering.

The Department Convention or the Department Council of Administration, if provided for in Department Bylaws, shall determine the number of Districts and the geographical boundaries established in the Department. No District shall be established with less than five (5) Posts and 175 members.

A Charter shall be issued by the Commander-in-Chief to such Districts as the Department Convention determines to establish. The Charter shall be signed by the Commander-in-Chief and countersigned by the Adjutant General.

Sec. 402 - Bylaws.

The District Convention shall adopt or may amend Bylaws governing the District as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure, provided such Bylaws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the Bylaws of the Department having jurisdiction.

Sec. 403 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Regular Meeting. Districts shall hold at least two (2) regular meetings each year for purposes of transacting business and conducting schools of instruction.

Special Meeting. Special meetings will be called in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Manual of Procedure. No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that for which the meeting was called.

Committee Meeting. Meetings called by District Committee Chairmen, or as authorized by the District Bylaws, for the purpose of conducting the business of that committee.

Convention. Each District shall hold an annual District Convention for the purpose of electing District officers and for the transaction of business; such Convention to be held not less than ten (10) days nor more than seventy-five (75) days prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

Quorum. The minimum number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at District meetings and Conventions shall not be less than one (1) delegate each from fifty (50) percent of Posts in the District.

Electronic Attendance. Members may be allowed to participate in meetings using technology that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.

Authorized Attendees. Any member, not a member of the District Convention, may attend the Convention, however, they shall have no voice in business discussions unless requested by the Commander, and shall have no voting privileges. Those on official business shall be recognized by the Commander for the conduct of business.

Sec. 404 - Governing Body; Composition.

Each District shall be governed by a District Convention. The District Convention and District meetings shall consist of:

1. The Commander-in-Chief and Past Commanders-in-Chief who are members in good standing in a Post in the District.
2. The National Council of Administration member who is in good standing in a Post in the District.
3. The Department Commander and Past Department Commanders who are members in good standing in a Post in the District.
4. The District Commander, all Past District Commanders who are members in good standing in a Post in the District, all elected officers of the District and the Adjutant.

Should any District's geographical boundaries be changed, due to redistricting, any Past District Commander, who is a member in good standing, in a Post, within the geographical boundaries of the District the Commander was elected from and served to the end of the term as District Commander shall retain the title, recognition and any privilege the District Commander may otherwise be entitled to, including voting.

5. All County Council Commanders (if applicable) throughout the District.
6. All Post Commanders throughout the District. In the absence of the Post Commander, the Post Senior Vice Commander, or, in their absence the Post Junior Vice Commander may function as a member of the Convention or meetings.
7. Delegates to be elected by the Posts as prescribed in Section 222 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 405

Sec. 406 - District Dues.

Delegates assembled at a District Convention, providing notice has been given to each Post thirty (30) days in advance of pending proposal, may assess or increase annual dues per member per Post.

Sec. 407

Sec. 408

Sec. 409

Sec. 410 - Surrender of Charter.

Voluntary Surrender. A District may voluntarily surrender its charter only upon a vote at a District convention conducted in accordance with the procedures herein set forth. A proposition to surrender the charter must be made at a meeting of the District at least four (4) weeks before the convening of the District Convention and due notice of the proposition must be given, in writing, to every Post in the District, and to the Department Commander. If a majority of the Posts vote to surrender the Charter, the District Commander shall, within thirty (30) days, notify the Department Commander of such action and unless the Department Commander during said thirty (30) day period receives a demand in writing from two-thirds (2/3) of the Posts in the District to continue the District, the cancellation or revocation of the District Charter shall be effected by requesting the Commander-in-Chief to cancel or revoke the Charter.

Sec. 411 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.

- (a) **Actions by the Department Commander—Suspension.** The Department Commander may suspend a District Charter.
- (b) **Actions by the Department Convention—Revocation.** The Department Convention may cancel or revoke a District Charter.
- (c) **Establishment of an Administrative Committee.** Upon the imposition of any suspension under this section, the Department Commander shall establish an administrative committee as prescribed in Section 411 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 412 - Defunct Districts.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 410, if and when the Posts in good standing in a District are less than five (5) in number, the District's charter may be canceled by the Department Convention.

Disposition of Property. In all cases of surrender, revocation or forfeiture of a charter, title to all real and personal property shall immediately pass to the Department who shall take possession and control for disposition as directed by the Department Council of Administration for the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter. In addition, the books and records of the District shall be recovered by the Department.

In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, the Department Council of Administration in the case of trust funds or trust property, or both, shall carry out the intent and purpose of such trust to the extent of such funds or property, or both.

Sec. 413 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.

The Commander of the District in arrears for financial obligations to Department or National, for fees, dues, poppy money, supply money, or failing to have the office of the Quartermaster properly bonded in accordance with Section 703, failing to ensure that the District is properly insured in accordance with Section 709, failing to submit properly completed District Trustees Report of Audit, District Election Report for the ensuing year, or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation at the Department Convention. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

A properly completed District Election Report shall be submitted to National Headquarters prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

Sec. 414 - Solicitation of Funds.

Districts shall be permitted to solicit funds or donations only as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 415 - Eligibility to Office.

Any member in a Post in the District shall be eligible to any office in the District; provided that no member shall hold two (2) elected District offices at the same time, but may hold one (1) elected and one (1) or more appointed offices. District officers, elected or appointed, shall be eligible to hold office in a higher or lower body, and such offices may be held concurrently, except as provided for in Section 515 of these Bylaws.

District Trustees shall not be eligible to serve on committees or as officers having to do with the receipt and expenditure of District funds whose records and accounts are audited by the Trustees.

Any officer or committee member whose membership is not in good standing by reason of failure to pay current dues by their anniversary date shall forfeit eligibility to hold any office during that administrative year.

Any member who is suspended from membership, pursuant to Article IX, shall forfeit eligibility to hold any office or committee membership during the period of suspension.

Sec. 416 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The elected officers of each District shall consist of a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, and three (3) Trustees.

- (b) The Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Chaplain, Benefits Advisor and Inspector.
- (c) The District may elect or the District Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff or Officer of the Day if required by the District Bylaws.
- (d) The District Commander may appoint such other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the District or as may be required by District Bylaws.

Sec. 417 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

The elected District officers shall be nominated and elected annually at the District Convention. Nomination, election and installation shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

An officer elected and assuming the duties of office shall continue to hold office for the period for which elected and until a successor assumes the duties of the office unless the office is declared vacant under the provisions of Sections 416 or 420 of these Bylaws. An officer or committee member must remain in good standing in a Post in the District, otherwise they forfeit the office and the office shall be vacated.

Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations.

District officers, elected and appointed, shall have such duties and obligations as prescribed in these Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 419

Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.

Vacancies. All vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the District shall be filled in accordance with Section 420 of the Manual of Procedure at the next regular or special meeting-as prescribed in Section 403 of the Manual of Procedure.

Removal. Elected officers or committee members can be removed as prescribed in Section 420 of the Manual of Procedure. If elected officers and committee members removed in accordance with this section hold more than one elected office and there is cause to remove them from additional offices, each removal shall be treated separately by issuance of a unique Special Order.

The Department Commander may, with respect to any District within the Department, remove any District officer who fails to fulfill the duties of office as required by Section 418.

Any District officer removed by the Commander-in-Chief by the reason of failure to pay current dues or under the provisions of this section, shall not be eligible to serve in any District office in the same administrative year in which the officer is removed.

Sec. 421 - Voting.

Each member of a District Convention or District meeting are those persons as defined in Section 404, except delegates elected by the Posts, present at a District Convention or meeting shall be entitled to one vote, and an individual possessing more than one qualification for membership in the District Convention or meeting shall have no more than one vote. The delegate or delegates of a Post present at a District Convention or meeting shall be entitled to vote the full delegate strength to which the Post is entitled.

Should there be a division among the delegates representing the Post, each delegate present and voting shall cast their pro rata share of the total voting strength of the Post. For the purpose of this section, a Post Commander shall be considered a delegate.

A roll call vote may be required and entered upon the record at the call of any three officers or delegates representing three different Posts.

(End of Article IV)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 501 - Formation, Institution and Chartering.

Formation. When twenty-five (25) or more Posts with a total membership of at least one thousand (1,000) have been organized in any State, Territory, Foreign Possession or Country, a new Department may be chartered in said State, Territory, Foreign Possession or Country.

Institution. Each new Department shall be instituted within sixty (60) days of the date the charter application is approved by the Commander-in-Chief. If not instituted within sixty (60) days from the date of approval, said approval may be rescinded.

Chartering. Charters of Departments shall be authorized by the Commander-in-Chief.

Sec. 502 - Bylaws.

The Department Convention shall adopt or may amend Bylaws governing the Department as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure, provided such Bylaws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Sec. 503 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Each Department shall hold one Convention each year, which shall begin no earlier than ninety days prior to the convening of the National Convention and shall be concluded no less than thirty (30) days prior to the conclusion of the National Convention.

The Department Bylaws may specify the minimum number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a Department Convention, provided that in no case shall the quorum be less than one delegate each from ten Posts in the Department.

Any member in good standing or one on official business may visit a Department Convention; however, such visitor shall have no voice in business discussions unless recognized by the Commander, and shall have no voting privileges. Those on official business shall be recognized by the Commander for the conduct of business.

The Department Council of Administration or Department Convention may allow delegates to participate in meetings using technology that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.

Sec. 504 - Governing Body; Composition.

Each Department shall be governed by a Department Convention. The Department Convention shall consist of:

1. The Commander-in-Chief and Past Commanders-in-Chief who are members in good standing in a Post within the Department.

2. The National Council Member, the Department Commander, all Past Department Commanders who are members in good standing in a Post within the Department; all elected officers of the Department, Chief of Staff, Inspector, and the Adjutant.
3. All District Commanders throughout the Department. In the absence of the District Commander, the District Senior Vice Commander, or, in the Senior Vice Commander's absence, the District Junior Vice Commander may be registered and function as a member of the Convention.
4. All Post Commanders throughout the Department. In the absence of the Post Commander, the Post Senior Vice Commander, or, in the Senior Vice Commander's absence, the Post Junior Vice Commander may be registered and function as a member of the Convention.
5. Delegates to be elected by the Posts.

Sec. 505

Sec. 506 - Department Dues.

Each Department Convention at its annual session shall assess Department dues of not less than fifty cents per annum on each member in good standing in each and every Post within its jurisdiction or as otherwise provided for in Department Bylaws.

Sec. 507

Sec. 508

Sec. 509 - Consolidation of Departments.

Two or more Departments may consolidate upon recommendation of the Department Conventions and approval of the Commander-in-Chief as prescribed in Section 509 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 510 - Surrender of Charter.

A Department may voluntarily surrender its charter only upon a vote at a Department Convention conducted in accordance with the procedures as prescribed in Section 510 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 511 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.

- (a) **Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Suspension.** The Commander-in-Chief may suspend a Department Charter for a period of up to six (6) months for violations of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.
- (b) **Establishment of an Administrative Committee.** Upon the imposition of any suspension under this section, the Commander-in-Chief shall establish an administrative committee as prescribed in Section 511 of the Manual of Procedure.
- (c) **Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Revocation.** The Commander-in-Chief may revoke the charter of a Department.
- (d) **Property and Funds.** Disposition of property and trust funds shall be as prescribed in Section 512 of the Bylaws.

Sec. 512 - Defunct Departments.

The Commander-in-Chief shall revoke a Department's Charter and declare it defunct if such Department has less than ten (10) Posts.

Disposition of Property. In all cases of surrender, revocation or forfeiture of a charter, title to all real and personal property shall immediately pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. who shall take possession and control for disposition as directed by the National Council of Administration for the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter.

In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, the National Council of Administration in the case of trust funds or trust property, or both, shall carry out the intent and purpose of such trust to the extent of such funds or property, or both.

Sec. 513 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.

The Commander of a Department in arrears for National dues payments, Buddy Poppy money, supply money or other financial obligations or failing to have the office of Quartermaster bonded, or failing to submit annual budgets, IRS Form 990 or Department Election Reports will be deprived of all representation at the National Convention. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

A properly completed Department Election Report shall be submitted to National Headquarters prior to the convening of the National Convention.

Sec. 514 - Solicitation of Funds.

Departments shall be permitted to solicit funds or donations only as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 515 - Eligibility to Office.

Any member in good standing in a chartered Post in the Department shall be eligible to any office in the Department, provided, no member shall hold two elected Department offices at the same time, but may hold one elected and one or more appointed offices. Elected committee members are not Department officers and accordingly may concurrently hold an elected Department Office as provided for in Section 516 of these Bylaws. Department officers, elected or appointed, may be eligible to hold office in a higher or lower body, and such offices may be held concurrently. District Commanders shall be ineligible to simultaneously hold an elected Department office.

Any officer or committee member whose membership is not in good standing by reason of failure to pay current dues by their anniversary date shall forfeit eligibility to hold any office or committee membership during that administrative year.

Any member who is suspended from membership, pursuant to Article IX, shall forfeit eligibility to hold any office or committee membership during the period of suspension.

Sec. 516 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The elected officers of each Department shall be a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster and Chaplain.
- (b) The Department Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Inspector and Service Officer.

- (c) The Department may elect or the Department Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff or Officer of the Day if so required by Department Bylaws.
- (d) The Department Commander may appoint such chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Department or as may be required by Department Bylaws.
- (e) With respect to salaried officers, the appointment shall be made subject to the confirmation of a majority vote of the Department Council of Administration.

Sec. 517 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

With the exception of District Commanders, Department officers shall be nominated, elected or appointed and installed as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

An officer elected and installed shall continue to hold office for the period for which elected and until a successor is installed unless the office is earlier declared vacant under the provisions of Sections 516 or 520 of these Bylaws. Appointed officers and appointed committee members shall hold office during the pleasure of the appointing officer. An officer or committee member must remain in good standing in a Post in the Department, otherwise they forfeit the office and the office shall be declared vacant.

Sec. 518 - Officers: Duties and Obligations.

The Department officers, elected and appointed, shall have such duties and obligations as prescribed in these Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 519

Sec. 520 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.

Vacancies. All vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the Department shall be filled by the Department Council of Administration by nominating and electing at the next regular or special meeting as prescribed in Section 520 of the Manual of Procedure.

Removal. The Department Commander or Department Council of Administration may remove an elected officer, elected committee member or appointed salaried officer as prescribed in Section 520 of the Manual of Procedure. If elected officers and committee members removed in accordance with this section hold more than one elected office and there is cause to remove them from additional offices, each removal shall be treated separately by issuance of a unique Special Order.

Any Department officer removed by the Commander-in-Chief by the reason of failure to pay current dues or under the provisions of this section, shall not be eligible to serve in any Department office in the same administrative year in which the officer is removed.

Sec. 521 - Voting.

Each member of the Department Convention as those persons are defined in Section 504, except delegates elected by the Posts, present at a meeting of the Convention shall be entitled to one vote, and an individual possessing more than one qualification for membership in the Department Convention shall have no more than one vote. The delegate or delegates of a Post present at a meeting of the Department Convention shall be entitled to vote the full delegate strength to which the Post is entitled.

The Post Commander, or the Senior or Junior Vice Commander functioning in their place as a member of the Convention, may, at their option, choose to vote as a delegate rather than as a Post Commander. Should there be a division among delegates representing the Post, each delegate present and voting shall cast their pro rata share of the total delegate voting strength of the Post. A roll call may be required and entered upon the record of the Department Convention at the call of at least three officers or delegates representing at least three different Posts.

Sec. 522 - Council of Administration—Composition, Powers and Duties.

- (a) **Composition.** The Council of Administration of a Department shall consist of the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Adjutant, Quartermaster, Chaplain and District Commanders. In the absence of a District Commander the District Senior Vice Commander and in the absence of the District Senior Vice Commander, the District Junior Vice Commander may function as a member of the Council of Administration. The immediate Past Department Commander shall also be a member of the Department Council of Administration. If provided in Department Bylaws, the Judge Advocate, Chief of Staff, Inspector or Surgeon may be members of the Department Council of Administration. In the Departments of Alaska, Hawaii and Europe, the Commanders of all Posts in good standing shall be voting members of the Department Council of Administration. Other Departments having a membership of 9,500 or less may adopt Bylaws to include all Post Commanders as voting members of the Department Council of Administration. Also the four (4) immediate Past Department Commanders may be voting members of the Council of Administration, on the condition that the Bylaws adopted by the Department Convention so provide.
- (b) **Administration of Affairs Between Conventions.** The Department Council of Administration shall be responsible for administering the affairs and transacting the business of the Department between Department Conventions. The Council shall be governed in its duties by the mandates of the National Convention, the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual and laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as well as by the mandates of the Department Convention, Charter and Bylaws.
- (c) **Budget.** The Council of Administration shall approve an annual budget by October 31 covering the financial operations of the Department for the ensuing year. The Council of Administration shall have the power to establish the compensation of all Department officers and employees.
- (d) **Audits-Accounts.** The Council of Administration may authorize an audit of the accounts of all Department officers.
- (e) **Disposition of Property.** In the case of surrender or forfeiture of a Post or District charter, the Department Council of Administration shall have the authority to make disposition of all proper ties in accordance with Sections 210 and 410 and its action therein shall be final.
- (f) **Regular Meetings.** The Council of Administration shall meet in regular session not less than twice each year and shall hold such other meetings as the Department Bylaws may provide.
- (g) **Special Meetings.** The Department Commander may call a special meeting of the Council of Administration whenever the same may be necessary for the welfare of the Department. The Department Commander shall call a special meeting upon written request signed by a majority of the members of the Department Council of Administration.

In case the Department Commander refuses to call such meeting, the Department Council of Administration may proceed to hold such meeting, due notice of which shall be sent to all members of the Council of Administration by the Department Adjutant not later than ten (10) days prior to the date of said meeting. No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that business for which the meeting is called, as set forth in the notice.

- (h) **Time and Place.** Meetings of the Department Council of Administration shall be held at such times and places as the Department Bylaws may provide, or as may be provided by majority vote of the Council. Special meetings shall be called at such times and places as may be decided by the Department Commander, except in case of a special meeting ordered by a majority request of the Council of Administration, which shall be held at such time and place as may be determined by those requesting the meeting.
- (i) **Quorum.** A majority of the members of the Council of Administration shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- (j) **Voting.** Each member of the Council of Administration present and voting at a meeting shall be entitled to one vote. On matters requiring action by the Department Council of Administration between regular meetings, the Department Commander may direct the Department Adjutant to conduct mail ballots, the results of such mail ballots shall be reported for the record at the next regular meeting.
- (k) Any valid action taken by the Council of Administration in the performance of its duties shall be effective upon passage and shall remain in effect until such time as it may be terminated or superseded by the Council of Administration or by a Department Convention acting within the limits of its own authority.

(End of Article V)

ARTICLE VI - NATIONAL

Sec. 601 - Formation.

The National organization shall be formed in accordance with the Congressional Charter.

Sec. 602 - Bylaws.

These Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure may only be amended as prescribed in Section 1401.

Sec. 603 - Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

The regular meeting of the National Convention shall be held annually between July 1 and September 1, at such time and place as shall have been determined previously by the National Council of Administration, which shall have full power to act in selecting a Convention city. Annual National Convention sites may be designated by the Council of Administration five years in advance of the next annual Convention date.

The minimum number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business shall be accredited delegates from a majority of all Departments.

Unless attendance of other persons is authorized by the Commander-in-Chief or by a vote of the Convention, only members of the National Organization may attend the National Convention.

The National Council of Administration or National Convention may allow delegates to participate in meetings using technology that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.

Sec. 604 - Governing Body; Composition.

The supreme power of this Organization shall be lodged in the National Convention. The National Convention shall consist of:

1. The Commander-in-Chief and Past Commanders-in-Chief and all other elected National officers, the Adjutant General, Inspector General and Chief of Staff who are members in good standing in their respective Posts.
2. Council of Administration *Department* members.
3. Department Commanders. In the absence of the Department Commander, the Department Senior Vice Commander, or, in the Department Senior Vice Commander's absence, the Department Junior Vice Commander may be registered and function as a member of the National Convention.
4. Elected Post delegates.

Sec. 605

Sec. 606 - National Dues.

The National Organization dues shall be \$21.50 for every member (except Life Members) of a Post in good standing, which includes an annual subscription to the VFW Magazine.

When collected, \$18.50 of the National dues will be retained by the National Organization, \$1.00 will be rebated back to the Department to which the member belongs and \$2.00 distributed as outlined in Section 606 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 607

Sec. 608

Sec. 609

Sec. 610

Sec. 611

Sec. 612

Sec. 613 - National Headquarters.

The National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be situated in Kansas City, Missouri.

Sec. 614 - Solicitation of Funds.

No funds or donations shall be solicited by the National Organization except by prior action of the National Convention or the National Council of Administration.

Sec. 615 - Eligibility to Office.

Any member in good standing in a Post shall be eligible for any National Organization office, provided that no member shall hold two (2) elected National Organization offices at the same time but may hold one (1) elected and one (1) or more appointed National Organization offices. National officers elected or appointed shall be eligible to hold office in a lower body, and such offices may be held concurrently. National Council members shall be ineligible to simultaneously hold an elected National office.

No Past Commander-in-Chief shall be eligible for appointment to a paid National position or office within the organization until a minimum of five (5) years has elapsed since their official departure date as the Commander-in-Chief. A Past Commander-in-Chief remains eligible to hold all elected positions within the organization for which they are otherwise eligible.

Sec. 616 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The elected officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be the Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Quartermaster General, Chaplain, Judge Advocate General and Surgeon General.
- (b) The Commander-in-Chief shall appoint an Adjutant General, Chief of Staff, Inspector General, and Sergeant-at-Arms and other such officers and committee chairmen as may be necessary.

Sec. 617 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

The elected National officers shall be nominated, elected and installed as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

An officer, elected and installed, shall continue to hold office for the period for which elected and until a successor is installed unless the position is declared vacant pursuant to the terms of Section 620 of these Bylaws or Manual of Procedure. An appointed officer shall hold office during the pleasure of the appointing power. In either case the elected or appointed officer must remain a member in good standing in a chartered Post.

Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year. National Officers shall assume their duties at the close of the National Convention.

Sec. 618 - Officers: Duties and Obligations.

- (a) **Commander-in-Chief:** Among the duties of the Commander-in-Chief, the Commander-in-Chief shall:
 - (1) Preside at all meetings of the National Convention and Council of Administration, conducting such conventions and meetings in accordance with Article X of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and other applicable parliamentary procedures.
 - (2) Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Ritual and Manual of Procedure and

all lawful orders and mandates of the National Convention and National Council of Administration.

- (3) Decide all questions of law and usage, subject to such appeal as may be made pursuant to these Bylaws.
 - (4) Issue such orders as are necessary and appropriate to carry out their duties.
 - (5) Insist that the business and activities of the organization are conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation or bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment on this organization.
 - (6) Immediately upon entering office, appoint the Adjutant General who shall be a full-time salaried officer of the organization, subject to the approval of two-thirds of the members of the National Council of Administration.
 - (7) Immediately upon entering office, appoint the Chief of Staff, Inspector General, and Sergeant-at-Arms and all other officers, Aides-de-Camp, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for.
 - (8) Approve and sign, or authorize the Adjutant General to approve and sign, vouchers for expenditure of funds before the same shall be paid.
 - (9) Assure that good and sufficient security in the sum approved by the National Council of Administration is given by the Quartermaster General.
 - (10) Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and that all business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is handled with dispatch.
 - (11) Assure that the Adjutant General and all other officers, committee chairmen, committee members and employees appointed by the Commander-in-Chief perform their respective duties in accordance with these Bylaws.
 - (12) Call a meeting of the National Council of Administration not more than ninety (90) days after the adjournment of the National Convention for the purpose of adopting the annual budget and the transaction of any business which may properly come before the National Council of Administration. Other meetings of the National Council of Administration may be called as the Commander-in-Chief deems advisable.
 - (13) Cause the Adjutant General to issue proper credentials to all elected and appointed National officers, aides and other subordinate officers.
 - (14) Assure that eligible members are encouraged to join and maintain membership. The Commander-in-Chief may order a review of applications for membership to assure that eligibility has been properly determined.
 - (15) Perform such other duties as are incident to such office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or by the National Convention, National Council of Administration or these Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure. Failure without just cause to perform these duties may result in removal from office.
- (b) **Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief:** The Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall discharge the duties of the Commander-in-Chief in the event of the Commander-in-Chief's disability or inability to perform them, preside in the absence of the Commander-in-Chief, assist the Commander-in-Chief in preserving order, provide such advice and assistance as may be required, and perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority. Failure without just cause to perform these duties may result in removal from office.
- (c) **Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief:** The Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall preside in the absence of the Commander-in-Chief and the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, assist the Commander-in-Chief in preserving order, provide such advice and assistance as may be required, and perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or

lawful orders from proper authority. Failure without just cause to perform these duties may result in removal from office.

(d) Quartermaster General: Among the duties of the Quartermaster General, the Quartermaster General shall:

- (1) Upon entering into office, may appoint an Assistant Quartermaster General who shall be a full-time salaried officer of the organization, subject to the approval of two-thirds of the members of the National Council of Administration.
- (2) Have charge of all employees of the Quartermaster General's staff for the Kansas City and Washington offices and supervise the Quartermaster General's operations at both offices. Immediately upon entering into office, appoint Directors who shall be full-time salaried employees of the organization. The Quartermaster General may employ such other personnel as may be necessary or appropriate.
- (3) Have charge of the funds, securities and other property of the organization, all of which shall be placed in the Quartermaster General's care. The Quartermaster General shall be the accountable officer of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Treasurer of all committees handling funds.
- (4) Have charge of, and manage, all real property of this organization.
- (5) Keep a correct account of all monies due and payable to this organization from any source and give such written receipts as may be required.
- (6) Disburse funds as authorized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, using accepted banking practices, and keep a record of such disbursements.
- (7) Keep a record of all liabilities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (8) Have charge of the Emblem and Supply Department and the Insurance Department under the direction of the National Council of Administration.
- (9) The books and records of the Quartermaster shall be maintained in a legible and uniform format to include reconciliation and verification of all transactions listed on all bank statements to assure the accuracy of National records. Unless authorized by the National Council of Administration to remove such books and records from its facilities, all such books and records shall be kept at the National Headquarters.

Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a secure back-up system is in place. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and National Council members at all reasonable times.
- (10) Prepare a quarterly report for the National Council of Administration and provide copies thereof to the Department Commanders. Prepare other reports as directed by the National Council of Administration or the National Convention.
- (11) Prepare for the Adjutant General a list showing the Posts in good standing and the number of delegates to which each Post is entitled before each National Convention.
- (12) Give good and sufficient security in a sum to be approved by the National Council of Administration for the faithful discharge of the duties.
- (13) Receive such compensation for services as the National Council of Administration may from time to time determine.
- (14) Prepare a tentative budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. Said budget shall set forth all anticipated income and estimated expense. Restricted funds shall be budgeted separately in every instance, and the budget shall be in balance. Final action must be taken on the adoption of the budget at the first regular meeting of the National Council of Administration and, when adopted, the budget shall be the expenditure guide for the ensuing year. Not later than thirty (30) days after the first meeting of the National Council of Administration, the

Quartermaster General shall forward to all Department Commanders a detailed copy of the National budget adopted by the National Council of Administration for their information.

- (15) Perform other duties as are incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or by the National Convention, National Council of Administration or these Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure. Failure without just cause to perform these duties may result in removal from office.
 - (16) Provide access and transfer to the successor in office or anyone designated by higher authority, without delay, all books, records, papers, monies, securities and other property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in possession or under control of said office.
- (e) **Assistant Quartermaster General:** Among the duties of the Assistant Quartermaster General, the Assistant Quartermaster General shall:
- (1) Discharge all duties delegated by the Quartermaster General.
 - (2) During the absence of the Quartermaster General, discharge the duties of Quartermaster General to the extent designated by the Quartermaster General.
 - (3) Discharge the duties of the Quartermaster General in the event of the Quartermaster General's inability to perform them except that the Assistant Quartermaster General shall not serve as a member of the National Council of Administration.
 - (4) Give good and sufficient security in a sum approved by the National Council of Administration for faithful discharge of the duties.
 - (5) Receive such compensation for services as the National Council of Administration may from time to time determine.
- (f) **Adjutant General:** Among the duties of the Adjutant General, the Adjutant General shall:
- (1) Immediately upon entering into office, appoint Assistant Adjutants General who shall be full-time salaried officers of the organization, subject to the approval of two-thirds of the members of the National Council of Administration.
 - (2) Have charge of all employees of the Adjutant General's staff for the Kansas City and Washington offices and supervise the Adjutant General's operations at both offices. Immediately upon entering office, appoint Directors who shall be full-time salaried employees of the organization. The Adjutant General may employ such other personnel as may be necessary or appropriate to fulfill the duties.
 - (3) Under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief, conduct all correspondence on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the official corresponding officer, attesting to all official communications and reports with the Adjutant General's signature and seal.
 - (4) Under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief, issue all necessary and appropriate orders.
 - (5) Keep correct records and minutes of the proceedings of the National Convention and the National Council of Administration and preserve and distribute copies of same as directed. The Adjutant General shall call the roll or, under the Adjutant General's supervision, cause same to be called at all official meetings and shall read to the body assembled, or cause to be read under the Adjutant General's supervision, all official communications, resolutions or other information pertinent to the meeting and consistent with the records of the Adjutant General's office. Abstracts of the business transacted will be submitted to all Department Commanders not later than sixty (60) days after meetings of the National Council of Administration.
 - (6) Under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief, conduct such programs and provide such services as are directed by the National Convention, the

- Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration.
- (7) Prepare such books and forms as may be required for the use of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
 - (8) Maintain such records, files and lists as may be necessary for the efficient conduct of the business of the organization, including, but not limited to, general and special orders, copies of proof of eligibility submitted pursuant to Section 616, a current roster of the names and addresses of all National, Department and Post officers and other records as may be directed by the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration. Record keeping by electronic means may be used.
 - (9) Receive as compensation for services such sum as the National Council of Administration may from time to time determine.
 - (10) Perform other duties as are incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or by the National Convention, National Council of Administration or these Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure. Failure without just cause to perform these duties may result in removal from office.
 - (11) Provide access and transfer to the successor in office or anyone designated by higher authority, without delay, all books, records, papers, monies, securities and other property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in possession or under control of said office.
- (g) **Assistant Adjutants General:** Assistant Adjutants General shall discharge the duties delegated to them by the Adjutant General and as directed by the Commander-in-Chief. They shall perform other duties as are incident to the office or may be required of them by the laws and usages of the organization, the National Convention, the National Council of Administration, these Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure.
- (h) **Chaplain:** The National Chaplain shall be concerned with the spiritual needs of the members and by precept and example point the way toward a high moral plane for the organization. The Chaplain will be familiar with the Ritual and shall conduct the annual memorial service held in connection with the National Convention. The Chaplain shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (i) **Judge Advocate General:** The Judge Advocate General shall give the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration such legal assistance and counsel and perform such other duties as may be incident to office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (j) **Chief of Staff:** Under the supervision of the Commander-in-Chief, the Chief of Staff shall perform the duties incident to office as the Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration may require and such other duties as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (k) **Inspector General:** Under the supervision of the Commander-in-Chief, the Inspector General shall perform the duties incident to office as the Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration may require and such other duties as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (l) **Surgeon General:** The Surgeon General shall perform the duties properly pertaining to the office and such other duties as may be incident to office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

- (m) **Sergeant-at-Arms:** Under the supervision of the Commander-in-Chief, the Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms shall perform the duties incident to their office as the Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration may require and such other duties as may from time to time be required of them by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (n) **Other Officers:** Other officers shall have such powers and duties as may be provided in the Bylaws, the Manual of Procedure or may be assigned by the National Convention, National Council of Administration or the Commander-in-Chief.

Sec. 619 - National Committees.

There shall be the following National committees:

- a. National Veterans Service Advisory Committee.
- b. National Committee on Awards and Citations.
- c. National Legislative Committee.

The Commander-in-Chief may establish such other committees as may be appropriate to properly conduct the affairs of the National Organization and disband such other committees as may be appropriate. The Commander-in-Chief may appoint the committee chairmen and members and remove them at the Commander-in-Chief's pleasure.

(a) National Veterans Service Advisory Committee.

- (1) **Composition:** The National Veterans Service Advisory Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the four immediate Past Commanders-in-Chief. Whenever a Commander-in-Chief shall retire at the end of the term, the Commander-in-Chief shall thereupon become a member of the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee and the senior Past Commander-in-Chief shall thereupon retire from the Committee.
- (2) Under the supervision of the National Council of Administration, and subject to provisions of the National Bylaws and orders of the National Convention, the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee shall establish the policy under which the Veterans Service work of the organization shall be conducted and may thereto make appropriate budget recommendations.
- (3) The National Veterans Service Advisory Committee shall establish the practice and procedures for representation by service officers accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs or other federal government agencies through the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (4) All welfare, poppy and service monies allocated to Veterans Service work shall be kept in a separate fund and disbursed as prescribed in Section 618(d) of these Bylaws.
- (5) Departments may provide in their Bylaws the means of organization and control of their respective Veterans Service work.

(b) National Committee on Awards and Citations.

- (1) **Composition:** The National Committee on Awards and Citations shall consist of five (5) members appointed by the Commander-in-Chief, subject to confirmation by the National Council of Administration, with the Commander-in-Chief serving as an ex-officio member. One member shall be appointed each year for a five-year term. The Commander-in-Chief shall designate the Chairman each year.
- (2) The National Committee on Awards and Citations shall determine the name, title, type and style of each authorized award or citation, the qualifications and/or accomplishments of the suggested recipients and shall make recommendations with respect thereto to the National Council of Administration for its approval.

(c) National Legislative Committee.

- (1) **Composition:** The National Legislative Committee shall consist of committee members appointed by each Department Commander with the approval of the Commander-in-Chief. Department Commanders shall receive one committee appointment for every eight members of the federal Congressional delegation for the states and/or territories that comprise the Department. Appointments to the committee must be approved by the current Department Commander, the current Department Senior Vice Commander, and the current Department Junior Vice Commander. Committee members shall be appointed to a three-year term with one-third of the committee receiving appointments each year. The Commander-in-Chief shall select a chairman for the committee and shall consult the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and immediate Past Commander-in-Chief on selection of vice chairs. The Commander-in-Chief may remove committee members for failure to discharge their duties or for other conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline.
- (2) **Duties:** The National Legislative Committee shall formally meet twice each year in Washington, D.C. to conduct training and advance the VFW legislative priority goals in accordance with the organization's legislative and welfare programs and policies approved by the National Convention. Committee members shall continually advance the VFW legislative priority goals in their home states and territories between formal meetings and shall complete activity reports for submission to the Adjutant General or the Adjutant General's duly appointed authority in the VFW Washington office. The Commander-in-Chief may call additional meetings of the committee or promulgate General Orders necessary to the committee for the effective discharge of its business. Committee members shall discharge all duties in compliance with Section 702 of the National Bylaws.

Sec. 620 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.

Vacancies. All vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the National organization will be filled as prescribed in Section 620 of the Manual of Procedure.

Removal. Elected officers or committee members can be removed as prescribed in Section 620 of the Manual of Procedure. If elected officers and committee members removed in accordance with this section hold more than one elected office and there is cause to remove them from additional offices, each removal shall be treated separately by issuance of a unique Special Order.

The Commander-in-Chief may, with a two-thirds vote of the National Council of Administration, remove any elected National officer or appointed salaried officer who fails, without just cause, to fulfill the duties of office as required by Section 618.

Any National officer removed by the Commander-in-Chief for reason of failure to pay current dues or under the provisions of this section, shall not be eligible to serve in any National office in the same administrative year in which the officer is removed.

Sec. 621 - Voting.

Each member of the National Convention as those persons are defined in Section 604, except delegates elected by the Posts, present at a meeting of the National Convention will be entitled to one (1) vote, and an individual possessing more than one (1) qualification for membership in the National Convention shall have no more than one vote. The delegate or delegates of a Post present at a meeting of the National Convention shall be entitled to vote

the full delegate strength to which the Post is entitled. The Department Commander shall be vested and directed to cast the entire voting strength of their Department, subject to the will of the delegation present. A roll call vote may be required and entered upon the record at the call of any ten (10) delegates from Posts in separate Departments. Procedure not outlined herein shall be according to rules of procedure adopted by the National Convention or according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Sec. 622 - National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties.

- (a) **Composition:** There will be a National Council of Administration which shall consist of all elected National Officers, the Adjutant General, Chief of Staff, Inspector General, the immediate past Commander-in-Chief and members elected by Departments as prescribed in Section 623 of the Bylaws.
- (b) **Powers and Duties:**
 - (1) **Administration of Affairs Between Conventions:** The National Council of Administration shall be responsible for administering the affairs and transacting the business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in the intervals between conventions. The Council shall be governed in its duties by the mandates of the National Convention and by the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual and laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
 - (2) **Budget:** The National Council of Administration shall, at a regular meeting not more than ninety (90) days following the National Convention, approve and adopt an annual budget. The National Council of Administration shall have full power to fix salaries of all officers and employees of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
 - (3) **Audits—Accounts:** The National Council of Administration shall have the power to audit the accounts of the National officers and/or employees and require that the records and accounts of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General be audited at least once annually by a Certified Public Accountant (firm).
 - (4) **Disposition of Property:** In the case of surrender or forfeiture of the charter of a Department, the National Council of Administration shall have the authority to make disposition of all proper ties accrued from such Department, and its actions therein shall be final. The National Council of Administration shall have full power, by resolution, to authorize the purchase by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of real estate deemed necessary and incidental for the corporate purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and to authorize the sale and conveyance of any real estate owned by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. They may direct the execution by the Commander-in-Chief, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, of any deeds or other documents necessary to convey title to a purchaser, pursuant to such resolution, any such deed or document to have the seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States affixed and to be attested by the Quartermaster General.
 - (5) **Manual of Procedure:** It shall be the duty of the National Council of Administration to adopt, amend and promulgate a Manual of Procedure and provisions and amendments thereto for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States not inconsistent with these Bylaws. The Manual of Procedure or amendments adopted by the National Council of Administration may also be amended or deleted by a majority vote of the National Convention as prescribed in Section 1401 of the Manual of Procedure.

- (6) **Ritual:** It shall be the duty of the National Council of Administration to adopt, amend and promulgate a Ritual for governmental and ceremonial purposes. The Ritual may also be amended or deleted by a majority vote of the National Convention.
- (7) **Regular Meetings:** The National Council of Administration shall meet in regular session not less than twice each year.
- (8) **Special Meetings:** The Commander-in-Chief may call a special meeting of the National Council of Administration whenever the same may be necessary for the welfare of the National Organization. The Commander-in-Chief shall call a special meeting upon written request signed by a majority of the members of the National Council of Administration. In case the Commander-in-Chief refuses to call such meeting, the National Council of Administration may proceed to hold such meeting, due notice of which shall be sent to all members of the National Council of Administration by the Adjutant General not later than ten (10) days prior to the date of said meeting.
- The meeting shall be convened within thirty (30) days after the request is submitted to the Commander-in-Chief. When a special meeting of the National Council of Administration is to be held by order of the Commander-in-Chief or upon the call of the members of the National Council of Administration acting within authority conferred by this section, it shall be the duty of the Quartermaster General to pay to the members of the Council of Administration minimum necessary expenses required to attend the special meeting, wherever it may be held.
- (9) **Time and Place:** Regular and special meetings, shall be conducted in Kansas City, Missouri, except that one meeting may be held in such other place as the council shall determine, and except such meetings as may be held in the National Convention city immediately prior to and subsequent to the National Convention.
- (10) **Quorum:** A majority of the members of the National Council of Administration shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- (11) **Proceedings:** The National Council of Administration shall keep a full and detailed record of its proceedings and shall submit to its members and Department Commanders abstracts of its proceedings.
- (12) **Voting:** Each member of the National Council of Administration present and voting at a meeting shall be entitled to one vote. If requested by at least 15 members of the council, a roll call vote shall be taken. Each council member shall receive a pro-rata share of votes based on one per 25,000 members or fraction thereof, based on the Quartermaster General's records as of June 30. On matters requiring action by the National Council of Administration between regular meetings, the Commander-in-Chief may direct the Adjutant General to conduct mail ballots, the results of such mail ballots shall be reported for the record at the next regular meeting.
- (13) Any valid action taken by the National Council of Administration in the performance of its duties shall be effective upon passage and shall remain in effect until such time as it may be terminated or superseded by the National Council of Administration or by a National Convention acting within the limits of its own authority.

Sec. 623 - National Council of Administration, Department Members, Election, Vacancies and Removal.

Each Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be entitled to a member on the National Council of Administration.

Election: Members will be elected to a four-year term or until their successor is elected. Said member shall be elected at the Department Convention preceding the National Convention at which the term is to commence, in the same manner and at the same time as Department officers are elected and shall be installed into office at the National Convention.

Removal: The Department Commander will, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the Department Council of Administration, request that the Commander-in-Chief remove the Department's elected National Council of Administration member who fails to fulfill the duties of office as required by Section 622, provided that such member has been given seven (7) days written notice that removal will be requested, including the reasons for removal, and the member is provided an opportunity to be heard by the Department Council at a regular meeting or special meeting called for that purpose, prior to such request being made by the Commander-in-Chief.

The Commander-in-Chief will, with a two-thirds vote of the National Council of Administration, remove an elected National Council of Administration Department Member for failure to perform the duties as outlined in Section 622 of the National Bylaws.

Any National Council of Administration Department member removed for reason of failure to pay current dues or under the provisions of this section shall not be eligible to serve in any National office in the same administrative year in which the member is removed.

Notification of Removal: Such actions and reasons therefore, shall be in the form of a Special Order, and delivered personally or by certified or registered mail at the removed member's last known address. The Special Order shall advise the member of their right to appeal under these Bylaws.

Vacancies: All other vacancies occurring in the office of National Council of Administration, shall be filled by the Department Council of Administration in accordance with Section 520 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 624

(End of Article VI)

ARTICLE VII - MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 701 - Ritual, Distribution.

The National Council of Administration may adopt, amend and promulgate a Ritual for governmental and ceremonial purposes. The Ritual or amendments adopted by the National Council of Administration may be amended or deleted by a majority vote of the National Convention. In order to preserve the integrity and solemnity of the Ritual, written copies shall be made available only to members in good standing.

The Ritual may be purchased from the Emblem and Supply Department.

Sec. 702 - Politics.

No officer or member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall in any manner use the Veterans of Foreign Wars for partisan politics and no discussion of partisan questions shall be permitted at any meetings nor shall any nominations, recommendations or endorsements for political office be made, provided this shall not apply to discussion of policies of any organization that seeks to alter our present form of government by force, violence or other unlawful means.

Participation in activities supporting or opposing legislation or administration of laws for veteran's welfare or relating to other matters pertaining to the purposes of the organization shall be permitted. Such participation shall be consistent with the legislative and welfare programs and policies approved by the National Convention.

No Post, County Council, District or Department shall participate in a labor dispute, either on behalf of labor or management. No member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall wear the VFW uniform or VFW cap in any plant or picket line or meeting of employees where a labor dispute arises.

Nothing contained in this Section shall prevent the organization of a lawful political action committee to further the purposes of the VFW as set forth in Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter, nor prevent any discussion of the activities of such a committee.

Sec. 703 - Bonds.

Each officer accountable for funds or property pursuant to any provision of these Bylaws shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which, so far as can be anticipated, they may be accountable. The bond premium shall be paid from the funds of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department, District, County Council or Post, as the case may be, to which each officer is accountable.

The bonds of such accountable officers, in amount and as to surety, shall be approved by their respective units and held by their respective Commanders. The Commander of each unit shall be responsible for the proper and adequate bonding of all accountable officers in their unit.

Sec. 704

Sec. 705 - Official Publication.

An official publication will be issued by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Orders and official notices published in the official publication shall be deemed to be sufficient notice to all members.

Sec. 706 - National Home Funds.

The solicitation of funds outside the membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliaries, where the proceeds or part of the proceeds so solicited and so collected are advertised for the VFW National Home, shall be subject to the rules and regulations as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 707

Sec. 708 - Incorporation of Units and Other Activities.

Posts, Districts, and Departments of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be incorporated within the state where they are located as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

No unit chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and no activities, clubrooms, holding companies or units sponsored or conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of any such chartered unit, shall separately from the Post, incorporate under the laws of the state in which it is located for any purposes whatsoever unless the Articles of Incorporation of such chartered unit and any incorporated activities, clubrooms, holding companies or units sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or in its behalf shall include those provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Chartered units failing to comply with the provisions of this Section or failing to cause compliance by activities, clubrooms, holding companies or units sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of such chartered unit shall be subject to suspension or revocation of charter.

Should any state incorporation law prohibit provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure for Articles of Incorporation, it shall be permissible to change the wording of such provision sufficiently so that the Certificate of Incorporation will conform to the state laws and at the same time protect the interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The name "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" or some colorable imitation thereof by any corporation shall be by license only, which may be revoked for cause.

Sec. 709 - Control of Units.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be responsible for the negligent or wrongful acts or omissions nor the contractual obligations or debts of any Post, County Council, District or Department nor for the negligent or wrongful acts or omissions or contractual obligations or debts of any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of any Post, County Council, District or Department. Any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of a Post, County Council, District or Department shall be at all times under the direct control of such Post, County Council, District or Department and all funds derived there from shall be at all times under the direct control of such Post, County Council, District or Department.

Any Post, County Council, District or Department owning and/or operating, directly or by reason of a holding company or other entity substantially controlled by the Post, County Council, District or Department or its members, a canteen, clubroom or other facility available to members or guests must maintain general liability insurance, including, if necessary or appropriate, liquor liability insurance. Such insurance must be of a type and amount sufficient to protect the Post, County Council, District or Department and must name, as additional insureds, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Department in which such Post, County Council, District or Department is located.

All money, property or assets of any kind or nature, as well as all books and records, owned, held or used by any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of a Post, County Council, District or Department shall be the property of such Post, County Council, District or Department and must be placed in the care and custody of the respective Quartermaster. Such money, property, assets, books and records shall be subject to the same rules and under the same procedure as any other Post, County Council, District or Department money, property, assets, books and records.

No Post, County Council, District or Department and no activity, clubroom or holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of any Post, County Council, District or Department may own any property jointly or in common with any individual, firm, partnership, association, corporation or other business or charitable entity, except that property may be held jointly or in common by a Post or unit of a congressionally chartered veterans organization, provided the arrangement allows for the prominent display of the names, trademarks, or service marks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and is not contrary to any provision of law or these Bylaws.

No Post, County Council, District or Department or activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or in its behalf, may participate in any arrangement whereby its funds are expended on property held by another entity for the joint use of such Post, County Council, District or Department and other individuals, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations or other business or charitable entities, including veterans organizations, except that such arrangement may be made with a Post or unit of a congressional chartered veterans organization, provided the arrangement allows for the prominent display of the names, trademarks, or service marks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States nor is contrary to any provision of law or these Bylaws.

Title to all real property of unincorporated Posts, County Councils and Districts shall be taken in the name of the regularly elected Trustees of said units, and their successors in office, to be held, used and enjoyed in trust for its members. When the laws of the respective states shall require the delivery of a bill of sale to establish ownership of property, such bills of sale shall also be made to the Trustees of said units, and their successors in office, in trust for the members thereof.

In addition to other legal requirements under existing local laws or Department Bylaws, no Post, County Council, District, or any holding company or corporation subordinate thereto, shall purchase, sell or otherwise transfer title or any interest in any real estate unless written notice of such proposal has first been given to each member of said unit ten (10) days prior to such regular or special meeting at which the proposal is to be considered, and then only by two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval of those members present and voting at such regular or special meeting. In addition, at least thirty (30) days prior to such meeting, notice shall be provided to the Department Commander who shall review any sale, purchase, transfer or encumbrance to determine whether such transaction serves the purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as prescribed in the Congressional Charter. Failure to comply with these provisions shall nullify said transaction.

When properly approved by the members of the Post, the Commander and Quartermaster shall be authorized to sign such legal documents required to sell or purchase real property.

Sec. 710 - Inspection.

The Commander-in-Chief or any Department Commander may require, within their respective jurisdiction, the inspection of any Department, District, County Council or Post, or any holding company or corporation subordinate thereto, whenever the Commander-in-Chief or Department Commander may believe the best interests of the Organization will be served to ensure compliance with the National Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, lawful orders of the National Convention, the National Council of Administration and the Commander-in-Chief and the laws and usages of the Organization. For this purpose the Commander-in-Chief or Department Commander may detail any member within their respective jurisdiction whose duties shall be prescribed by the appointing power. All books, papers, accounts, records and proceedings pertaining to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be subject to inspection at all times.

Sec. 711 - Buddy Poppy.

The manufacture and/or sale of the trademarked "Buddy Poppy" shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

A grant in the amount of one and one-half cents of each poppy sold shall be payable to the VFW National Home; any remaining net proceeds from the sales of Buddy Poppies after the costs of producing and distributing the poppies and payment of the grant to the National Home has been deducted shall be allocated to the National Veterans Service Budget.

Sec. 712 - National Honor Guard.

A National Honor Guard, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, may be organized and function as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

It shall be governed by and under the control of the National Convention, National Council of Administration, and the Commander-in-Chief.

Sec. 713 - Language Prescribed.

All Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States now in existence, or hereafter organized, shall conduct their meetings in no other language than the English language.

Sec. 714 - Control of Mailing Lists.

The names and addresses of the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be considered confidential and shall not be made available for commercial or political use.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the VFW from soliciting or authorizing solicitation of its membership to benefit the purposes of the organization.

Sec. 715 - Rebate on Sales.

Ten percent (10%) of the net profits of supplies sold by the Quartermaster General, within a Department, shall be paid to such Department within thirty (30) days following the termination of each fiscal period.

Sec. 716 - Title of Department Officers.

In those Departments which are located within states of the United States, the officers and committee members of such Departments shall have their office or title designated as State rather than Department.

Sec. 717

Sec. 718

Sec. 719 - Past Officers.

A Past Officer is one who has been elected and installed, appointed or succeeds to a vacancy in a Post, District, Department or National Organization office, respectively, and (1) has served to the end of term; (2) died before the expiration of term; (3) ceased to hold office by reason of a consolidation of units; or (4) resigned to enter active military service or, while in active military service, resigns office due to receipt of permanent change of station orders, provided, however, if such person is determined to be ineligible or if such person's membership is terminated under Article IX, they shall not be a Past Officer.

For purposes of Sections 404, and 504, the term "Past Commander" includes only those persons whose service as a Commander was in that respective District or Department or in one which was consolidated or merged into it.

Sec. 720 - Definitions.

"Unit" as used in Section 709 of these Bylaws refers to an entity or group other than the sponsoring Post, District or Department. In all other instances, the term "unit" or "subordinate unit" refers only to a duly chartered Post, District or Department and does not, under any circumstances, refer to any activity, clubroom or holding company sponsored by any Post, District or Department.

"This organization" or "National organization," as used in these Bylaws, refers to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the body corporate created by Act of Congress, 36 U.S.C. 111 et seq.

"He, His, Him" as used in these Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual shall include both male and female persons.

"Resign, Resignation" means deliberately giving up an office or membership, e.g., quitting. Resignation from an office in this organization or any unit shall become effective immediately upon the communication to resign in writing or orally to the respective Commander, or at a regular or special meeting of the chartered unit. Any elected officer who resigns their position will not be allowed to hold that same office in the same administrative year in which the officer resigned.

(End of Article VII)

ARTICLE VIII - UNIFORMS, BADGES, ETC.

Sec. 801 - Adoption of Seals, Emblems, Badges and Insignia.

The Great Seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be a cross of eight points, or Cross of Malta, between the segments of which are rays of the sun cantoned, forming a star, superimposed upon the center of which shall be an American Eagle with outstretched wings and claws. The right claw of the eagle shall have an olive branch and the left claw a sheath of arrows. From the bill of the eagle a streamer shall be suspended bearing the inscription "Pro Deo—Pro Patria" and over its head shall be grouped thirteen (13) stars. On the breast of the eagle shall be an American shield. The eagle shall be encircled by the legend "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

The seal of Departments shall be identical with the Great Seal, and an additional outer legend for Department Seals shall be added to read: "Department of (insert name of Department), Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" and within that outer legend shall be added the date of the institution of the Department.

The seal of Districts shall be identical with the Great Seal and an additional outer legend shall be added to read: "District (insert number of District), Department of (insert name of Department), Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" and within that outer legend shall be added the date of the institution of the District.

The seal of a County Council shall be identical with the Great Seal, and an additional outer legend shall be added to read: "(insert name of County) County Council, Department of (insert name of Department), Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" and within that outer legend shall be added the date of the institution of the Council.

The seal of Posts shall be identical with the Great Seal, and an additional outer legend shall be added to read: "(insert name of Post) Post No. (and then the name of the City and State in which it is located), Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" and within that outer legend shall be added the date of the institution of the Post.

The National Convention or the National Council of Administration may adopt such other seals, emblems, badges and insignia as may from time to time be appropriate. Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall have sole and exclusive rights to its seals, emblems, badges and insignia and its seals, emblems, badges and insignia shall not be used without written consent of the Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Sec. 802 - Colors of Units.

The colors of the various units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall show the authorized emblem of the organization on fields which shall be colored as follows:

National Convention.....	Purple
Departments.....	Maroon
Districts.....	Maroon over White
County Councils.....	White
Posts.....	Navy Blue

Department Colors shall bear the name of the Department; District Colors shall bear the name of the Department and the numerical designation of the District; County Council Colors shall bear the name of the County Council; and Post Colors shall bear the name and number of the Post.

Sec. 803 - Manufacture and Use of Seals, Emblems, Badges, Insignia and Uniforms.

The seals, uniforms, emblems, badges and insignia of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, or goods bearing same, shall be manufactured only on order of or with the express written consent of the Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such written consent shall be the sole discretion of the Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States unless otherwise directed by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, or National Convention.

No subordinate unit, member or person shall engage, by contract or otherwise, for the manufacture of such seals, uniforms, badges, emblems or insignia, or goods bearing same, unless such written consent has been obtained.

No person shall be entitled to use or wear any seal, emblem, badge, insignia, or uniform of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States unless a member in good standing or unless such written consent has been obtained.

No member or other person shall use or wear any seal, emblem, badge, insignia or uniform of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States while engaged in any commercial or political activity in such a manner as likely to falsely convey that such activity is approved or endorsed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The design of seals, uniforms, emblems, badges and insignia and goods and services using such seals, uniforms, badges, emblems or insignia shall be as provided in the Manual of Procedure.

Ownership of all seals, badges, emblems and insignia shall remain vested in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the right to use or wear such seals, badges, emblems, insignia or uniforms shall be a license only which shall be automatically revoked when such person ceases to be a member or authorization is revoked.

Sec. 804 - Official Name.

The official name of this organization is "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States." The name may be abbreviated to read "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.," "Veterans of Foreign Wars, U.S.," "Veterans of Foreign Wars" and "VFW" on seals, emblems, badges and insignia and in other cases when it would be desirable to shorten the title.

Sec. 805 - Trademarks; Service Marks, Publications.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has acquired the exclusive right to use certain names, trademarks, service marks and/or membership marks including those registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. The National Council of Administration may authorize the Adjutant General to make application to the United States Patent and Trademark Office for the registration of names and marks. The National Council of Administration shall also take such action as is necessary to enforce and protect this Organization's rights in such names and marks.

No person shall use any name mentioned and described in Section 804, or any other trade name, trademark, service mark and/or membership mark of this Organization in connection with any financial, commercial or other business activity without the express written authorization of the Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Publications. The name "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" or any colorable imitation thereof, shall not be used by any individual members, group of members, Post, County Council, District, Department or any other individual, firm or corporation in connection with any publication, including electronic unless permission for the use of the name "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" or some colorable imitation thereof has been granted to the publisher of such publication. Such permission will be a license only subject to immediate revocation by the Commander-in-Chief, with or without notice.

(End of Article VIII)

ARTICLE IX - DISCIPLINE

Sec. 901 - Discipline of Members.

Except as otherwise provided in the Congressional Charter, these Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, no member shall be subject to the penalties authorized in Section 907 unless such member has been advised in writing of the Charges and Specifications, including any Materials Relied Upon with respect to those Charges, and afforded the opportunity to request that such charges be heard and determined at a Disciplinary Hearing or otherwise resolved, as provided and prescribed in this Article.

Sec. 902 - Offenses.

Members who have committed offenses recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may be subject to Disciplinary Action and may be assessed the penalties provided in this Article. Offenses recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are:

1. Disloyalty to the United States of America.
2. Failure to fulfill the Member's Obligation as stated in the VFW Ritual or the obligations taken upon installation to any office.
3. False representation or deliberate concealment concerning eligibility for membership or for any office, or knowingly acquiescing in or permitting ineligible persons to become members or officers.
4. Disobedience or disregard of the provisions of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or General Orders or any of the laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or order of the Commander-in-Chief or the Bylaws or general orders of any Post, County Council, District or Department or the lawful orders of any Commander thereof.

5. Conviction of, or entering a guilty or no contest plea to, a felony, or to a misdemeanor or ordinance violation involving moral turpitude, in any court in the United States.
6. Conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline or conduct unbecoming a member in their relations to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or other members.
7. Divulging any of the private business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or any Post, County Council, District or Department, without proper authority.
8. Preparing or signing any false record, return, order or other official document of or concerning the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or any Post, County Council, District or Department, knowing it to be false, or making any other false official statement.
9. Selling or otherwise disposing of money or property without proper authority or willfully or negligently damaging, destroying or losing any such money or property belonging to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, or any Post, County Council, District, or Department.
10. Aiding, abetting, counseling, concealing, commanding, conspiring, soliciting, procuring or causing to be done any act which, if done, would be punishable under this Article.
11. Knowingly conveying or causing to be conveyed in any form false information concerning military records.
12. Knowingly providing false information or statements in connection with the initiation of charges against any member or with respect to Disciplinary Actions under this Article.

Sec. 903 - Procedure for Disciplinary Actions.

(a) Preliminary Requirements with Respect to the Initiation of Disciplinary Actions.

1. Disciplinary Actions may be initiated only when there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offense recognized in Section 902 of these Bylaws has been committed by the person charged and an incident report and other appropriate documentation demonstrating the commission of the offense has been submitted to the appropriate Post or Department Commander or Commander-in-Chief.
2. Prior to the initiation of a Disciplinary Action, a Post or Department or its respective Commander or the Commander-in-Chief, shall appoint an individual or committee to investigate alleged offenses and report the results of the investigation in writing.
3. No Disciplinary Action may be initiated with respect to the act or acts of a member that have been the subject of an ongoing or completed Disciplinary Action.

(b) Authority to Initiate Disciplinary Action:

1. A Post may, acting by two-thirds vote at a regular or special meeting, instruct the Post Commander to initiate an action with respect to a member of the Post.
2. A Department Commander may initiate an action with respect to any member within the Department.
3. The Department Council of Administration may, by two-thirds vote, instruct the Department Commander to initiate an action with respect to any member within the Department.
4. The Commander-in-Chief may initiate such action with respect to any member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
5. The National Council of Administration may, by two-thirds vote, instruct the Commander-in-Chief to initiate an action with respect to any member.
6. If the respective Commander fails or refuses to initiate a disciplinary action after being instructed to do so, another member may be designated to initiate the action.
7. If the Commander is the accused, the action must be initiated by higher authority. In the event the Commander-in-Chief is the accused, the National Council of Administration shall designate a member to initiate the Disciplinary Action.

(c) Procedure for Initiating a Disciplinary Action:

1. Disciplinary Actions must be initiated by the preparation and delivery of written Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon with respect to those Charges and Specifications to the accused member.
2. The Charges and Specifications shall be issued under and attached to a Special Order of the Initiating Officer or designated initiating member. The Special Order shall make specific reference to the right to a Hearing or Summary Disposition and the rights of appeal afforded by these Bylaws. The Special Order shall also inform the accused concerning the manner in which copies of Article IX of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and the Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions may be obtained electronically.
3. Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon with respect to those Charges and Specifications shall be prepared and delivered in the manner described in Section 903 of the Manual of Procedure. Materials Relied Upon will include any incident report, the investigative report and documentary or other evidence demonstrating reasonable grounds that an offense has been committed.
4. The written Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon shall be delivered personally to the accused or delivered by registered or certified mail return receipt requested to the last known address of the accused member. A copy thereof must be forwarded to the next higher authority. Posts shall forward a copy to the Department Commander. If delivered to the accused in person, the member making such delivery shall sign and submit a report attesting to same. The Adjutant shall retain copies of any mail receipt or attestation of personal delivery.
5. *If the initiating documents are returned to the initiating authority due to refusal of delivery, failure to claim the mailing, or undeliverable based on the last known address of the member, such service shall be deemed sufficient notice for purposes of these proceedings, and the action shall proceed as though no hearing or summary disposition was requested.*
6. Prescribed forms for the initiation and conduct of Disciplinary Actions under this Article shall be as described in the Manual of Procedure.
7. Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions. The Adjutant General shall prepare, and amend as necessary, a Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions. The Guide will supplement the Manual of Procedure and will provide explanation and direction concerning Disciplinary Action proceedings.
8. Upon mutual written consent of the initiating officer or designated initiating member and the accused, delivery of documents, including the initiating documents may be electronic.

(d) Procedure if Summary Disposition or Disciplinary Hearing is not Requested.

If the accused member does not properly request a Summary Disposition or Disciplinary Hearing as provided, in these Bylaws, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt of the Charges and Specifications or, if the accused member, prior to the expiration of the fifteen (15) day period or after requesting Summary Disposition or Disciplinary Hearing, advises the Commander or the designated initiating member that a Summary Disposition or Disciplinary Hearing is not desired or fails to participate in those procedures, the accused will be deemed to acknowledge the sufficiency of the evidence and guilt of the Charges and the Commander or the designated initiating member may then take such action as is deemed appropriate, including the ordering of any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws, subject to the following provisions:

1. If initiated by the Post, the Commander or the designated member initiating the charges, must have concurrence by majority vote of the Post to order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws.

2. If initiated by the Department Commander, the Department Commander may order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws, subject to the concurrence of a majority of the Department Council of Administration.
3. If Charges were initiated by the Department Council of Administration, the Council shall, by majority vote, order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws.
4. If initiated by the Commander-in-Chief, the Commander-in-Chief may order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws, subject to the concurrence of a majority of the National Council of Administration.
5. If Charges were initiated by the National Council of Administration, the Council shall, by majority vote, order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws.

Notification of penalty shall be mailed to the accused's last known address by registered or certified mail return receipt requested.

No appeal is authorized if the accused does not request a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition.

(e) Procedure for Summary Disposition.

The accused may request Summary Disposition instead of requesting a Disciplinary Hearing. Under this procedure the accused cannot contest that the facts alleged in the Charges and Specifications support a finding that the accused has committed an offense under one or more provisions of Section 902 of these Bylaws, but requests an assessment of the penalty by a Panel of members of the National Council of Administration independent of the initiating officer or designated initiating member.

1. Procedure for requesting Summary Disposition. Summary Disposition must be requested in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt of the Charges and Specifications by the accused. Summary Disposition must be requested by directing the request to the initiating officer or designated initiating member, who shall, within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the request, forward it through proper channels to the Commander-in-Chief, all as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.
2. Upon receipt of a timely request for Summary Disposition, the Commander-in-Chief shall appoint three (3) members of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration to the Assessment Panel, designating one (1) member as the Chairman. The Panel members appointed must not be members of the same Department or geographical area as the accused or the initiating officer or designated initiating member.
3. The Assessment Panel may hear the matter electronically. The procedure for conducting the Summary Disposition shall be as set forth in the Manual of Procedure.
4. Disposition by the Assessment Panel. After reviewing the evidence presented and arguments of the parties, the Panel will separately determine the appropriate penalty and the Chairman will notify the parties and the Commander-in-Chief in writing.
5. No Appeal shall be permitted from the decision of the Assessment Panel, provided, however, a decision to terminate the member is subject to concurrence by the Commander-in-Chief.

(f) Procedure if Disciplinary Hearing is Requested.

If the accused member desires a Disciplinary Hearing, the accused member must, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt of the Charges and Specifications, request the Hearing.

1. The Disciplinary Hearing shall be supplemented by the Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions.
2. In the event a Disciplinary Hearing is requested and the accused fails to appear, the action shall continue as if no Hearing had been requested.

(g) Resolution prior to Hearing or during Appeal.

The Prosecutor, with concurrence of the Panel President, and accused may enter into an Agreement finally resolving the Disciplinary Action from which no appeal may be taken. The Agreement shall be reduced to writing signed by the parties. The Agreement shall set forth in detail the terms of the Agreement, including any penalties that are agreed by the parties.

A copy of any Agreement must be forwarded by the initiating officer or designated initiating member to the Commander-in-Chief.

(h) The Adjutant General shall prepare such forms as are necessary to facilitate actions under this Section. Such forms shall be an Appendix to the Manual of Procedure.

(i) Computation of Time.

Whenever in this Article an action is to be taken or completed by a certain number of days it shall be calendar days, unless the final day is a Sunday or National holiday, in which case it shall be the next calendar day that is not a Sunday or a National holiday.

Sec. 904 - Appeal.

Except where otherwise provided in this Article, a member on whom Disciplinary Action is taken under this Article shall have the right to appeal such action. Any appeal under this Section must be made in writing and mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and postmarked no later than the date due, as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure. The time for an appeal shall be calculated beginning the date upon which the decision appealed from was delivered to the accused or to the accused last known address. The Commander-in-Chief may grant an extension, provided the request is received prior to the expiration of the time originally prescribed and the request is for good and sufficient cause. If the member fails to properly appeal the action, the appeal will not be considered.

Appeals to the Department Commander. Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by a Post will be to the Department Commander. The decision of the Department Commander shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the Commander-in-Chief. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration is final.

Appeals to the Commander-in-Chief. Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by a Department Commander or Department Council of Administration shall be to the Commander-in-Chief. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration shall be final.

Appeals to the National Council of Administration. Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by the Commander-in-Chief will be to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration is final.

Computation of Time. See Section 903(i) of these Bylaws.

Nothing herein shall be construed as preventing the Commander-in-Chief from enforcing the provisions of the Congressional Charter, these Bylaws, the Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws or usages or the duties of the office, regardless of any pending appeal.

Sec. 905 - Suspension from Office.

At any time after charges are initiated on a member holding office, the Commander-in-Chief or Department Commander having jurisdiction, may at their discretion suspend the accused member from an elected or appointed position pending a final decision on the disciplinary action, provided that, with respect to salaried positions, said suspension will be with pay. During the suspension of a Post, County Council, District or Department Commander, the office shall be temporarily filled by the Senior Vice Commander. Suspensions affected under this section are not subject to appeal under any provision of these Bylaws.

Sec. 906 - Prima Facie Case.

If the accused member has been convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or ordinance violation for conduct that subjects the accused member to discipline under Section 902, certified copies of the judicial record or guilty plea shall be conclusive evidence of a violation subjecting the member to discipline unless the record is proven not to be a true and correct copy or is otherwise subject to challenge as inaccurate.

Sec. 907 - Penalties.

Penalties for offenses recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be:

1. Reprimand.
2. Suspension of certain rights of membership for a specified period of time.
3. Suspension or removal from office.
4. Suspension from membership for a specified period of time.
5. Termination of membership.
6. Other administrative actions deemed appropriate.

Except as provided in Section 905, no penalty in a Disciplinary Action will be effective if an appeal is current and not finally adjudicated. The penalty shall be carried into effect at such time as a decision is final and by execution of an appropriate Special Order by the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration.

Sec. 908 - Administrative Actions.

A member who has been suspended from any Post by sentence of Disciplinary Action properly executed, will be administratively transferred to Department Member-at-Large. Upon completion of the suspension of membership, a transfer is permitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 107 of the National Bylaws.

In the event that a member transfers their membership and reasonable grounds exist to initiate disciplinary action, for conduct prior to such transfer, the Department Commander or the Commander-in-Chief may transfer the member back to the jurisdiction where the disciplinary action will be initiated.

Any member or former member sentenced will be allowed one opportunity to petition directly to the Commander-in-Chief to have their conviction pardoned or their sentence commuted provided at least five years of the pertinent sentence have been served.

In the event a member or former member sentenced is declared deceased prior to having served at least five years of the pertinent sentence, the Commander-in-Chief shall have the authority, at their sole discretion, to issue a pardon or commute the sentence. Upon a written request submitted by any interested party or initiated independently by the Commander-in-Chief any such pardon or commuted sentence shall only have the effect of restoring the deceased member's good standing for historical and ceremonial purposes.

(End of Article IX)

ARTICLE X - RULES OF ORDER

Sec. 1001 - Rules of Order Governing All Meetings.

Rules governing the conduct of meetings of all units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, including the National Convention, shall be as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure and the Ritual.

(End of Article X)

ARTICLE XI - AUXILIARY

Sec. 1101 - Organization, Disbandment, and Transition of Auxiliaries.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary is an incorporated national association of eligible members chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such association shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary shall be governed by such Bylaws, Rules and Regulations and Ritual as may be adopted by it and by the lawful orders issued by the National Officers of the Auxiliary, provided such Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, Ritual and orders do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the lawful orders or directives of the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary may issue charters to Department, District, County Council, and Post Auxiliaries, provided that the establishment of such Auxiliary shall have been approved by the respective Department, District, County Council or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its control. Formation, control and disbandment of auxiliaries as well as suspension or cancellation of charters shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Auxiliary units approved and chartered prior to the adoption of these provisions shall be entitled to retain such unit's seal, uniforms, emblems, badges, and insignia so long as such seal, uniforms, emblems, badges, and insignia are serviceable and available, for a period of up to five-years following the adoption of this provision.

Auxiliary officers shall make such reports as may be required in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1102 - Eligibility.

Membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary shall be limited to spouses, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren of a person who was or is eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Persons eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in the Auxiliary; however, members in good standing of the Auxiliary and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States prior to August 20, 2015, may retain membership in both.

Sec. 1103 - Ritual, Bylaws and Regulations.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary may adopt Bylaws, a Ritual and such Rules and Regulations as are deemed necessary and may authorize Department, District, County Council and Post Auxiliaries to adopt Bylaws. In the event any part of the Bylaws, Ritual and Rules and Regulations so adopted are inconsistent with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of the respective Department, District, County Council or Post, such part shall be considered null and void.

Sec. 1104 - Incorporation.

- (a) The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary is authorized to incorporate under appropriate not-for-profit corporation laws, provided such incorporation, and the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto, are reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by a two-thirds vote of the National Convention of the Auxiliary and provided further that the Articles of Incorporation include those provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter.
- (b) The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary may, by duly approved amendments to its Bylaws, authorize Department Auxiliaries and Post Auxiliaries to incorporate under appropriate not-for-profit corporation laws and may adopt such Rules and Regulations as are appropriate concerning such incorporation, provided that the respective Department or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States approves such incorporation, which approval shall be given in the same manner as for initial formation of an Auxiliary, and, provided further that the Articles of Incorporation of any such corporation include the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Should any state law prohibit the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure for Articles of Incorporation, it shall be permissible to change the provision sufficiently to conform to state law so long as the change is not inconsistent with the purpose of the Manual of Procedure provision. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter.

(End of Article XI)

ARTICLE XII - MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

Sec. 1201 - Formation.

- (a) The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States is a national Honor Degree membership association separately constituted as a subordinate and an auxiliary order chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such association shall be governed by and subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration. Grand Pup Tents (Department Units) and Pup Tents shall be governed by and subject to jurisdiction of the respective Department Convention, Commander and Council of Administration or Post.
- (b) The Military Order of the Cootie shall be governed by such Bylaws and Ritual as may be adopted by it, and by the lawful orders issued by its National Officers, provided such Bylaws, Ritual and Orders do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the lawful orders or directives of the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (c) The Military Order of the Cootie may issue charters to Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents, provided that the establishment of such Grand Pup Tents or Pup Tents shall have been approved by the respective Department Convention or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its control. Formation, control and disbandment of Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents, as well as suspension or cancellation of charters, shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

- (d) Auxiliary. The Military Order of the Cootie is authorized to establish an Auxiliary and establish eligibility for such Auxiliary, provided that membership shall be limited to members in good standing in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary. Such association shall be subject to the control of the Supreme Scratch (National Convention), Supreme Commander and Supreme Council of Administration of the Military Order of the Cootie. Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents may authorize the establishment and discontinuance of corresponding Auxiliaries in accordance with the Bylaws of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States, provided that an Auxiliary to a Pup Tent shall be chartered only after approval by the Post with which it is affiliated.

Sec. 1202 - Eligibility.

Eligibility for membership in the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States shall be limited to those members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (1) who, at the time of application, have been a member in good standing of their Post for the preceding six (6) months and (2) who have (a) completed satisfactory service on a major Post committee; or (b) satisfactorily performed Post duties or participated actively as a leader of Post functions, and (3) who have been approved for membership by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a meeting of the Post. Application for membership and certification thereof will be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1203 - Bylaws, Ritual.

The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States may adopt such Bylaws and Ritual as are deemed necessary and may authorize Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents to adopt Bylaws. In the event any part of the Bylaws and Ritual so adopted are inconsistent with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, or the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations and Procedures of the respective Department or Post, such part shall be considered null and void.

Sec. 1204 - Incorporation.

- (a) The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States is authorized to incorporate under appropriate not for profit corporation laws, provide such incorporation, and the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto, are reviewed and approved by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by a two-thirds vote of the National Scratch (National Convention) of the Order and provided further that the Articles of Incorporation include those provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Failure to comply with these provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the charter.
- (b) The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States may, by duly approved amendments to its Bylaws, authorize Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents to incorporate under appropriate not for profit corporation laws and may adopt such Rules and Regulations as are appropriate concerning such incorporation, provided that the respective Department or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States approves such incorporation, which approval shall be in the same manner as for the initial formation of a Grand Pup Tent or Pup Tent, and approves the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto and, provided further, that the Articles of Incorporation of any such corporation include the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Should any state law prohibit the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure for Articles of Incorporation, it shall be permissible to change the provisions sufficiently to conform to state law so long as the change is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Manual of Procedure provision. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the charter.

ARTICLE XIII – NATIONAL VFW RIDERS GROUP

Sec. 1301 - Formation.

- (a) The National VFW Riders *Group* is a membership association separately constituted as a subordinate unit chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such association shall be governed by and subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, and shall be governed by and subject to jurisdiction of the respective Department Convention, Commander and Council of Administration or Post.
- (b) The National VFW Riders *Group* shall be governed by such Bylaws and Ritual as may be adopted by it, and by the lawful orders issued by its National Officers, provided such Bylaws, Ritual and Orders do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the lawful orders or directives of the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (c) The National VFW Riders *Group* may issue charters to subordinate chapters, provided that the establishment of such chapter shall have been approved by the respective Department or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its control. Formation, control and disbandment of National VFW Riders *Group* chapters, as well as suspension or cancellation of charters, shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1302 - Eligibility.

Eligibility for membership in the National VFW Riders *Group* shall be limited to those members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States *and its Auxiliary* who have met the requirements as outlined in the National VFW Riders *Group* Bylaws and have been approved for membership by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a meeting of a chapter. Application for membership and certification thereof will be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1303 - Bylaws, Ritual.

The National VFW Riders *Group* may adopt such Bylaws and Ritual as are deemed necessary and may authorize subordinate chapters to adopt Bylaws. In the event any part of the Bylaws and Ritual so adopted are inconsistent with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, or the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations and Procedures of the respective Department or Post, such part shall be considered null and void.

Sec. 1304 - Incorporation.

- (a) The National VFW Riders *Group* is authorized to incorporate under appropriate not for profit corporation laws, provide such incorporation, and the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto, are reviewed and approved by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the VFW Riders *Group* National Convention and provided further that the Articles of Incorporation include those provisions specified in Section 708 the Manual of Procedure. Failure to comply with these provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the charter.

- (b) The National VFW Riders *Group*, by duly approved amendments to its Bylaws, authorize subordinate chapters to incorporate under appropriate not for profit corporation laws and may adopt such rules and regulations as are appropriate concerning such incorporation, provided that the respective Department or unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States approves such incorporation, which approval shall be in the same manner as for the initial formation of a subordinate chapter, and approves the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto and, provided further, that the Articles of Incorporation of any such corporation include the provisions specified in Section 708 of the Manual of Procedure. Should any state law prohibit the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure for Articles of Incorporation, it shall be permissible to change the provisions sufficiently to conform to state law so long as the change is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Manual of Procedure provision. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the charter.

(End of Article XIII)

ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS

Sec. 1401 - Amendments.

Bylaws: Any member in good standing, a Post, a District, or a Department, may propose an amendment to the National Bylaws; provided, however, before consideration at the National Convention, the proposed amendment must be approved by a Department Convention. Immediately following a Department Convention, the proposed amendments must be forwarded to National Headquarters.

A national officer may propose an amendment to the National Bylaws and forward the proposed amendment to the Adjutant General.

All proposed amendments will be available to each Post by the Adjutant General at least fifteen (15) days before the assembling of the National Convention.

Amendments require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates present and voting at the National Convention.

All amendments adopted at any National Convention according to the provisions of this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after the final adjournment of the National Convention at which they were adopted, unless specifically stated otherwise in the amendment.

The Adjutant General shall be authorized to correct article and section designations, punctuation and cross references and to make such other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the intent of the National Convention in connection with these Bylaws.

Manual of Procedure and Ritual: Amendments to the Manual of Procedure and Ritual will be in accordance with Section 1401 of the Manual of Procedure.

(End of Article XIV)

NOTES

MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

ARTICLE I - MEMBERS

Sec. 101 - Eligibility.

The following is to be used as a guide in determining eligibility for membership and is furnished as a matter of information concerning the periods during which campaign and/or service medals were authorized:

Hostilities - Persons in the Armed Forces of the United States shall become eligible for membership immediately upon arrival on hostile soil, in hostile waters or the airspace above in the performance of service qualifying such persons for membership.

Subsequent Service - An applicant for membership who had honorable campaign service, terminated by a discharge under honorable conditions, but who later reenlisted or returned to active duty and had subsequent service terminated by a discharge other than honorable shall not be considered eligible for membership. A member of the organization who receives a discharge other than honorable for service subsequent to becoming a member shall, upon issuance of a special order, cease to be a member by reason of ineligibility; provided, however, that such member may request in writing that the Commander-in-Chief determine their eligibility and appeal therefrom in accordance with the provisions of Section 108. In the event that such discharge is subsequently changed by appropriate governmental authorities, such former member may apply for membership in accordance with the provisions of this Article. Veterans who were originally given a discharge other than honorable for refusal of repatriation shall forever be denied the privilege of membership in this organization, notwithstanding any later change in their status. Any person whose membership has been terminated under the provisions of Article IX of these Bylaws shall not be eligible for membership.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDE

The following is to be used as a guide in determining eligibility for membership and is furnished as a matter of information concerning the periods during which campaign and/or service medals were authorized.

Eligibility for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is based on honorable service in the Armed Forces of the United States performed by officers or enlisted personnel who have served in any foreign war, insurrection, or expedition, which service is recognized by the award of a campaign or service medal of the United States, or who served in Korea as outlined in the following guide, or who earned Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay. Persons still serving in the active Armed Forces may be accepted for membership provided they meet eligibility requirements.

Proof of service to establish eligibility for membership rests with the applicant. The Post is responsible for assuring the eligibility of every member accepted to membership. The Department Headquarters and the National Headquarters are accountable for the eligibility of their respective Members-at-Large.

The following campaign medals have been recognized as meeting campaign medal requirements of membership:

Campaign Medal	Military Service	Qualifying Dates
<u>Expeditionary</u>	Navy/Marine Corps	Feb. 12, 1874 – Open
<u>Spanish Campaign</u>	Army Navy	May 11, 1898 - Aug. 16, 1898 Apr. 20, 1898 - Dec. 10, 1898
<u>Army of Cuba Occupation</u>	Army	Jul. 18, 1898 - May 20, 1902
<u>Army of Puerto Rico Occupation</u>	Army	Aug. 14, 1898 - Dec. 10, 1898
<u>Philippine Campaign</u>	Army Navy	Feb. 4, 1899 - Dec. 31, 1913 Feb. 4, 1899 - Sep. 15, 1906
<u>China Relief Expedition</u>	Army Navy	Jun. 20, 1900 - May 27, 1901 Apr. 5, 1900 - May 27, 1901
<u>Cuban Pacification</u>	Army Navy	Oct. 6, 1906 - Apr. 1, 1909 Sep. 12, 1906 - Apr. 1, 1909
<u>Mexican Service</u>	Army Navy	Apr. 12, 1911 - Jun. 16, 1919 Apr. 12, 1914 - Feb. 7, 1917
<u>First Nicaraguan Campaign</u>	Navy	Jul. 29, 1912 - Nov. 14, 1912
<u>Haitian Campaign</u>	Navy	Jul. 9, 1915 - Dec. 6, 1915 Apr. 1, 1919 - Jun. 15, 1920
<u>Dominican Campaign</u>	Navy	May 4, 1916 - Dec. 5, 1916
<u>World War I Victory</u> (with battle or service clasp including Siberia and European Russia)	Army Navy	Apr. 6, 1917 - Apr. 1, 1920 Apr. 6, 1917 - Mar. 30, 1920
<u>Army Occupation of Germany</u>	Army	Nov. 12, 1918 - Jul. 11, 1923
<u>Second Nicaraguan Campaign</u>	Navy	Aug. 27, 1926 - Jan. 2, 1933
<u>Yangtze Service</u>	Navy	Sep. 3, 1926 - Oct. 21, 1927 Mar. 1, 1930 - Dec. 31, 1932
<u>China Service</u>	Navy	Jul. 7, 1937 - Sep. 7, 1939 Sep. 2, 1945 - Apr. 1, 1957
<u>American Defense Service</u> (with foreign service clasp)	Army-Navy	Sep. 8, 1939 - Dec. 7, 1941
<u>European-African- Middle Eastern Campaign</u>	Army-Navy	Dec. 7, 1941 - Nov. 8, 1945
<u>American Campaign</u> (30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days of duty outside continental limits of the U.S.)	Army-Navy	Dec. 7, 1941 - Mar. 2, 1946
<u>Asiatic-Pacific Campaign</u>	Army-Navy	Dec. 7, 1941 - Mar. 2, 1946

Army of Occupation (30 consecutive days of duty)

Italy	May 9, 1945 - Sep.15, 1947
Germany (except West Berlin)	May 9, 1945 - May 5, 1955
Korea	Sep. 3, 1945 - Jun. 29, 1949
Japan	Sep. 3, 1945 - Apr. 27, 1952
Austria	May 9, 1945 - Jul. 27, 1955
Germany (West Berlin)	May 9, 1945 - Oct. 2, 1990

Navy Occupation Service Medal

Italy	May 8, 1945 - Dec.15, 1947
Trieste	May 8, 1945 - Oct. 26, 1954
Germany (except West Berlin)	May 8, 1945 - May 5, 1955
Austria	May 8, 1945 - Oct. 25, 1955
Asiatic Pacific	Sep. 2, 1945 - Apr. 27, 1952
	Jun. 27, 1950 - Jul. 27, 1954

Korean Service Medal

Navy and Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal

Cuban Military Operation	Jan. 3, 1961 - Oct. 23, 1962
Thailand Military Operation	May 16, 1962 - Aug. 10, 1962
Iranian, Yemen and Indian Ocean Operation	Dec. 8, 1978 - Jun. 6, 1979 Nov. 21, 1979 - Oct. 20, 1981
Lebanon	Aug. 20, 1982 - May 31, 1983
Libyan Expedition	Jan. 20, 1986 - Jun. 27, 1986
Persian Gulf	Feb. 1, 1987 - Jul. 23, 1987
Panama - (pre and post invasion)	Apr. 1, 1988 - Dec. 19, 1989 Feb. 1, 1990 - Jun. 13, 1990
Operation Sharp Edge – Liberia	Aug. 5, 1990 - Feb. 21, 1991
Operation Distant Runner – Rwanda (11th Marine Expeditionary Unit USS Peleliu)	Apr. 7-18, 1994

Vietnam Service Medal

Jul. 1, 1958 - Mar. 28, 1973
Apr. 29 - 30, 1975

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal

Lebanon	Jul. 1, 1958 - Nov. 1, 1958
Taiwan Straits	Aug. 23, 1958 - Jan. 1, 1959
Quemoy and Matsu Islands	Aug. 23, 1958 - Jun. 1, 1963
Vietnam	Jul. 1, 1958 - Jul. 3, 1965
Congo	Jul. 14, 1960 - Sep. 1, 1962
Laos	Apr. 19, 1961 - Oct. 7, 1962
Berlin	Aug. 14, 1961 - Jun. 1, 1963
Cuba	Oct. 24, 1962 - Jun. 1, 1963
Congo	Nov. 23-27, 1964
Dominican Republic	Apr. 23, 1965 - Sep. 21, 1966
Korea	Oct. 1, 1966 - Jun. 30, 1974
Cambodia	Mar. 29, 1973 - Aug. 15, 1973
Thailand - (only those in direct support of Cambodia)	Mar. 29, 1973 - Aug. 15, 1973
Operation Eagle Pull - Cambodia (includes evacuation)	Apr. 11-13, 1975
Operation Frequent Wind - Vietnam (includes evacuation)	Apr. 29-30, 1975
Mayaguez Operation	May 15, 1975
El Salvador	Jan. 1, 1981 - Feb. 1, 1992
Lebanon	Jun. 1, 1983 - Dec. 1, 1987
Operation Urgent Fury - Grenada	Oct. 23, 1983 - Nov. 21, 1983
Eldorado Canyon - Libya	Apr. 12-17, 1986
Operation Earnest Will - Persian Gulf (only those participating in, or in direct support)	Jul. 24, 1987 - Aug. 1, 1990
Operation Just Cause – Panama (USS Vreeland & other SVS-designated aircrew members outside the Conus in direct support)	Dec. 20, 1989 - Jan. 31, 1990
United Shield – Somalia	Dec. 5, 1992 - Mar. 31, 1995
Operation Restore Hope - Somalia	Dec. 5, 1992 - Mar. 31, 1995
Operation Uphold Democracy - Haiti	Sep. 16, 1994 - Mar. 31, 1995
Operation Joint Endeavor - Bosnia, Croatia, the Adriatic Sea & airspace.	Nov. 20, 1995 - Dec. 19, 1996

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal

Operation Vigilant Sentinel - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, & Persian Gulf.	Dec. 1, 1995 - Feb. 15, 1997
Operation Southern Watch - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Persian Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Gulf of Oman W of 62o E Long., Yemen, Egypt, & Jordan.	Dec. 1, 1995 - Mar. 18, 2003
Operation Maritime Intercept - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman W of 62o E Long., Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, & Jordan.	Dec. 1, 1995 - Mar. 18, 2003
Operation Joint Guard - Bosnia, Croatia, Adriatic Sea & airspace.	Dec. 20, 1996 - Jun. 20, 1998
Operation Northern Watch - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Persian Gulf W of 56o E Long., and Incirlik AB, Turkey (only pers. TDY to ONW)	Jan. 1, 1997 - Mar. 18, 2003
Operation Joint Forge - Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Adriatic Sea & airspace.	Jun. 20, 1998 - Mar. 23, 1999
Operation Desert Thunder - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea support.	Nov. 11, 1998 - Dec. 22, 1998
Operation Desert Fox - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, USN Red Sea support.	Dec. 16, 1998 - Dec. 22, 1998
Former Republic of Yugoslavia	Jan. 1, 2014 - Open

Southwest Asia Service Medal

Operation Desert Shield/Operation Desert Storm (combat areas of operation only)	Aug. 2, 1990 - Nov. 30, 1995
Personnel assigned to support units serving in Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Jordan.	Jan. 17, 1991 - Apr. 11, 1991

Kosovo Campaign Medal

Operation Allied Force - Kosovo Air Campaign	Mar. 24, 1999 - Jun. 10, 1999
Kosovo Defense Campaign - Ground Action	Jun. 11, 1999 - Dec. 31, 2013

Purple Heart

Aug. 7, 1782 - Open

Combat Infantry Badge & Combat Medical Badge

Army

Dec. 6, 1941 - Open

Combat Action Ribbon

Navy, Marine, Coast Guard

Dec. 6, 1941 - Open

Combat Action Medal

Air Force, Space Force

Sep. 11, 2001 - Open

Combat Action Badge

Army

Sep. 18, 2001 - Open

<u>SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia</u>	Navy	Jan. 21, 1961 - Open
<u>Korea Duty</u> Service on the Korean Peninsula, its airspace and territorial waters for 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days of duty		Jun. 30, 1949 - Open
<u>Korea Defense Service Medal</u>		Jul. 28, 1954 - Open
<u>Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal</u>		Sep. 11, 2001 - Open
<u>Afghanistan Campaign Medal</u>		Sep. 11, 2001 – Aug 31, 2021
<u>Iraq Campaign Medal</u>		Mar. 19, 2003 - Dec. 31, 2011
<u>Air and Space Expeditionary Service Ribbon with GOLD BORDER</u>		Apr. 2004 - Open
<u>Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal</u>		Jun. 15, 2014 - Open
<u>Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay</u>		

Sec. 102 - Applications - Affiliation of New Members.

Every application for membership must be submitted on an approved, signed application outlining the applicant's honorable service, eligibility and other pertinent information. Proof of service to establish eligibility for membership rests with the applicant. The Post is responsible for assuring the eligibility of every member accepted to membership.

With respect to active duty military personnel currently performing service qualifying for membership, applications may be submitted on their behalf by a member who shall certify the requisite qualifications for membership based on personal knowledge concerning the applicant and shall be acted upon in accordance with the provisions of Section 103. Active duty military personnel admitted to membership under such procedure shall, within a reasonable time, sign the application, personally certifying eligibility and subscribing to the obligation of membership.

The application shall bear the name and the ID number of the member recommending the applicant and the recommendation of the Post Reviewing Committee.

Sec. 103 - Election.

Applications. After the applicant has filled out the application card, it should be provided to the Post Adjutant or Quartermaster, together with the dues (and admission fee, if applicable). A receipt shall be given to the applicant.

An applicant may be recommended after eligibility has been fully determined by the Post Reviewing Committee. With respect to a Department Member-at-Large, the National Organization and/or the Department Headquarters will be responsible for eligibility determination.

The original application of every member will be retained on file with the Adjutant.

Balloting on Applications. Before voting on the application during a Post meeting, the Commander shall allow the members present an opportunity to state their objections, if any, to the admission of the applicant. Unless one member present shall request a written ballot, a vote shall be taken and a majority of the votes cast shall decide acceptance or rejection of the application.

Rejection of Applicant. Should an applicant be rejected by the Post, the admission fee and dues shall be returned. After one year (12 months) the applicant may again make application, but a person shall not be proposed for membership more than twice in one Post. An applicant rejected in one Post may apply to another Post or become a Department Member-at-Large.

Notification. The member shall be notified of their acceptance and that they are in good standing, subject to the Bylaws governing the organization. The member shall receive a membership card and will be eligible to receive a lapel pin.

Obligation. New Post members may receive the obligation according to the Ritual.

Sec. 104 - Member Dues. (See Section 104 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 105 - Members in Good Standing. (See Section 105 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 106 - Former Members.

The annual dues for a former member must be accepted without reapplication to membership if tendered to their Post within one year of the date on which they became unpaid. A member whose dues remain unpaid for a period of more than one year may be required to reapply for membership in their former Post as prescribed in Section 102 of the National Bylaws.

A former member may apply for membership in any other Post by payment of the current year's dues and as prescribed in Section 107 of the National Bylaws.

Sec. 107 - Transfers.

A member may transfer from one Post to another Post provided the following conditions are met:

- 1) Completion of the application as prescribed in Section 102 of the Manual of Procedure.
- 2) Signing the Member Declaration as stated below.
- 3) Acceptance by the Post.

With respect to transfers from a Post to Department Member-at-Large, it is the National Organization's and/or the Department Headquarters' responsibility to ensure the above mentioned conditions have been met.

Member Declaration

"I hereby certify that it is my desire to transfer my membership. I further certify that I am not indebted to my former Post, be it through oral or written commitment or otherwise, and that, to the best of my knowledge, no written charges have been preferred against me by my former Post and I understand that any such indebtedness or charge which may be disclosed any time hereafter will render this transfer null and void."

Members transferring should surrender their membership card to the Quartermaster of the accepting Post.

Sec. 108 - Challenging Members Eligibility.

A Post shall, upon motion duly passed at any regular or special meeting called for such purpose, challenge the eligibility of an individual member. The challenged member shall be

notified within five (5) days of such action by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address, at which time they shall have fifteen (15) days to provide proof of eligibility to the Post Adjutant for disposition. If proof of eligibility cannot be established the member's application and proof of service shall be submitted to the Department Commander for review and disposition.

A Department Commander may initiate a challenge of eligibility of any member in their respective Department after the member has been properly notified in writing by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address, at which time they shall have fifteen (15) days to provide proof of eligibility to the Department Commander for disposition. If proof of eligibility cannot be established by the Department Commander, the member's application and proof of service shall be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief, who shall determine the eligibility of the member. Should the Commander-in-Chief determine the member to be ineligible, they shall issue an order directing that the member be removed from the membership rolls. A copy of the order shall be mailed to the member at their last known address.

The Commander-in-Chief may challenge the eligibility of any member.

With respect to ineligibility by reason of a less than honorable discharge, the determination by the Commander-in-Chief and any appeal shall be limited to consideration of the type of discharge received and shall not extend to the reason or reasons for such discharge.

Any member removed from the membership rolls by order of the Commander-in-Chief for ineligibility shall forfeit all rights and privileges as a member. In such event, no refund of annual dues will be made.

Appeals from determinations of the Commander-in-Chief concerning eligibility of a member shall be made in the manner prescribed for appeals to the National Council of Administration under Section 109 of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 109 - Right of Appeal.

The aggrieved member, Post, District or Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars may submit a written appeal to the next higher authority using the following chain of command:

1. Department Commander
2. Commander-in-Chief
3. National Council of Administration

Appeal Criteria:

A written, signed appeal shall:

1. Describe the act or decision from which the appeal is taken and the manner in which the matter at issue has been handled.
2. State all facts known to the member concerning the matter at issue.
3. Specify the provision or provisions of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or the laws or usages of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States which the act or decision violates or contradicts.
4. State the relief requested by the member.

Notification of Appeal: Written notification of any acts or decision by a Post, District or Department Commander from which an appeal may be taken under this section shall advise the member of their right to appeal.

Computation of Time: With respect to appeals, within a specific number of days it shall mean calendar days. The time shall be calculated beginning with the day upon which the decision at the previous level was either hand delivered or mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the member. Any required action

by the member must be made in writing and mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and postmarked no later than the date due. The Commander-in-Chief may, at their sole discretion, grant an extension provided the request is received prior to the expiration of the time frame originally prescribed and that the request is for good and sufficient cause.

Appeals to the Department Commander: Appeals to the Department Commander from the acts or decisions of the Post or District Commander shall be made within thirty (30) days of the act or decision from which the appeal is taken. All appeals shall be made in writing and shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Department Commander at Department Headquarters.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Department Commander shall conduct such inquiry, request such documents and evidence as deemed appropriate, and shall send a copy of the written appeal papers to the Post, County Council (if applicable) or District or respective Commander whose act or decision is the subject of the appeal. Such Post, County Council (if applicable), District or respective Commander may make written response within thirty (30) days. A copy of such response shall be mailed to the member taking the appeal, who shall have ten (10) days from the date of such response to make any further written submission to the Department Commander.

The Department Commander shall decide the appeal and shall inform the member and Post, County Council (if applicable) or District or respective Commander in writing that the appeal is denied, or if not denied, the relief granted the member. In the event that no written decision is rendered within thirty (30) days, the appeal shall be considered denied.

The determination of the Department Commander shall have full force and effect unless and until reversed by competent authority. The member aggrieved by the acts or decisions of a Department Commander, the Department Council of Administration or the Department Convention shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief.

Appeals to the Commander-in-Chief: Appeals to the Commander-in-Chief from the acts or decisions of the Department Commander (including decisions on an appeal made to the Department Commander), the Department Council of Administration or the Department Convention shall be made within thirty (30) days of the act or decision from which the appeal is taken. All appeals shall be made in writing and shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Commander-in-Chief at Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Headquarters.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Commander-in-Chief shall conduct such inquiry, request such documents and evidence as deemed appropriate, and shall send a copy of the written appeal papers to the Department Commander or Department Council of Administration whose act or decision is the subject of the appeal. With respect to an appeal from the Department Commander's decision on an appeal, the Department Commander shall, within fifteen (15) days, forward copies of the written appeal, any responses and their decision to the Commander-in-Chief. The Department Commander or the Department Council of Administration may make written response to the member's appeal within thirty (30) days. A copy of such response shall be mailed to the member taking the appeal, who shall have ten (10) days from the date of such response to make any further written submission to the Commander-in-Chief.

Thereafter, the Commander-in-Chief shall decide the appeal and shall inform the member and the Department Commander or Department Council of Administration in writing that the appeal is denied, or if not denied, the relief granted the member. In the event that no written decision is rendered within one-hundred twenty (120) days, the appeal shall be considered denied.

The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall have full force and effect unless and until reversed by the National Council of Administration. The member aggrieved by the acts or decisions of the Commander-in-Chief may make a final appeal to the National Council of Administration.

Appeals to the National Council of Administration: Appeals to the National Council of Administration shall be made within thirty (30) days of the acts or decisions of the Commander-in-Chief from which appeal is taken. All such appeals shall be in writing and shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the National Council of Administration at National Headquarters, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The member shall have the right to appear at their own expense, personally or by counsel, at such time and place as the matter is considered. The National Council of Administration shall decide the appeal and shall inform the member in writing of its decision.

Sec. 110 - Rights of Members. (See Section 110 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 111 - Life Members.

Any applicant whose 31st, 41st, 51st, 61st, 71st or 81st birthday will occur after the date of application and on or before December 31 of the current calendar year shall pay only the fee that would be required on their next birthday.

Upon receipt of the applicable fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment together with the life membership application of the individual to the Quartermaster General (or, if required by the Department, through the Department Quartermaster to the Quartermaster General). In the case of Members-at-Large, the payment, along with the life membership application, shall be forwarded to the Quartermaster General. The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the full fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received for life membership in a special fund called the Life Membership Fund, and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

Death of a life member prior to December 31 of the calendar year an applicant's life membership is processed by the Quartermaster General shall be cause for a refund of the life member fee if requested by the Post Quartermaster or Department Quartermaster. Annual payments paid from the Life Membership Fund to the Post, Department or National Headquarters will be deducted from any such refund.

Members-at-Large: A Member-at-Large in good standing, a prospective Member-at-Large otherwise eligible for membership but not previously a member and a prospective Member-at-Large that was a former member and otherwise eligible for reinstatement may become a Life Member by submitting the application and applicable fee in the manner prescribed by the National Council of Administration.

(End of Article I)

ARTICLE II - POSTS

Sec. 201 - Formation, Institution and Chartering.

Formation.

1. Obtain New Post Charter Kit from Department Headquarters.
2. Complete Charter Application.
3. Submit completed charter applications, membership applications and membership transmittal to Department Headquarters.
4. Approval by Department Commander

Institution. The Department Commander having jurisdiction shall designate an instituting officer. The instituting officer shall be a member in good standing and shall hold or have held

an office equal to or of higher rank than Post Commander. The instituting officer shall be responsible for the proper institution of the Post. No Post shall be instituted with less than ten (10) members of the new Post present.

The instituting officer shall review all documentation submitted by members being mustered to verify eligibility. After such institution, election and installation of officers, the instituting officer shall submit the report of institution to Department Headquarters.

Chartering. After ninety (90) days, the Post Commander shall verify the information necessary for the issuance of the charter. When a charter has been issued and signed by the Commander-in-Chief, it can only be changed as provided for in the Bylaws and/or Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 202 - Bylaws.

Copies of Bylaws, including amendments, adopted by a Post shall, within thirty (30) days, be forwarded to the Department Commander for review and forwarding to the Commander-in-Chief. Bylaws or amendments adopted by a Post shall become effective upon review by the Commander-in-Chief, provided such Bylaws do not conflict with the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Sec. 203 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Special Meetings. Special meetings must be called for a date not more than fourteen (14) days after: (a) The Post Commander receives the signed, written request; or (b) The majority vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting; or (c) The date upon which the Post Commander determines that a special meeting maybe necessary.

The Post Adjutant shall give notice, in writing, of the time and place of any special meeting and of the business to be transacted, such notice to be given in such manner as to reasonably reach members at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the time set for the meeting.

The Post Commander shall call a special meeting upon the signed written request of seven (7) members or upon the vote of a majority of the members present and voting at a regular meeting. The Post Commander may call a special meeting of the Post whenever in the opinion of the Commander it may be necessary for the welfare of the Post.

No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that for which the meeting is called.

Sec. 204

Sec. 205 - Change of Location, Meeting Place, Day or Time.

A Post may, after at least thirty (30) days written notice to the Department Commander and members of the Post, change its chartered location upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting. Upon recommendation of the Department Commander, an amended Charter will be issued by the Commander-in-Chief. No change may be effected until an amended Charter is issued.

At such time as the Post changes its location from one community to another, any portion of the Post name that relates to the geographical area or community from which it has relocated shall be deleted from its name.

A Post may, after at least fourteen (14) days written notice to the Department Commander and members of the Post, change its meeting place, appointed day or time upon a majority vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting.

Sec. 206 - Post Admission Fees and Dues. (See Section 206 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 207

Sec. 208 - Change of Name.

A Post may, after at least thirty (30) days written notice to the Department Commander and members of the Post, change its name upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting. Upon recommendation of the Department Commander, an amended Charter will be issued by the Commander-in-Chief. No change may be effected until an amended Charter is issued.

A Post shall not change its name to the name of a living person, other than a living Medal of Honor recipient, only after written consent from the recipient has been received, nor adopt a name already adopted by another Post in good standing in the Department.

Sec. 209 - Consolidation of Posts.

Two or more Posts may consolidate upon a vote of their respective members conducted in accordance with the procedures herein set forth as follows:

1. A motion to consider consolidation shall be made and approved at a regular or special meeting of the Posts.
2. A committee shall be appointed by the Post Commander to investigate consolidation.
3. All Posts involved in the consolidation shall exchange a report of all assets and liabilities.
4. A Post may then, after at least twenty (20) days written notice to the Department Commander, District Commander and members of the respective Posts, consolidate upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at each regular or special meeting of the respective Posts.
5. The Department Commander shall be notified, in writing, immediately after the meeting of the outcome of the action taken.
6. A Department representative shall conduct a joint meeting of all Posts within thirty (30) days for the purpose of determining the name, number (must be one of the consolidating Post numbers), location of the consolidated Post and the election and installation of officers. A written notice must be sent to the members of all Posts involved at least fourteen (14) days in advance. All actions, with the exception of the election of officers, must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting.
7. Such facts shall be certified by the Department representative, submitted to the Department Commander for forwarding to the Commander-in-Chief who shall issue a Certificate of Charter reciting the facts of such consolidation. The Certificate of Charter shall rank from the date of the senior Post's charter. The property of each of the Posts shall be conveyed to and become the property of the consolidated Post. All past officers in each Post shall be entitled to rank as of date of service in their respective Posts.

Notwithstanding the provisions above, the Department Commander may recommend consolidation to the Commander-in-Chief as circumstances dictate.

Sec. 210 - Surrender of Charter.

A Post may surrender its charter in accordance with the following procedures:

1. A motion to consider surrendering a Post charter shall be made and approved at a regular or special meeting of the Post. If approved, the Post Commander shall immediately provide to the Department Commander a list describing all assets and liabilities of the Post.
2. A Post may then, after at least twenty (20) days written notice to the Department Commander, District Commander and members of the Post, vote to surrender the charter upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting.
3. The Department Commander shall be notified immediately after the meeting, in writing, of the outcome of the vote to surrender the charter of a Post. If approved, the Department Commander shall within thirty (30) days, request that the Commander-in-Chief cancel the charter. Pending such cancellation, the Post shall not dispose of any assets.

Sec. 211 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.

1. Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Suspension.

The Commander-in-Chief may issue a Special Order directing the Department Commander to suspend a Post Charter.

2. Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Revocation.

The Commander-in-Chief may revoke a Post Charter in accordance with the procedures herein set forth.

- a. The Post Commander shall be notified in writing of the proposed action by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address of record.
- b. Unless the Post, in the presence of the Department assigned administrative committee or *Department representative*, upon a motion duly passed at any regular or special meeting called for such purpose, notifies the Commander-in-Chief in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, within thirty (30) days of receipt of the revocation notice that the Post desires a hearing, the revocation of the Charter shall be effected.
- c. In the event that the Post requests a hearing, said hearing shall be held within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the notice. A hearing will be scheduled at a time and place and in a manner prescribed by the Commander-in-Chief.
- d. The Commander-in-Chief shall decide the matter within thirty (30) days.
- e. If the Post is not already under suspension at the time that the notice of proposed revocation is given, the Post shall thereafter be under suspension.
- f. The Commander-in-Chief may at their discretion, and after hearing the matter if so requested, revoke the charter of the Post by issuing a Special Order to that effect.

Notwithstanding the provisions above, the Commander-in-Chief shall declare a Post defunct in accordance with Section 212 of the National Bylaws.

3. Actions by the Department Commander—Suspension.

The Department Commander may suspend a Post Charter in accordance with the procedures herein set forth.

- a. The Department Commander shall issue a Special Order suspending a Post Charter which outlines the deficiencies and appoints an administrative committee consisting of three (3) to five (5) members. Pursuant to a written grant of powers and limitations, such committee shall supervise the business and affairs of the Post during the period of suspension.

The acts and actions of the committee shall be subject to the approval or disapproval of the Department Commander.

- b. The Post Commander shall be notified in writing of the action by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address of record or by personal delivery by a designated representative.
 - c. The Department Commander shall notify the Commander-in-Chief in writing within two (2) days.
 - d. The Department Commander shall give notice, in writing, of the time and place of the next scheduled meeting, in such manner as to reasonably reach the Post members at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the time set for the meeting. Such notice shall include a copy of the special order.
 - e. Following an initial suspension period as provided in this subsection, the Department Commander may lift or extend the suspension for an additional period of time not to exceed ninety (90) days; and shall notify the Commander-in-Chief in writing within two (2) days.
- 4. Actions by the Administrative Committee.**
- a. The administrative committee shall approve the expenditure or obligations of all funds and transfers of all property while the order of suspension is in effect. If provided in the Special Order, all funds, securities and other property of the Post may be placed under the custody and supervision of the administrative committee.
 - b. All acts and actions shall be documented and summarized in a report to the Department Commander with a final recommendation.
- 5. Actions by the Department Commander—Revocation.**
- The Department Commander may at any time during the suspension period, recommend revocation of the Post Charter to the Commander-in-Chief.

Sec. 212 - Defunct Posts. (See Section 212 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 213 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.

If a Post has any outstanding financial obligations due National Headquarters that remain unpaid on September 1, the amount due will be deducted from future dues payments until balance due is paid in full.

Sec. 214 - Solicitation of Funds.

Posts may solicit funds or contributions or otherwise engage in fundraising activities or projects only after a prior vote of the Post agreeing to such solicitations, activities or projects. Posts shall assure that such solicitations, activities or projects do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment upon the Post, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The name, seals, badges and emblems of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be used in connection with any solicitations, activities or projects not in compliance with applicable law and Article VIII of the National Bylaws.

A Post shall not solicit funds or donations or otherwise engage in fundraising activities or projects outside the immediate geographical area or community of the Post. A Post may solicit funds or donations utilizing web-based communities provided that the activity is not repetitive or ongoing and otherwise in keeping with applicable state and local charitable solicitation law.

Fundraising organizations or individuals conducting solicitations, activities or projects for a profit shall not be engaged or used by any Post for such purpose unless such engagement is made by written agreement between the Post and the organization or individual's providing those services. The form of any such written agreement must be submitted to the Department Commander for review and approval at least thirty (30) days prior to any Post entering into any such agreement.

In the event a Post shall employ or enter into an agreement with a fundraising organization or individual to solicit contributions or engage in a fundraising project, a surety bond or cash advance in the full amount of expected collections from the solicitation or project shall be furnished by the fundraising organization or individual, said bond or cash advance guaranteeing payment of the funds solicited or raised to a bonded officer of the Post within thirty (30) days of the close of the solicitation or project, provided, however, that the bond shall be discharged or cash advance returned if such fundraising organization or individual shall make payment within thirty (30) days. If a bond or cash advance cannot be furnished, then all collections shall be made by members of the Post sponsoring the solicitation or fundraising project and funds shall be paid to a bonded officer of the Post who shall hold the funds pending proper distribution.

Sec. 215 - Eligibility to Office. (See Section 215 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

Post officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the Post Adjutant. Post officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the Commander, Adjutant and Quartermaster prior to installation to office. In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within thirty (30) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National Bylaws.

Sec. 217 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Order of nominations and elections. The order of nominations and elections shall be Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, and Trustee(s).

Nomination. Prior to the opening of nominations, the Post shall decide which form of election shall be used, unless the Post Bylaws specify the manner of election.

Any nominee shall have the opportunity to decline nomination for the office to which they have been nominated before nominations are closed. A member making the nomination of an absentee for any office shall have presented to the Adjutant, in writing, the consent of the member being nominated prior to the opening of nominations. Nominations of Post Officers shall open in March and remain open until the Post is ready to vote, provided, however, that when a poll system is used, as hereinafter described, nominations must be closed at the meeting prior to the election to allow the Adjutant to prepare a printed ballot.

Election. Post officers shall be elected in April. Balloting for Post officers may be conducted by open vote or written secret ballot (handwritten or printed) at a regular Post meeting, or, if required by Post Bylaws or authorized by Post vote prior to the opening of nominations, by a poll system. Absentee ballots and proxy votes are prohibited.

A majority vote of all votes cast, except where otherwise designated, shall be necessary to elect. If there be no election on the first ballot, the name of the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made.

Poll System. The Post shall determine where and during what hours the polls shall be open for members in good standing to cast their vote; and shall determine the procedure for tallying the votes; and the procedure to be followed in the event of a tie. Due notice of any election to be conducted pursuant to poll system including the time and place for voting, shall be provided to members in good standing within reasonable time prior to the date of the election. That notice shall contain the names of the candidates. The candidate receiving the greater number of votes cast shall be the winner.

Challenging Election Results. If irregularities are claimed with respect to the election to any office, such challenge must be made prior to the close of the meeting.

Installation of Officers. The Post Commander-elect will select the installing officer who holds or has held a rank at least as high as that of Post Commander. Post officers shall be installed in their respective offices prior to the convening of the Department Convention, but shall not assume their duties until the Department Commander is installed. The installation may be conducted publicly at an open meeting.

An officer-elect who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause may be installed at any regular or special meeting prior to the Department convention. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.

Term of Office. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year except that three (3) Trustees shall initially be elected for terms of one (1), two (2) and three (3) years and thereafter one (1) Trustee shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years.

Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.

(a) Officers.

(1) **Commander.** Among the duties of a Post Commander, the Commander shall:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Post, conducting such meetings in accordance with Article X of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and other applicable parliamentary rules.
- b. Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including Post, County Council (if applicable), District and Department Bylaws and the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual and all lawful orders from proper authorities.
- c. Insist that Post business and activities be conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment upon the Post, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- d. Decide all questions of law and usage in the Post, subject to appeal pursuant to the Bylaws.
- e. Upon entering into office, appoint all other officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.
- f. Approve all disbursements of funds properly authorized by the Post.
- g. Assure that the office of Quartermaster is bonded according to Section 703 of the Bylaws.
- h. Assure that all dues and other monies due the National Headquarters and Department are forwarded promptly together with accurate reports and returns pertaining thereto.
- i. Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded, that all the business of the Post is handled with dispatch and that all necessary

- licenses and permits are obtained for proper operation. Ensure that a properly completed Report of Election of Officers for the ensuing year is submitted to Department and National Headquarters by June 1.
- j. Assure that the Post Trustees have examined the books and records of the Post and prepared the Post Trustees Quarterly Report of Audit no later than the end of the month following the last day of each quarterly period.
 - k. Assure that the Commander or their representative attend all properly called District Conventions or meetings and County Council meetings (if applicable).
 - l. Comply with and perform all of the duties required by the laws and usages of this organization, the provisions of these Bylaws, the Manual of Procedure and Ritual and Department, District, County Council (if applicable) or Post Bylaws pertaining to the duties and obligations of a Post Commander and lawful orders from proper authority and perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.
 - m. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.
- (2) **Senior Vice Commander.** The Post Senior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order, preside in the absence of the Commander, provide such advice or assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are incident to such office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (3) **Junior Vice Commander.** The Post Junior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order, preside in the absence of the Commander and Senior Vice Commander, provide such advice or assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are incident to such office or may from time to time be required of the Junior Vice Commander by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (4) **Commander Pro Tempore.** In the event that neither the Commander, Senior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander is present, the Post shall elect a Commander Pro Tempore to preside at the meeting of the Post.
- (5) **Quartermaster.** Among the duties of a Post Quartermaster, the Quartermaster shall:
- a. Qualify and secure a bond in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable in accordance with Section 703.
 - b. Collect all monies due the Post, giving receipt therefore, and have charge of the funds, securities and other property of the Post, all of which shall be placed in their care. The Quartermaster shall be the accountable officer of the Post and the Treasurer of all committees handling funds.
 - c. Disburse funds as properly authorized by the Post using accepted banking practices. Unless otherwise provided for in Post Bylaws, all disbursements of Post funds shall bear the signature of the Quartermaster or other person(s) authorized by the Quartermaster. Such other authorized person(s) shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable in accordance with Section 703.
 - d. Receive annual membership dues (admission fees if applicable) and life membership fees and forward the Department and National dues and life membership fees immediately to National Headquarters as prescribed in Section 104.
 - e. Provide the Post Trustees with all records, files and statements required or necessary for the preparation of the Post Trustees Quarterly Report of Audit.
 - f. Reconcile and verify all transactions listed on all bank statements to assure the accuracy of Post records. The books and records of the Quartermaster

shall be maintained in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a back-up is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Post members at all reasonable times. Unless specifically authorized by the Post to remove such books and records from its facilities, they will be kept at the Post facilities.

- g. Provide access and transfer to their successor in office or anyone designated by higher authority, without delay, all books, records, papers, monies, securities and other property of the Post in their possession or under their control.
 - h. Comply with, and perform all duties required of the Quartermaster by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are incident to such office.
 - i. Report on transactions concerning receipts and expenditures, for any given period, at a regular or special meeting of the Post.
 - j. File appropriate forms as required by Federal, State and Local Statutes or regulations.
- (6) **Adjutant.** Among the duties of the Post Adjutant, the Adjutant shall:
- a. Be the official corresponding officer for the Post and shall attest to all official communications and reports with their signature.
 - b. Under the direction of the Commander, prepare all reports and returns required of the Adjutant.
 - c. Maintain the books and records in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a back-up is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Post members at all reasonable times. Unless specifically authorized by the Post to remove such books and records from its facilities, they will be kept at the Post facilities.
 - d. The Post Adjutant shall maintain the following records:
 - 1. A copy of the original application of every member admitted to the Post.
 - 2. Minutes of each Post meeting after correction and approval.
 - 3. All current orders or circulars issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, the Department Commander, the District and/or County Council Commander (if applicable) and the Post Commander.
 - 4. A correspondence file.
 - 5. A file containing a copy of the proof of eligibility submitted by officers pursuant to Section 216.
 - e. Maintain a current copy of the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and copies of the Bylaws of the Post, Department, District and County Council (if applicable).
 - f. Transfer to their successor, without delay, all books, papers, records, monies and other records and property of the Post in their possession or under their control.
 - g. Comply with and perform all duties required of the Adjutant by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are incident to such office.
- (7) **Chaplain.** The Post Chaplain shall perform such duties as are incident to the office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (8) **Judge Advocate.** The Post Judge Advocate shall perform such duties as may be incident to the office or as may from time to time be required of the Judge Advocate by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

- (9) **Surgeon.** The Post Surgeon shall perform such duties as are incident to the office or as may from time to time be required of the Surgeon by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (10) **Officer of the Day.** The Officer of the Day shall perform such duties as may be incident to the office or may from time to time be required of the Officer of the Day by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (11) **Trustees.** Trustees shall not be eligible to serve as an elected officer, Adjutant or on a committee whose books, records and accounts are audited by the Trustees. Among the duties of Post Trustees, they shall:
- At least monthly, review the Monthly Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Post Quartermaster.
 - Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant, and any activity, club room, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post and submit a Post Trustee's Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.
 - The Report shall be in accordance with and upon such form as may be prescribed by the Adjutant General. The audit shall be signed by the Post Commander and Trustees, who shall, by their signatures, certify to the accuracy of the information contained therein.
 - Perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (12) **Benefits Advisor.** The Post Benefits Advisor shall advise members of the Post, their family members and survivors of benefits and services that are available in the local community such as homeless services, employment opportunities, and companies that offer discounted goods or services to veterans. The Post Benefits Advisor shall direct individuals seeking Federal benefits assistance to the Department Service Officer, *an accredited VFW Service Officer, or other accredited representative*. The work of a Post Benefits Advisor shall be performed in accordance with the instructions contained in the VFW Guide for Post Benefits Advisor under the general supervision of the Post Commander. The Post Benefits Advisor shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office and as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

Sec. 219 - Relief Fund.

The Quartermaster of the Post will be the custodian of the relief fund and will expend monies there from, as directed by the Post, for the following purposes only:

- Aid, assistance, relief, and comfort of needy or disabled veterans or members of the Armed Forces and their dependents, and the surviving spouses and orphans of deceased veterans.
- Maintenance and expansion of the VFW National Home and other facilities devoted exclusively to the benefit and welfare of the dependents, surviving spouses, and orphans of disabled, needy or deceased veterans or members of the Armed Forces.
- Necessary expenses in providing entertainment, care, and assistance to hospitalized veterans or members of the Armed Forces.
- Veterans rehabilitation, welfare, and service work.
- To perpetuate the memory of deceased veterans and members of the Armed Forces, and to comfort their survivors.

- f. To foster true patriotism through historical and educational programs.
- g. Remission of dues of sick, needy or disabled members.
- h. Necessary expenses to support the relief fund such as the purchase of Buddy Poppies.

Relief funds may be invested in approved securities but shall not be loaned to the Post or other units or transferred from the relief fund in any manner or under any guise.

Sec. 220 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.

Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander or Commander-elect, the Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of such office and the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of the Senior Vice Commander. Likewise, in the event of a vacancy in the office of Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect, the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of said office. If the Senior Vice Commander does not move to the position of Commander then the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title of Commander.

If neither the Senior nor Junior Vice Commander succeed as described herein then the Senior Vice Commander shall assume the duties of the Commander until the election of the new Commander at the next regular or special meeting called for such purpose.

Should a vacancy occur in the office of Post Quartermaster, the Post Commander may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster to carry out the duties incident to that office. The appointment shall in no instance exceed more than sixty (60) days and shall be null and void upon the election of a Post Quartermaster.

Should the vacancy occur in any other elected Post office or committee, the Post shall at the next regular or special meeting, nominate and elect a member to that position.

Removal – Post. A Post may, upon motion duly passed at any meeting, propose the removal of an officer or committee member at the next regular or special meeting. The member holding such office or committee membership shall be notified at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address stating the reasons for the proposed action. A copy of the notice shall be provided to the Department Commander at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

The Post, at the next regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any elected officer or elected chairman or committee member who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings or who has
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office specified in Section 218 of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Removal – Department. The Department Commander may, with respect to any Post within their Department, remove any Post officer for cause who fails to fulfill their duties of office as required by Section 218.

Notification of Removal. All removals require written notification. The notification shall be in the form of a Special Order and detail specifically in what manner the elected officer or elected committee member failed to perform their duties. The notification must advise the member of their right to appeal this action under Section 109 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. The Special Order shall be delivered personally or by certified or registered mail to the removed officer or committee member's last known address.

Sec. 221 - Voting.

In the conducting of Post elections or other routine business, each Post member in good standing present at the meeting shall be entitled to one vote. In the case of an election by poll system each member in good standing shall be entitled to cast one ballot during the hours of balloting determined by vote of the Post as outlined in Section 217 of the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 222 - Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.

Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st.

Delegates and alternates of each Post shall serve as delegates throughout the year provided they remain members in good standing in the respective Post within the District.

Delegates shall not be recognized at the National Convention unless they personally register their completed delegate card with the National Credentials Committee.

Posts instituted after delegate strength has been determined, but prior to convening date of the respective convention or District meeting, shall on the day of institution, elect one delegate and one alternate for each thirty names or fraction thereof according to the number of names listed on the charter application.

Only in the event a Post is left without at least one elected delegate or alternate during the year, the Post shall elect replacement delegates, according to delegate strength, at the next Regular or Special Meeting.

Sec. 223 - Commemorative Dates.

Each Post shall make arrangements for observances of Memorial Day, see that suitable grave markers, wreaths and flags of the United States are placed on the graves of deceased members and, if practicable, conduct Memorial Day Services in the cemeteries in its locality.

Each Post shall see that suitable arrangements are made for the observance of Veterans Day, Flag Day and Loyalty Day.

In addition, the Post should arrange special ceremonies, and all Commanders should alert comrades to their obligations for appropriate commemoration of other dates specified in the Ritual.

(End of Article II)

ARTICLE III—COUNTY COUNCILS

Sec. 301 - Formation, Chartering. (See Section 301 of the Bylaws)

(End of Article III)

ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS

Sec. 401 - Formation, Institution and Chartering.

(See Section 401 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 402 - Bylaws.

Copies of Bylaws, including amendments, adopted by a District shall be forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief, through channels. Such proposed Bylaws or amendments shall be submitted to the Department Commander who shall review them for compliance with the Department Bylaws and shall forward them within thirty (30) days, with a recommendation to the Commander-in-Chief, certifying that there is no conflict in the proposed Bylaws with the Department Bylaws. No Bylaws or amendments adopted by a District shall become effective until reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief or their designee for compliance with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Sec. 403 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Regular Meeting. At least one (1) regular meeting shall be held by the District each year for the purpose of conducting schools of instruction for Post officers.

Special Meeting. The District Commander shall call a special meeting: (a) upon the signed written request of a majority of the Posts (b) upon the vote of a majority of the members present and voting at a regular meeting (c) whenever the District Commander determines it may be necessary for the welfare of the District.

The District Adjutant shall give notice, in writing, of the time and place of any special meeting and of the business to be transacted, such notice to be given in such manner as to reasonably reach each Post Commander, District officer and Department Commander at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the time set for the meeting.

No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that for which the meeting is called.

Sec. 404 - Governing Body; Composition. (See Section 404 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 405

Sec. 406 - District Dues. (See Section 406 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 407

Sec. 408

Sec. 409

Sec. 410 - Surrender of Charter. (See Section 410 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 411 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.

1. Actions by the Department Commander—Suspension.

The Department Commander may suspend a District Charter in accordance with the procedures herein set forth.

- a. The Department Commander shall issue a Special Order suspending a District Charter and appointing an administrative committee consisting of three to five members. Pursuant to a written grant of powers and limitations, such committee

shall carry on the business and affairs of the District during the period of suspension. The acts and actions of the committee shall be subject to the approval or disapproval of the Department Commander.

- b. The District Commander shall be notified in writing of the action by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address of record or by personal delivery by a designated representative.
- c. The Department Commander shall notify the Commander-in-Chief in writing within two (2) days.
- d. While under suspension no meetings shall be held in the name of the District or organization, except for the sole purpose of the discussion of the cause, effect or removal of the penalty and no funds of the District shall be expended or obligations incurred during and while the order of suspension is in force and effect except as may be expended or obligated by the committee appointed under this subsection.
- e. Following an initial suspension period as provided in this subsection, the Department Commander shall revoke or extend the suspension for an additional period of time not to exceed ninety (90) days.

2. Actions by the Department Convention—Revocation.

The Department Commander may at any time during the suspension period, recommend revocation of the District Charter to the Department Convention.

Sec. 412 - Defunct Districts. (See Section 412 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 413 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.

(See Section 413 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 414 - Solicitation of Funds.

Districts may solicit funds or contributions or otherwise engage in fundraising activities and projects only by prior vote of the District agreeing to such solicitations, activities or projects. Districts shall assure that such solicitations, activities or projects do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation or bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment upon the District, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The name, seals, badges and emblems of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be used in connection with any solicitations, activities or projects not in compliance with applicable law and Article VIII of the National Bylaws.

A District shall not solicit funds or contributions or engage in fundraising activities or projects outside the immediate geographical area of the District. A District whose territory is partly within a city may solicit funds within the entire city. A District may be allowed to solicit funds or donations utilizing web-based communities provided that the activity is not repetitive or ongoing and otherwise in keeping with applicable state and local charitable solicitation law.

Fundraising organizations or individuals conducting solicitations, activities or projects for a profit shall not be engaged or used by any District for such purpose unless such engagement is made by written agreement between the District and the organization or individuals providing those services. The form of any such written agreement must be submitted to the Department Commander for review and approval at least thirty (30) days prior to any District entering into any such agreement.

In the event a District shall employ or enter into an agreement with a fundraising organization or individual to solicit contributions or engage in a fundraising project, a surety bond or cash advance in the full amount of expected collections from the solicitation or project shall be furnished by the fundraising organization or individual, said bond or cash advance guaranteeing payment of the funds solicited or raised to a bonded officer of the

District within thirty (30) days of the close of the solicitation or project, provided, however, that the bond shall be discharged or cash advance returned if such fundraising organization or individual shall make payment within thirty (30) days. If a bond or cash advance cannot be furnished, then all collections shall be made by members of the District sponsoring the solicitation or fundraising project and funds shall be paid to a bonded officer of the District who shall hold the funds pending proper distribution.

Sec. 415 - Eligibility to Office. (See Section 415 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 416 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

District officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the District Adjutant. Additionally, District Commanders, District Senior Vice Commanders, and District Junior Vice Commanders shall submit proof of eligibility to the Department Adjutant. District officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the District Commander, Adjutant and Quartermaster prior to installation to office. In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within thirty (30) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National Bylaws.

Sec. 417 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Order of Nominations and Elections. The order of nominations and elections shall be Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Judge Advocate, Surgeon and Trustee(s).

Nomination. A member may be nominated and elected although not present at the meeting. A member making a nomination of an absentee for any office shall have presented to the Adjutant, in writing, the consent of the member being nominated prior to the closing of nominations. Any nominee shall have the opportunity to decline nomination for the office to which they have been nominated before nominations are closed. Nominations shall remain open until the District Convention is ready to vote.

Election. In balloting for District officers, a majority of all the votes cast shall be necessary for election. If there is no election on the first ballot, the name of the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made.

Challenging Election Results. If irregularities are claimed with respect to the election to any office, such challenge must be made prior to the close of the meeting.

Installation. District officers shall be installed before the adjournment of the meeting at which elected. The installation shall be conducted by a member in good standing who holds or has held an office equal to or higher than District Commander. The District Commander-elect shall select the installing officer. An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed at any succeeding regular or special meeting of a unit of the organization, within sixty (60) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.

Term of Office. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year except that three (3) Trustees shall initially be elected for terms of one (1), two (2) and three (3) years and thereafter one (1) Trustee shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. District officers shall take office upon the confirmation of election and installation of the Department Commander by the Department Convention.

Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations.

(a) Officers.

- (1) **Commander.** Among the duties of a District Commander, the Commander shall:
 - a. Preside at all meetings of the District conducting such convention and meetings in accordance with Article X and other applicable parliamentary rules and procedures.
 - b. Promote schools of instruction for Post officers at District meetings.
 - c. Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including District and Department Bylaws and the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual and all lawful orders from proper authorities.
 - d. Insist that District business and activities are conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment on the District, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
 - e. Decide all questions of law and usage in the District, subject to an appeal pursuant to these Bylaws.
 - f. Appoint officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.
 - g. Approve all disbursements of funds properly authorized by the District.
 - h. Assure that the office of District Quartermaster is bonded according to Section 703 of these Bylaws.
 - i. Assure that all monies due the Department and National Headquarters are forwarded promptly.
 - j. Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded and that all the business of the District is handled with dispatch.
 - k. Assure that the District Trustees have examined the books and records of the District and prepared the District Trustees Report of Audit. The Commander shall forward a copy within thirty (30 days) to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.
 - l. Assure that the District Inspector has properly inspected the books and records of the Posts within the District in accordance with the Department Bylaws or as directed by the State Commander.
 - m. Assure that eligible veterans are encouraged to join and maintain membership.
 - n. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.
 - o. Serve as a member of the Department Council of Administration.
- (2) **Senior Vice Commander.** The District Senior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order, preside in the absence of the Commander, provide such advice and assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (3) **Junior Vice Commander.** The District Junior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order, preside in the absence of the Commander and Senior Vice Commander, provide such advice and assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office or may from time to time be required of the Junior Vice Commander by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (4) **Commander Pro-Tempore.** In the event that neither the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, or Junior Vice Commander is present, the District shall elect a Commander Pro-Tempore to preside at the meeting of the District.

- (5) **Quartermaster.** Among the duties of the District Quartermaster, the Quartermaster shall:
- a. Receive and hold all monies, securities, vouchers and other personal property of the District as may pertain to their office.
 - b. Disburse funds as properly authorized by the District using accepted banking practices. Unless otherwise provided for in District Bylaws, all disbursements of District funds shall bear the signature of the Quartermaster or other person(s) authorized by the Quartermaster. Such other authorized person(s) shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable in accordance with Section 703.
 - c. Before entering upon their duties, and for the faithful performance thereof, the Quartermaster shall qualify by good and sufficient bond in accordance with Section 703 in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable, the cost of which shall be paid from District funds.
 - d. Collect all monies due the District, giving receipts therefor.
 - e. Maintain the books and records at all times in a neat and efficient manner. The books and records of the Quartermaster shall be uniform and shall be those prescribed by the National Headquarters, provided, however, that a computer record keeping system may be used so long as the records contain the same data as required on forms prescribed by National Headquarters *and a backup is maintained*. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized persons at all reasonable times.
 - f. Deliver to their successor in office, or to anyone designated by the District or higher authority, all books, records, vouchers, monies, securities and other properties of the District in their possession or under their control.
 - g. Serve as Treasurer of all District committees handling funds.
 - h. Comply with and perform all duties required of the Quartermaster by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office.
- (6) **Adjutant.** *Among the duties of the District Adjutant, the Adjutant shall:*
- a. *Be the official corresponding officer for the District and shall attest to all official communications and reports with their signature.*
 - b. *Under the direction of the Commander, prepare all reports and returns required of the Adjutant.*
 - c. *Maintain the books and records in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a backup is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Post members at all reasonable times.*
 - d. *The District Adjutant shall maintain the following:*
 - 1. *Minutes of each District meeting after correction and approval.*
 - 2. *All current orders or circulars issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, the Department Commander, and the District Commander.*
 - 3. *A correspondence file.*
 - 4. *A file containing a copy of the proof of eligibility submitted by officers pursuant to Section 416.*
 - e. *Maintain a current copy of the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and copies of the Bylaws of the Department and District.*

- f. *Transfer to their successor, without delay, all books, papers, records, monies and other records and property of the District in their possession or under their control.*
 - g. *Comply with and perform all duties required of the Adjutant by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are incident to such office.*
- (7) **Trustees.** Among the duties of the District Trustee, the Trustee shall:
- a. At each District Convention or District meeting, or as Department Bylaws may provide, properly audit the books and records of the District Quartermaster, District Adjutant, and any activity or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the District and submit a detailed statement of such audit to the District.
 - b. Submit a Trustees Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster. The report shall be in accordance with and upon such form as may be prescribed. The audit shall be signed by the District Commander and District Trustees, who shall, by their signatures, certify to the accuracy of the information contained therein.
 - c. Audit the records and accounts of all committees, officers and members having to do with the receipt and expenditure of District funds. Trustees shall not be eligible to serve on committees or as officers whose books, records and accounts are audited by the Trustees.
 - d. Perform such other duties as may be usually incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (8) **Chaplain.** During the annual District Convention, the District Chaplain shall see that a fitting tribute is paid to our departed comrades. The Chaplain shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (9) **Judge Advocate.** The District Judge Advocate shall give the District Commander such legal assistance incident to their office as the Commander may request and perform such other duties as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (10) **Chief of Staff.** The District Chief of Staff shall, under the supervision of the District Commander, perform the duties incident to their office as the District Commander may require such other duties as may be from time to time required of the Chief of Staff by the laws and usages of this organization or orders from proper authority.
- (11) **Inspector.** The District Inspector shall ensure that each Post in the District is inspected in accordance with the Department Bylaws or as directed by the Department Commander. The requirements of such inspection are:
- a. That all books and records be inspected in accordance with a properly executed Inspection Form.
 - b. The Inspector shall provide a copy of each inspection to the Post Commander, District and Department and set forth therein any constructive criticism and recommendations. The Inspector shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may be from time to time required by the laws and usages of the organization or on lawful orders of proper authority.
- (12) **Assistant Inspector.** The District Commander may appoint an Assistant Inspector(s).
- (13) **Surgeon.** The District Surgeon shall perform the duties properly pertinent to their office. The Surgeon shall assist with the schools of instruction for Post Surgeons. The Surgeon shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

(14) Benefits Advisor. The District Benefits Advisor shall assist Post Benefits Advisor.

Sec. 419

Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.

Districts may fill any vacancy in their offices at any regular or special meeting.

Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander or Commander-elect, the Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of such office and the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of the Senior Vice Commander. Likewise, in the event of a vacancy in the office of Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect, the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of said office. If the Senior Vice Commander does not move to the position of Commander then the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title of Commander at the next regular or special meeting.

Should a vacancy occur in the office of District Quartermaster, the District Commander may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster to carry out the duties incident to that office. The appointment shall be valid only until the next regular or special meeting and shall be null and void upon the election of a District Quartermaster.

Removal – District. A District may, upon motion duly passed at any meeting, propose the removal of an elected officer or committee member at the next regular or special meeting. The member holding such office or committee membership shall be notified at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address stating the reasons for the proposed action. A copy of the notice shall be provided to the Department Commander at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

The District, at the next regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any an elected officer or elected committee member who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings.
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office specified in Section 418 of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Removal – Department. The Department Commander may, with respect to any District in the Department and with concurrence of a majority vote of the Department Council of Administration, remove any elected District officer for cause who fails to fulfill their duties of office as required by Section 418.

Notification of Removal. All removals require written notification. The notification shall be in the form of a Special Order and detail specifically in what manner the elected officer or elected committee member failed to perform their duties. The notification must advise the member of their right to appeal this action under Section 109 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. The Special Order shall be delivered personally or by certified or register mail to the removed officer or committee member's last known address.

Sec. 421 - Voting. (See Section 421 of the Bylaws)

(End of Article IV)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 501 - Formation, Institution and Chartering.

(See Section 501 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 502 - Bylaws.

Copies of Bylaws, including amendments, adopted by a Department shall be forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief, through channels. No Bylaws or amendments adopted by a Department shall become effective until reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief or their designee for compliance with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Sec. 503 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees. (See Section 503 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 504 - Governing Body; Composition. (See Section 504 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 505

Sec. 506 - Department Dues. (See Section 506 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 507

Sec. 508

Sec. 509 - Consolidation of Departments.

Two or more Departments may consolidate upon a vote of their respective Department Conventions in accordance with the procedures as follows:

1. A motion to consider the consolidation must be approved by the individual Department Convention.
2. Each Department Commander shall submit the names of three members to serve on a joint Consolidation Committee to investigate along with a Chairman appointed by the Commander-in-Chief. A slate of line officers for the consolidated Department will be submitted to each Department Convention for approval along with the consolidation proposal. District Commanders from all Departments shall serve as members of the Council of Administration until District geographical boundaries are established at the next convention.
3. A resolution containing the committee's final report shall be provided to every Post in each Department and to the Commander-in-Chief at least thirty (30) days prior to the Department Conventions.
4. The consolidation resolution requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates present and voting at each Department Convention.
5. The Commander-in-Chief may appoint an oversight committee to complete the consolidation of the Departments.
6. The property of each Department shall be conveyed to and become the property of the consolidated Department. All past officers in each Department shall be entitled to rank as of date of service in their respective Departments.

7. Once approved by the Commander-in-Chief, the consolidated charter shall be issued. The Certificate of Charter shall rank from the date of the senior Department's charter.

Sec. 510 - Surrender of Charter.

Voluntary Surrender. A Department may voluntarily surrender its charter only upon a vote at a Department Convention conducted in accordance with the procedures herein set forth. A proposition to surrender the charter must be made at a meeting of the Department Council of Administration at least four (4) weeks before the convening of the Department Convention and due notice of the proposition must be given, in writing, to every Post in the Department and to the Commander-in-Chief. If a majority of the Posts vote to surrender the charter, the Department Commander shall, within thirty (30) days, request that the Commander-in-Chief cancel the charter, unless during such thirty (30) day period, the Department Commander receives a demand in writing from two-thirds (2/3) of the Posts in the Department to continue the Department. Each post affected shall be governed under the jurisdiction of the Adjutant General.

Sec. 511 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.

1. Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Suspension.

The Commander-in-Chief may suspend a Department Charter in accordance with the procedures herein set forth.

- a. The Commander-in-Chief shall issue a Special Order suspending a Department Charter and appointing an administrative committee consisting of three to five members. Pursuant to a written grant of powers and limitations, such committee shall carry on the business and affairs of the Department during the period of suspension. The acts and actions of the committee shall be subject to the approval or disapproval of the Commander-in-Chief.
- b. The Department Commander shall be notified in writing of the action by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address of record or by personal delivery by a designated representative.
- c. The Commander-in-Chief shall notify the National Council of Administration.
- d. While under suspension no meetings shall be held in the name of the Department or organization, except for the sole purpose of the discussion of the cause, effect or removal of the penalty and no funds of the Department shall be expended or obligations incurred during and while the order of suspension is in force and effect except as may be expended or obligated by the committee appointed under this subsection.
- e. Following an initial suspension period as provided in this subsection, the Commander-in-Chief shall revoke or extend the suspension for an additional period of time not to exceed ninety (90) days

2. Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Revocation.

The Commander-in-Chief may revoke a Department Charter in accordance with the procedures herein set forth.

- a. The Department Commander shall be notified in writing of the proposed action by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address of record.
- b. Unless the Department Commander notifies the Commander-in-Chief in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, within fifteen (15) days of receipt of notice that the Department desires a hearing, the revocation of the Charter shall be effected.

- c. In the event that the Department requests a hearing, said hearing shall be held within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the notice. A hearing will be scheduled at a time and place and in a manner prescribed by the Commander-in-Chief.
- d. The Commander-in-Chief shall decide the matter within thirty (30) days.
- e. If the Department is not already under suspension at the time that the notice of proposed revocation is given, the Department shall thereafter be under suspension.
- f. The Commander-in-Chief may at their discretion, and after hearing the matter if so requested, revoke the charter of the Department by issuing a Special Order to that effect. Each post affected shall be governed under the jurisdiction of the Adjutant General.

Sec. 512 - Defunct Departments.

In the event a Department falls under ten (10) Posts, the Commander-in-Chief shall issue a Special Order canceling the charter of said Department. The Department Commander shall be notified in writing of the action by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address of record or by personal delivery by a designated representative. Each post affected shall be governed under the jurisdiction of the Adjutant General.

Sec. 513 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.

If a Department has any outstanding financial obligations due National Headquarters that remain unpaid on September 1, the amount due will be deducted from future dues payments until balance due is paid in full.

Sec. 514 - Solicitation of Funds.

Departments may solicit funds or contributions or otherwise engage in fundraising activities or projects only after prior vote of the Department Convention or Department Council of Administration. Departments shall assure that solicitations, activities and projects do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment upon the Department, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The name, seals, badges and emblems of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be used in connection with any solicitations, activities or projects not in compliance with applicable law and Article VIII of the National Bylaws.

A Department shall not solicit funds or contributions or engage in fundraising activities or projects outside the immediate geographical area of the Department. A Department whose territory is partly within a city may solicit funds within the entire city. A Department may be allowed to solicit funds or donations utilizing web-based communities provided that the activity is not repetitive or ongoing and otherwise in keeping with applicable state and local charitable solicitation law.

Fundraising organizations or individuals conducting solicitations, activities or projects for a profit shall not be engaged or used by any Department for such purpose unless such engagement is made by written agreement between the Department and the organization or individuals providing those services. The form of any such written agreement must be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for review and approval at least thirty (30) days prior to any Department entering into any such agreement.

In the event a Department shall employ or enter into an agreement with a fundraising organization or individual to solicit contributions or engage in a fundraising project, a surety

bond or cash advance in the full amount of expected collections from the solicitation or project shall be furnished by the fundraising organization or individual, said bond or cash advance guaranteeing payment of the funds solicited or raised to a bonded officer of the Department within thirty (30) days of the close of the solicitation or project, provided, however, that the bond shall be discharged or cash advance returned if such fundraising organization or individual shall make payment within thirty (30) days. If a bond or cash advance cannot be furnished, then all collections shall be made by members of the Department sponsoring the solicitation or fundraising project and funds shall be paid to a bonded officer of the Department who shall hold the funds pending proper distribution.

Sec. 515 - Eligibility to Office. (See Section 515 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 516 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

The Department Commander retains authority to remove appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at any time; provided, however, that salaried officers appointed by the Commander may only be removed by the Commander as prescribed in Section 520.

Department officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the Department Adjutant. Additionally, Department Commanders, Department Senior Vice Commanders, Department Junior Vice Commanders, Department Adjutants and Department Quartermasters shall submit proof of eligibility to the Adjutant General. Department officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the Department Commander, Adjutant and Quartermaster prior to installation to office. In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within thirty (30) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National Bylaws.

Sec. 517 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Order of nominations and elections. The order of nominations and elections shall be Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Chaplain, and, if election is required by Department Bylaws the Judge Advocate and Surgeon. The elected Department officers shall be nominated and elected by voice vote or roll call at the annual Department Convention.

Nomination. A member may be nominated and elected although not present at the Department Convention. A member making a nomination of an absentee for any office shall have presented to the Adjutant, in writing, the consent of the member being nominated prior to the closing of nominations. Any nominee shall have the opportunity to decline nomination for the office to which they have been nominated before nominations are closed. Nominations shall remain open until the Department Convention is ready to vote.

Election. In balloting for Department officers, a majority of all the votes cast shall be necessary for election. If there is no election on the first ballot, the name of the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made. District Commanders shall be ineligible to simultaneously hold an elected Department office.

Challenging Election Results: If irregularities are claimed with respect to the election to any office, such challenge must be made prior to the close of the meeting.

Installation. Department officers shall be installed before the adjournment of the convention at which elected. The installation shall be conducted by a member in good standing who holds or has held an office equal to or higher than Department Commander. The Department Commander-elect shall select the installing officer. An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed at any succeeding regular or special meeting of a unit of the organization, within sixty (60) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.

Term of Office. Department officers shall take office at the close of the Department Convention. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.

Sec. 518 - Officers: Duties and Obligations.

(a) Officers.

(1) Commander. Among the duties of a Department Commander, the Commander shall:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Department conducting such conventions and meetings in accordance with Article X of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and other applicable parliamentary procedures.
 - b. Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including Department Bylaws and the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual and all lawful orders from proper authorities.
 - c. Insist that Department business and activities are conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment on the Department, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
 - d. Decide all questions of law and usage in the Department, subject to an appeal pursuant to these Bylaws.
 - e. Appoint officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.
 - f. Approve all disbursements of funds properly authorized by the Department Council of Administration or *Department Convention*.
 - g. Assure that the office of Department Quartermaster is bonded according to Section 703 of these Bylaws.
 - h. Assure that all monies due the National Headquarters and received by the Department are forwarded promptly.
 - i. Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded and that all the business of the Department is handled with dispatch.
 - j. Assure that eligible veterans are encouraged to join and maintain membership.
 - k. Assure the books and records of the Department are properly audited.
 - l. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.
- (2) Senior Vice Commander.** The Department Senior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order, preside in the absence of the Commander, provide such advice and assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (3) Junior Vice Commander.** The Department Junior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order, preside in the absence of the Commander and Senior Vice Commander, provide such advice and assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office or

may from time to time be required of the Junior Vice Commander by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

(4) Quartermaster. Among the duties of the Department Quartermaster, the Quartermaster shall:

- a. Qualify and secure a bond in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable in accordance with Section 703.
- b. Collect all monies due the Department and have charge of the funds, securities and other property of the Department, all of which shall be placed in their care. The Quartermaster shall be the accountable officer of the Department and the Treasurer of all committees handling funds.
- c. Disburse funds as properly authorized by the Department using accepted banking practices. Unless otherwise provided for in Department Bylaws, all disbursements of Department funds shall bear the signature of the Quartermaster.
- d. Receive annual membership dues (admission fees if applicable) and life membership fees and forward the National dues and life membership fees immediately to National Headquarters as prescribed in Section 104.
- e. Provide the auditors with all records, files and statements required or necessary for the preparation of the Department report of audit.
- f. The books and records of the Quartermaster shall be maintained in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a back-up is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Department members at all reasonable times. Reconcile and verify all transactions listed on all bank statements to assure the accuracy of Department records. Unless authorized by the Department to remove such books and records from its facilities, all such books and records shall be kept at the Department facilities.
- g. The Quartermaster shall provide access and transfer to their successor in office or anyone designated by higher authority, without delay, all books, records, papers, monies, securities and other property of the Department in their possession or under their control.
- h. Comply with, and perform all duties required of the Quartermaster by the laws and usages of this organization, the Department Convention, Department Bylaws, Department Commander and Department Council of Administration, the National Convention and the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual and lawful orders from proper authority and perform such other duties as may be incident to the office.
- i. Report on transactions concerning receipts and expenditures, for any given period, at a regular or special meeting of the Department.
- j. Budget. Prepare a tentative balanced budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. The budget once adopted by the Department Council of Administration shall be forwarded to the Adjutant General by November 1.
- k. Reports.
 1. Prepare for the Department Convention a complete financial report, membership report, a list of Posts in good standing and the number of delegates to which each Post is entitled.
 2. Prepare a quarterly and final year-end financial report for the Department Council of Administration.
 3. Forward the final year-end financial report and a copy of Form 990 filed with the IRS to the Adjutant General.
 4. Prepare other reports as directed by the Department Commander, Council of Administration or Department Convention.

- (5) **Adjutant.** Among the duties of the Department Adjutant, the Adjutant shall:
- a. Be the official corresponding officer for the Department and shall attest to all official communications and reports with the Adjutant's signature.
 - b. Prepare reports as directed by the Department Commander, Council of Administration or Department Convention.
 - c. Maintain the books and records in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a back-up is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Department members at all reasonable times. Unless authorized by the Department to remove such books and records from its facilities, all such books and records shall be kept at the Department facilities.
 - d. Records. Maintain a roster of the following:
 1. Department Officers and Committees.
 2. Districts and County Councils (if applicable) to include officers, committee chairmen, and meeting times and places.
 3. Posts, Post Officers, meeting times and places, membership data and other information provided by the Department Quartermaster.
 - e. Files.
 1. Maintain such records and correspondence as prescribed by National Headquarters and the Department Council of Administration.
 2. Prepare and maintain minutes of each Council of Administration meeting and Department Convention after correction and approval.
 3. A file containing a copy of the proof of eligibility submitted by officers pursuant to Section 516.
 - f. Maintain a current copy of the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and copies of the Bylaws of the Department, District and County Council (if applicable), and all Posts within its jurisdiction.
 - g. Transfer to their successor, without delay, all books, papers, records, monies and other records and property of the Department in their possession or under their control.
 - h. Comply with and perform all duties required of the Adjutant by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are incident to such office.
- (6) **Chaplain.** The Department Chaplain shall, during the annual Department Convention, see that fitting tribute is paid to our departed comrades. The Chaplain shall perform such other duties as may be usually incident to the office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (7) **Judge Advocate.** The Department Judge Advocate shall give the Department Commander, Council of Administration and Department Convention such legal assistance incident to their office and perform such other duties as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (8) **Chief of Staff.** The Department Chief of Staff shall perform the duties incident to their office as the Department Commander or Department Council of Administration may require and such other duties as may be from time to time required of the Chief of Staff by the laws and usages of this organization or orders from proper authority.
- (9) **Inspector.** The Department Inspector shall:
1. Ensure each District, County Council (if applicable) and Post are inspected in accordance with Department and National guidelines.
 2. Receive from each District Inspector all completed inspections.

3. Review and forward each report and submit recommendation(s) to the Department Commander.
 4. Shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may be from time to time required by the laws and usages of the organization or on lawful orders of proper authority.
- (10) **Surgeon.** The Department Surgeon shall perform the duties properly pertaining to their office. The Department Surgeon shall assist Post Surgeons, in an advisory capacity, and promote statewide health programs. The Surgeon shall perform such other duties as may be incident to their office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
- (11) **Service Officer.** The Department Service Officer shall assist the members of the Department, their surviving spouses and orphans and other worthy cases in obtaining rightful benefits from the federal or state governments. Their work shall be performed in accordance with policies established by the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee. The Service Officer shall perform such other duties as are incident to their office or may be from time to time required by the laws and usages of this organization or as may be directed by proper authority.
- (12) **Other Officers.** Other officers appointed by the Department Commander under the authority of Section 516, National Bylaws, shall perform the duties incident to their respective offices, or as the Department Commander may direct.

Sec. 519

Sec. 520 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.

Departments may fill any vacancy in their offices at any regular or special meeting.

Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander or Commander-elect, the Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of such office and the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of the Senior Vice Commander. Likewise, in the event of a vacancy in the office of Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect, the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of said office. If the Senior Vice Commander does not move to the position of Commander then the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title of Commander at the next regular or special meeting.

Should a vacancy occur in the office of Department Quartermaster, the Department Commander may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster to carry out the duties incident to that office. The appointment will be null and void upon the election of a Department Quartermaster as described below.

All other vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the Department, including the office of Junior Vice Commander, will be filled by the Department Council of Administration in the following manner:

1. In the event that a regular meeting is scheduled within thirty (30) days of the date the office is vacated, an election will be held to fill such office at that regular meeting. In the event that no regular meeting is scheduled within thirty (30) days of the date the office is vacated, the Department Commander may call a special meeting of the Department Council of Administration pursuant to Section 522 Bylaws. Election to office at either a regular or special meeting shall be by majority vote of all votes cast.

If there is no election on the first ballot, the name of the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made.

2. In lieu of calling a special meeting, the Department Commander may notify all members of the Council that the vacancy exists and names of nominees are being accepted. Fifteen (15) days thereafter, the Department Commander shall advise the Council of the names of comrades presented for the same. Members of the Council may vote to fill such vacancy by written ballot, submitting as directed by the Department Commander by mail and forward to the Department Adjutant. These ballots shall be tallied at a time specified by the Commander by tellers appointed by the Commander in the presence of such Department officers as the Department Commander may designate. The comrade receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared duly elected to the office designated, with results of election being posted in the minutes of the next Council meeting.

Removal. The Department Commander may propose the removal of an elected officer, elected committee member or appointed salaried officer.

The Department Council of Administration may propose the removal of an elected officer, elected committee member or appointed salaried officer upon written request signed by a majority of its members. The member holding such office or committee membership shall be notified at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting to remove said officer by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address stating the reasons for the proposed action. A copy of the notice shall be provided to the Commander-in-Chief at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

The Department Council of Administration, at a regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any an elected officer or elected chairman or committee member who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings.
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office specified in Section 518 of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Notification of Removal. All removals require written notification. The notification shall be in the form of a Special Order and detail specifically in what manner the elected officer or elected committee member failed to perform their duties. The notification must advise the member of their right to appeal this action under Section 109 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. The Special Order shall be delivered personally or by certified or register mail to the removed officer or committee member's last known address.

Sec. 521 - Voting. (See Section 521 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 522 - Council of Administration - Composition, Powers and Duties. (See Section 522 of the Bylaws)

(End of Article V)

ARTICLE VI - NATIONAL

Sec. 601 - Formation. (See Section 601 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 602 - Bylaws. (See Section 602 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 603 - Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.
(See Section 603 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 604 - Governing Body; Composition. (See Section 604 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 605

Sec. 606 - National Dues.

Nineteen dollars and fifty cents (\$19.50) of the \$21.50 National Dues will be distributed as set forth in Section 606 of the Bylaws. The remaining \$2.00 will go into the Veterans Service Fund.

Sec. 607

Sec. 608

Sec. 609

Sec. 610

Sec. 611

Sec. 612

Sec. 613 - National Headquarters. (See Section 613 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 614 - Solicitation of Funds. (See Section 614 of Bylaws)

Sec. 615 - Eligibility to Office. (See Section 615 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 616 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

National officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the Adjutant General. National officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief, Adjutant General and Quartermaster General prior to installation to office. In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within thirty (30) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National Bylaws.

Sec. 617 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Order of nominations and elections. The order of nominations and elections shall be Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Quartermaster General, Chaplain, Judge Advocate General and Surgeon General. The elected National officers shall be nominated and elected by voice vote or roll call at the annual National Convention.

Nomination. A member may be nominated and elected although not present at the National Convention. A member making a nomination of an absentee for any office shall

have presented to the Adjutant General, in writing, the consent of the member being nominated prior to the closing of nominations. Any nominee shall have the opportunity to decline nomination for the office to which they have been nominated before nominations are closed. Nominations shall remain open until the National Convention is ready to vote.

Election. In balloting for National officers, a majority of all the votes cast shall be necessary for election. If there is no election on the first ballot, the name of the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made.

Challenging Election Results. If irregularities are claimed with respect to the election to any office, such challenge must be made prior to the close of election unless otherwise prescribed in the National Convention Rules.

Installation. National officers will be installed before the adjournment of the convention at which elected. The Commander-in-Chief elect shall select a Past Commander-in-Chief as the installing officer. An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed by an officer holding a position equal to or higher than their office within ninety (90) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.

Sec. 618 - Officers: Duties and Obligations. (See Section 618 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 619 - National Committees. (See Section 619 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 620 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.

Vacancies: In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall at once succeed to the title and duties of the office, and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall become the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall at once succeed to the title and duties of that office.

Should the vacancy occur in the office of the Quartermaster General, the Assistant Quartermaster General will carry out the duties of the Quartermaster General until such time as an election is held. In the event no Assistant Quartermaster General has been appointed the Commander-in-Chief may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster General to carry out the duties until such time an election is held. The appointment will be null and void upon the election of a Quartermaster General as described below.

All other vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the National Convention shall be filled by the National Council of Administration in the following manner:

1. In the event that a regular meeting is scheduled within thirty (30) days of the date the office is vacated, an election will be held to fill such office at that regular meeting. In the event that no regular meeting is scheduled within thirty (30) days of the date the office is vacated, the Commander-in-Chief may call a special meeting of the National Council of Administration pursuant to Section 622 of the Bylaws. Election to office at either a regular or special meeting shall be by majority vote of all votes cast. If there be no election on the first ballot, the name of the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made.
2. In lieu of calling a special meeting, the Commander-in-Chief may notify all members of the Council that the vacancy exists, and names of nominees are being accepted. Fifteen (15) days thereafter, the Commander-in-Chief shall advise the Council of the names of comrades presented for the same. Members of the Council may vote to fill such vacancy by written ballot, submitting as

directed by the Commander-in-Chief by mail and forward to the Adjutant General. These ballots shall be tallied at a time specified by the Commander by tellers appointed by the Commander in the presence of such National officers as the Commander-in-Chief may designate. The comrade receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared duly elected to the office designated, with results of election being posted in the minutes of the next Council meeting.

Removal: The Commander-in-Chief retains authority to remove officers, committee chairmen and committees appointed by the Commander-in-Chief at any time provided, however, that salaried officers appointed by the Commander-in-Chief may only be removed by the Commander-in-Chief as provided herein.

The Commander-in-Chief may propose the removal of any elected National officer, elected National committee member, or appointed salaried officer.

The National Council of Administration may propose the removal any elected National officer, elected National committee member, or appointed salaried officer upon written request signed by a majority of its members.

The National Council of Administration, at the next regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any elected officer, elected National committee member, or appointed salaried officer who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings.
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office as specified in Section 618 of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

The elected National officer, elected National committee member, or appointed salaried officer holding such office and the National Council of Administration shall be notified at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting to remove said officer by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address stating the reason for the proposed action.

Notification of Removal. The notification shall be in the form of a Special Order, detailing specifically in what manner the elected officer, elected committee member or appointed salaried officer failed to perform their duties. The Special Order shall be delivered personally or by certified or registered mail at the removed member's last known address.

Sec. 621 - Voting. (See Section 621 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 622 - National Council of Administration- Composition, Powers and Duties. (See Section 622 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 623 - National Council of Administration, Department Members-Election, Vacancies and Removal.
(See Section 623 of the Bylaws)

(End of Article VI)

ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 701 - Ritual, Distribution. (See Section 701 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 702 - Politics. (See Section 702 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 703 - Bonds. (See Section 703 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 704

Sec. 705 - Official Publication. (See Section 705 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 706 - National Home Funds.

The solicitation of funds outside the membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliaries, where the proceeds or part of the proceeds so solicited and so collected are advertised for the benefit of the VFW National Home, shall be subject to the following rules and regulations:

All units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or the Auxiliary before soliciting funds outside the membership of the VFW and the Auxiliaries where the proceeds or part of the proceeds so solicited and so collected are advertised for the benefit of the VFW National Home shall first have the consent and approval of the next higher authority to that unit; namely, either the National Convention, the National Council of Administration, Department Convention, Department Council of Administration, or District and County Councils.

Such approval shall be given only after the unit proposing the solicitation shall have filed with the next higher authority an application setting forth in detail all contracts, literature and advertising matter pertaining to the proposed solicitation. The unit whose approval is asked is hereby given the power to demand any and all information it may deem necessary to determine the propriety of the undertaking and the percentage of net profit which shall accrue to the VFW National Home.

Should the higher authority approve the project the permission granted shall be made a matter of record and a copy of the data filed with the application shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the National Home for their files. In case an application is refused, the applying unit shall have the right of appeal to the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration, after the filing of copies of the application and data, together with the action thereon, with the Adjutant General. In no case shall any permission for solicitation in the name of the VFW National Home be granted where it is found that less than fifty percent of the net proceeds accrue to the Home.

Sec. 707

Sec. 708 - Incorporation of Units and Other Activities.

Proposed Articles of Incorporation and amendments thereto shall be forwarded to the Department Commander for review through channels to the Adjutant General for review by the Commander-in-Chief for compliance with this Section. Articles shall not be filed with the appropriate state officials until review has been completed. No proposed Articles or amendments thereto shall be reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief unless so recommended by the Department Commander.

The Commander-in-Chief shall assure the Articles of Incorporation contain the following provisions: (1) "The active and voting membership of this corporation shall at all times consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing in _____ Post No. _____ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, with eligibility to, acquiring of, suspension from and discontinuance of membership being in accordance with the National Charter and Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States." (2) "This incorporated subordinate unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall, at all times, remain under the jurisdiction of and be governed according to the Congressional Charter and Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. In the event that any provision of this Certificate of Incorporation conflicts with the National Charter and Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, such conflicting provisions shall be deemed null and void, and the National Charter and Bylaws shall, at all times, govern."

(3) "In the event of dissolution of this corporation all of the assets shall be the property of Post No. _____ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and in the event of the simultaneous dissolution of this corporation and of the forfeiture of the charter issued by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to said subordinate unit then, and in that event, title to all of the assets of this corporation shall pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to be disposed of in accordance with the National Bylaws, rules and regulations of the said Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. At no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof."

To the extent the Articles of Incorporation of incorporated units provide that title to property shall pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in the event of simultaneous dissolution of the corporation and forfeiture of the charter, the disposition of such property will be made in accordance with sections 212, 412, and 512 of the National Bylaws.

Sec. 709 - Control of Units.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a federally chartered membership corporation created by an Act of Congress. In accordance with that legislation, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has issued charters to the Auxiliary, Departments and other units, including Posts. Pursuant to their charters, those units are bound to pursue the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter and abide by the Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and the laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. However, each organization is a separate unincorporated association or corporation under the laws of the jurisdiction in which each is located.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States does not own an interest in any clubroom, canteen, facility or any fundraising activity operated by any such chartered unit, nor are clubrooms, canteens, facilities or other fundraising activities operated for or on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States does not derive any profit from such facilities or activities. Clubrooms, canteens, facilities and other fundraising activities of chartered units are carried on by such units in furtherance of the fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational purposes set forth by Congress.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States does not lend money or extend credit to any chartered unit. It is in no manner responsible for the debts or any other liability incurred by any chartered unit or any clubroom, canteen, facility or other fundraising activity operated by it. As unincorporated associations or corporations, they are responsible for their own debts and liabilities. To the extent that Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is threatened with or sustains damage arising from a debt or liability incurred by a chartered unit, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may seek to recover such damages and any costs and expenses incurred from such chartered unit or persons responsible for such debt or liability.

Sec. 710 - Inspection. (See Section 710 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 711 - Buddy Poppy.

The Buddy Poppy is owned and trade-marked by the National Organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and exclusive right to manufacture said Buddy Poppy is reserved by the National Organization. No Department, District, County Council or Post is permitted to manufacture or have manufactured said Buddy Poppy except by a written permission of the Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration.

Distribution of the Buddy Poppy shall be made exclusively for units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and of the Auxiliary. Other not for profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist in such distribution provided there shall be no division of the proceeds. A donation to such not for profit organization for assistance may be paid from the General Fund of the Post.

No subordinate unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be permitted to conduct or sponsor the distribution of any flower, artificial flower, emblem or tag as a substitute for or in competition with the distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies without having first made application in writing, through channels, to the Commander-in-Chief and having received their approval in writing setting forth the conditions under which permission is granted.

Sec. 712 - National Honor Guard.

Name and Control. The National Honor Guard, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, shall be governed by and under the control of the National Convention of this organization and under the control of the Council of Administration and Commander-in-Chief.

Eligibility. Only active members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be eligible for membership in the National Honor Guard of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, but such membership shall be continued and conditioned only upon retaining active membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Bylaws. For the purpose of government and for ceremonial purposes the National Honor Guard may adopt such Bylaws and amendments thereto as are necessary for its proper government, not conflicting or inconsistent with the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations or the Congressional Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States which shall become effective upon review by the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Inspection. The National Honor Guard, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, shall be subject to inspection by the Commander-in-Chief or such officer or officers as the Commander-in-Chief may designate for such duty as occasion arises.

Sec. 713 - Language Prescribed. (See Section 713 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 714 - Control of Mailing Lists. (See Section 714 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 715 - Rebate on Sales. (See Section 715 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 716 - Title of Department Officers. (See Section 716 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 717

Sec. 718

Sec. 719 - Past Officers. (See Section 719 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 720 - Definitions. (See Section 720 of the Bylaws)

(End of Article VII)

ARTICLE VIII - UNIFORMS, BADGES, ETC.

Sec. 801 - Adoption of Seals, Emblems, Badges and Insignia.

(See Section 801 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 802 - Colors of Units. (See Section 802 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 803 - Manufacture and Use of Seals, Emblems, Badges, Insignia and Uniforms.

Cap. A cap of the overseas type, lettered with VFW initials, Post numerals, state, rank of office (when applicable), and bearing the Cross of Malta emblem, shall be the regulation cap to be worn with or without the uniform. The color shall be green, shade 51; Suntan; or other colors as the National Council of Administration may dictate. Lettering on each cap shall be in gold.

Organizational echelons will be designated by the color of the braid (piping) and letters on the caps as follows:

Post officers, members and Past Post Commanders -- gold braid; County Council officers and Past County Council Commanders -- bright blue braid; District officers, except District Commanders and Past District Commanders -- bright green braid; Department officers and Past Department officers, Conference officers and Past Conference officers, and District Commanders and Past District Commanders -- bright red braid; National officers and Past Commanders-in-Chief -- silver braid.

The National Council of Administration may designate other colors or color combinations of the cap, braid and lettering to be worn on the caps of All-American and All-State honorees, life members and aides-de-camp. Past Commanders-in-Chief and National officers with a Council vote, other than National District Council Members, may wear white caps with gold lettering and braid.

Regulation caps shall be worn by elected and appointed officers at all official meetings.

Alternative Cap. A baseball-style cap, black in color, lettered with VFW initials, Post numerals, state, rank of office (when applicable), Veterans of Foreign Wars and bearing the Cross of Malta may be worn by members other than officers during meetings of the Post and District. Lettering on each cap shall be in gold.

The trim on the front of the bill shall be either gold, green, red, or silver, corresponding to the official braid colors for the respective organizational echelon.

The baseball-style cap shall be an alternative to, but not a replacement for the regulation overseas cap and shall not be worn in place of the regulation cap at formal ceremonies, when in business attire, or at events where the regulation cap is prescribed.

Uniforms. Subject to the approval of the sponsoring units, color guards, drill teams and similar units may adopt optional uniforms and campaign hats, berets, helmets or other headgear for wear at parades, assemblies and similar events and at official functions in the performance of duties. Headgear shall be uniform for all members of the unit. If organizational emblems are worn on VFW Color Guard Headgear, one of them must be the Cross of Malta.

Uniform Patches and Pins. American or US Flag patches may be placed on either or both sleeves, provided the star field is on top and facing forward. When worn in this manner, it gives the effect of the flag flying in the breeze as the wearer moves forward. Hence it requires a proper left and/or right-sided flag patch, which is worn centered on the sleeve(s) one-half of one inch to one inch (1/2"-1") down from the shoulder seam.

Collar pins, VFW and unit number, may be placed as follows: VFW pin(s) on left or on both collar tabs so that the bottom is parallel to the ground one-half of one inch to one inch (1/2"-1") above the tip; the Unit Number Pin, if used, on the right collar tab so that the bottom

is parallel to the ground, one-half of one inch to one inch (1/2"-1") above the tip.

Grave Markers. The official grave marker of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be the same design as the Great Seal of the Order and shall be manufactured only under authority granted by the National Council of Administration in such size and of such materials as the Council shall from time to time determine.

Sec. 804 - Official Name. (See Section 804 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 805 - Trademarks; Service Marks, Publications.

(See Section 805 of the Bylaws)

(End of Article VIII)

ARTICLE IX - DISCIPLINE

Sec. 901 - Discipline of Members.

Article IX does not apply to actions taken by a Post, County Council, District or Department to bar, suspend or limit members from participating in activities or using clubrooms or holding company facilities sponsored, conducted or operated by a Post, County Council, District or Department. Such actions are subject to separate regulation by the respective Post, County Council, District or Department.

Sec. 902 - Offenses. (See Section 902 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 903 - Procedure for Disciplinary Actions.

- (a) **Preliminary Requirements with Respect to Initiating Disciplinary Actions.** (See Section 903 of the Bylaws.)
- (b) **Authority to Initiate Disciplinary Action.** (See Section 903 of the Bylaws.)
- (c) **Procedure for Initiating Disciplinary Action.** (See also Section 903 of the Bylaws)
 - 1. **Charges and Specifications.** The charges must specifically identify the subsections of Section 902 of the Bylaws that have been violated. The specifications shall provide a factual description of the conduct constituting the violation.
 - 2. **Materials Relied Upon.** (See Section 903(c)(3) of the Bylaws.)
 - 3. **Special Order.** The Special Order should be issued using Special Order Form DA-1 and should have attached Charges and Specifications Form DA-2, Materials Relied Upon, a Request for Hearing Form DA-6, and a Request for Summary Disposition Form DA-8. These forms may be found in the Appendix to the Manual of Procedure.
- (d) **Procedure if a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition is not Requested.** (See also Section 903 of the Bylaws.)

Notification of any penalties under this procedure shall be made using Form DA-7, found in the Appendix to the Manual of Procedure.
- (e) **Procedure for Summary Disposition.**
 - 1. Within 15 calendar days following the appointment, the Chairman will contact the accused and the Initiating Officer or designated initiating member to establish a time for the Summary Disposition by the Assessment Panel. This must be scheduled within 45 calendar days of the appointment of the Chairman.
 - 2. The Initiating Officer or designated initiating member shall provide copies of the Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon to the Panel at least 10 days prior to the Summary Disposition date.

Also, by that date each party will provide the Panel and the other party with any additional pertinent evidence or documents they wish the Panel to consider. Evidence may include any relevant documentation whether written or electronic by audio or video format.

3. It shall be the duty of the Chairman to assure there is a full and fair opportunity to present evidence and arguments. The Panel members may question the parties. The Initiating Officer or designated initiating member, or their designee, will first offer evidence and argument, followed by the accused. Each party may then make a closing presentation.

(f) Procedure where Disciplinary Hearing Requested. In the event that the accused member requests a Disciplinary Hearing within fifteen (15) calendar days and in the manner prescribed in Section 903 of the Bylaws, the following procedures apply:

1. Preliminary Procedures.

- a. If the action is initiated by a Post or Post Commander, the Department Commander will appoint the Disciplinary Panel members. The Department Commander will appoint the Panel in cases arising in the Department, unless the Department Commander expects to be a witness with respect to factual matters, in which case the Department Commander shall request, in writing, that the Commander-in-Chief appoint the Panel. The Commander-in-Chief shall appoint the Panel in cases in which the Commander-in-Chief is the Initiating Officer. In cases where a member has been designated to initiate the Disciplinary Action pursuant to Sections 903 (b) (6) and (7) of the National Bylaws, the designated member shall appoint the Panel.
- b. The Commander, Commander-in-Chief or designated initiating member shall, within forty-five (45) calendar days of receipt of the request for Hearing, issue a Special Order. The Special Order will be on the approved form appointing at least five (5) members to the Panel and designating one (1) of them the Panel President. Only members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in good standing may sit on a Disciplinary Panel. Panel members must be able to afford an impartial hearing. If appointees are unable to serve or are unable to afford an impartial hearing, or the time and place of a hearing must be changed, a supplemental order may be issued. Panel members shall not discuss the merits of the case prior to the Hearing. The Prosecutor, Defense Counsel and Recording Officer are not Panel members.
- c. The hearing must be set within forty-five (45) calendar days of the date of the order appointing the Panel. If the hearing is not set or not held within such time, and not otherwise properly continued, the action shall be deemed dismissed and completed pursuant to Section 903 of the Bylaws, subject to reinstatement by higher authority.
- d. The same Panel may be appointed to hear more than one (1) case and related cases may be heard at the same time, provided the Recording Officer maintains a separate record for each accused.
- e. The appointing authority or Panel President may authorize or order that the hearing be held electronically, provided that the participants, witnesses and documents may be seen and heard by the Panel and parties.
- f. Duties of the Panel President. The Panel President is the presiding officer over the panel and hearing process and not subject to challenge. The duties of the President shall commence upon the issuance of the Special Order. The President shall be acquainted with the hearing procedures, maintain order and give the necessary directions for the conduct of the proceedings. The President shall require that the Prosecutor and the accused member, at least ten (10) days prior to the Hearing, disclose to each other any materials not previously disclosed under Section 903 that either party intends to introduce as evidence at the Disciplinary Hearing. The President shall rule upon all questions concerning the admissibility of evidence, the competency of witnesses, continuances, adjournments, recesses, motions, challenges and orders, the propriety of any argument or statement of counsel and on any other matter

deemed appropriate for the efficient conduct of the hearing. The President shall maintain a record of all proceedings prior to the hearing, which shall be included in the record. The President may, for reasonable cause, postpone and/or reschedule a hearing. A party desiring that the President postpone or reschedule a hearing shall make such request with reasonable notice and in writing, stating the reasons for such request. All Panel members and parties shall be advised in writing of the rescheduled date and time, provided the hearing is not unnecessarily delayed.

- g. Prosecutor, Defense Counsel and Recording Officer.
 - i. Appointment and Duties of the Prosecutor. The Prosecutor shall be designated by the initiating officer or designated initiating member and shall present the evidence supporting the Charges and Specifications. The Prosecutor may not be a witness, but may provide advice concerning procedural matters.
 - ii. Duties of the Defense Counsel. The accused may select lay counsel, retain private representation at their own expense, or represent themselves. Defense Counsel may not be a witness, but may provide advice concerning procedural matters.
 - iii. Appointment and Duties of the Recording Officer. The Recording Officer shall be appointed by the initiating officer or designated initiating member. The Recording Officer shall record all the proceedings and the recordings shall be retained and included as record. The recording officer should take reasonable steps to assure that all testimony is recorded and that all speakers and exhibits are adequately identified in the record. A complete record shall include copies of:
 - Special Order advising of the initiation of a Disciplinary Action. (Form DA-1)
 - Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon. (Form DA-2)
 - The written statement that the Charges and Specifications have been personally served or mailed to the accused in accordance with Section 903 (c).
 - The request for the Disciplinary Hearing made by the accused. (Form DA-6)
 - The order appointing the Panel. (Form DA-3)
 - The complete recording of the proceedings by audio or video means.
 - The President's notes of the proceedings.
 - Any exhibits admitted into evidence.
 - The record of Disciplinary Action. (Form DA-5)
 - The findings and sentence. (Form DA-4)
 - The resolution agreement signed by all parties in accordance with Section 903 (g) [if applicable].

The record shall be delivered to and maintained by the Adjutant.

- 2. **General Rules Concerning the Conduct of Hearings.** The procedure for conducting a Disciplinary Hearing shall be as follows:
 - a. **Challenges.** The entire panel shall initially be seated. Either side may challenge any member, but a member may be removed only for good cause. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, prejudice for or against a party, financial or other interest in the outcome or inability to afford an impartial hearing. The challenging party shall state the reasons upon which that party believes good cause exists. When a member of the Panel is challenged for cause, the President of the Panel will decide on the question. No further Panel members may be excused for cause when the effect is to reduce the number of panel members below three. Members of the panel shall swear or affirm that they will judge the case fairly and impartially.
 - b. **Plea to the Charges.** After the Panel is confirmed, the Charges and Specifications shall be read to the accused by the President unless the accused advises the Panel that the accused has read the charges and they need not be read.

The accused will plead guilty or not guilty to each charge and specification separately. The plea will be recorded on the Form of Record of Disciplinary Action (DA-5).

- c. **Objections.** If there have been procedural errors in initiating the disciplinary action, preparing or delivering the Charges or Specifications, appointing the panel, scheduling the time and place of the hearing or any other matter occurring prior to the hearing, Defense Counsel or the accused must make their objections known to the Panel before the opening statements are given and evidence heard. Similarly, objections must be made to errors in procedure or in the admission of evidence occurring during the course of the hearing at the time of the error. Unless objections are timely made, the alleged error will not be considered in the event of an appeal.
- d. **Opening Statements.** The Prosecutor and then the Defense Counsel shall be permitted to make opening statements which outline for the Panel what each believes the issues to be and what each expects to show by the evidence to be introduced.
- e. **Order of Presentation.** The Prosecutor introduces evidence first followed by the defense. The prosecutor may then present evidence to rebut such evidence as may have been presented by the defense and the defense shall be given an opportunity to rebut any rebuttal evidence presented by the prosecution. Both sides shall have the opportunity to cross-examine each witness after direct testimony is given.
- f. **Rules Concerning Evidence.** Evidence may be testimonial or documentary. Testimonial evidence is evidence given in the form of testimony by witnesses. All testimony shall be taken under oath or affirmation by all parties testifying.

Documentary evidence includes items presented in the form of exhibits which show or demonstrate factual matters. An adequate showing of authenticity (i.e., that the document is an original or a true and correct copy of the original) must be made with respect to documentary evidence.

A Panel may base its decision on either direct or circumstantial evidence. Direct evidence consists of testimony or documents which, if believed, would directly prove or disprove facts. Circumstantial evidence consists of testimony or documents which, if true, would prove or disprove facts or circumstances from which, either alone or in connection with other facts, the existence or nonexistence of a fact in issue could be inferred.

Hearsay evidence consists of testimony based upon the out-of-court statements of persons or documents, i.e., what some other person told the witness or upon something seen by the witness in a document that is not presented. Hearsay testimony is given less credence because there may be no opportunity to cross-examine the person who actually heard or saw the incident or wrote the document. While hearsay evidence can be considered by the Panel because of a belief that a sufficiently trustworthy basis exists for considering the evidence, it should be considered with an appreciation that the evidence is less credible. Hearsay evidence may be fully considered without that limitation if the witness is testifying concerning something the accused has said or the evidence consists of reinforcing documents or letters prepared or signed by the accused.

Books of account or business records are generally admissible. Evidence must be relevant and material. Evidence is not relevant or material when it does not tend to prove or disprove an issue in the case or the President rules that it's not material to the issue at hand.

The President will exclude improper evidence to which an objection is sufficiently made. Presidents may, on their own initiative, exclude other improper evidence. Excluded evidence should not be considered by the Panel. The President should note any evidence which was offered but excluded, giving the reason therefore, and any instances where objection was made but the evidence was admitted over such objection, noting the objection. The Recording Officer must include all rulings with respect to evidentiary objections in the record.

The President should protect every witness from insulting or improper questions, harsh or insulting treatment and unnecessary inquiries into private affairs. It should also forbid any inquiries into irrelevant matters intended to merely annoy witnesses or other pertinent parties.

- g. **Closing Arguments.** After both sides have rested, the prosecution commences its closing arguments. The defense follows and the prosecution closes with rebuttal argument.
- h. **Deliberations of the Panel.** The Panel sits in closed session during the deliberation on the findings and sentence. Each case shall be decided on its own merits and the Panel shall give due regard to all of the circumstances, including the length of time between the alleged offense and the initiation of the Disciplinary Action. Deliberations should include full and free discussion of the evidence at hand. The Panel must consider each charge and specification separately and make a determination whether the accused is guilty or not guilty on each charge and specification.
 - i. **Standard of Proof.** In order to convict the accused of an offense, the Panel must be reasonably satisfied that the accused is guilty of the offense.
 - ii. **Conviction and Sentencing.** There must be a two-thirds majority vote in order to convict on any charge and specification. If, in computing the number of votes required, a fraction results, such fraction will be counted as one; thus, where five members are to vote, the requirement that two-thirds concur is not met if less than four concur. The sentence must likewise be determined by a two-thirds majority vote. The sentence should be commensurate with the offense committed.
- i. **Findings and Sentencing.** The findings and sentence shall be announced by the President in open hearing after deliberations are complete. In the event the accused or their counsel was not present at the hearing, a copy of the Findings and Sentence (Form DA-4) shall be mailed to the last known address within seven days after the hearing.
- j. **Record of Hearing of Disciplinary Action.** The President shall prepare a Form of Record of Disciplinary Action (Form DA-5).

Sec. 904 - Appeal.

Appeals shall only be based on errors in the hearing procedure or the interpretation of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, or laws and usages of the organization that prejudiced the outcome. An appeal is not a new hearing of the case and new witnesses or evidence will not be considered.

Failure of the member to comply with the following rules are grounds for denying the appeal.

(a) Rules Applicable to all Appeals.

A proper appeal shall:

- 1. Be in writing, timely filed and properly delivered.
- 2. State the facts of the case based on the evidence introduced at the Hearing.
- 3. Make a clear and concise statement of the reason or reasons upon which the member claims the case was erroneously decided.
- 4. State the relief requested by the member.

(b) Appeals from Post Actions.

Appeals to the Department Commander will be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of penalties by a Disciplinary Hearing Panel. All appeals shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Department Commander at the Department Headquarters.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Department Commander shall request that the Adjutant maintaining the Trial Record forward the same to the Commander within fifteen (15) days. The Department Commander will provide a copy of the written appeal to the Prosecutor, who shall have fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the copy to make a written response directly to the Department Commander with a copy to the accused.

The accused shall then have ten (10) days from the date of such response to make a further written submission to the Department Commander, with a copy to the Prosecutor. The Department Commander shall decide the appeal and inform the accused and the Post Commander in writing as to the determination. The decision of the Department Commander is final unless within fifteen (15) days an appeal is made to the Commander-in-Chief. Such an appeal must be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Commander-in-Chief at National Headquarters in Kansas City.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Commander-in-Chief will request that the Department Commander forward the Trial Record, together with any papers submitted by the parties on appeal. The Commander-in-Chief will, within thirty (30) days, decide the matter and inform the member, the pertinent Post Commander and the Department Commander of that decision. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief is final unless an appeal is made to the National Council of Administration within fifteen (15) days of the Commander-in-Chief's decision. Such appeal must be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration at National Headquarters in Kansas City.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals shall request the Commander-in-Chief forward the Trial Record and any papers submitted by the parties on appeal. The Chairman shall advise the member of a time and place that the matter will be considered and decided. The member shall have the right to appear, at their own expense, personally or by counsel, at such time and place as the matter is considered. By agreement between the Chairman and the accused member, the matter may be considered electronically. Upon a recommendation by the Committee on Appeals, The National Council of Administration shall decide the appeal and subsequently inform all concerned of its decision in writing.

- (c) **Appeals from Department Actions.** Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by the Department Commander or Department Council of Administration shall be to the Commander-in-Chief. Such an appeal must be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of sentence by the Disciplinary Hearing Panel. All appeals must be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Commander-in-Chief at National Headquarters in Kansas City.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Commander-in-Chief shall request that the Adjutant maintaining the Trial Record forward the same within fifteen (15) days. The Commander-in-Chief will provide a copy of the written appeal to the Prosecutor, who shall have fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the copy to make a written response directly to the Commander-in-Chief, with a copy to the accused, who shall have ten (10) days to submit a reply. The Commander-in-Chief shall decide the appeal and inform the accused and the Department Commander. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief is final unless an appeal is made to the National Council of Administration within fifteen (15) days. Such appeal shall be made in the manner specified in the foregoing subsection (b) for appeals to the National Council of Administration for cases initially appealed to the Department Commander.

- (d) **Appeals from National Actions.** Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by the Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration shall be to the National Council of Administration. Such an appeal must be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of sentence by the Disciplinary Hearing Panel. All appeals must be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration at National Headquarters in Kansas City.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration shall request the Trial Record. The Chairman will provide a copy of the written appeal to the Prosecutor who may, within fifteen (15) days, submit a written response, with a copy to the accused who shall have ten (10) days to submit a reply.

The Chairman shall advise the member of a time and place that the matter will be considered. By agreement between the Chairman and the accused member, the matter may be considered electronically.

The member shall have the right to appear, at their own expense, personally or by counsel, at such time and place where the matter is considered.

Upon recommendation by the Committee on Appeals, the National Council of Administration will decide the appeal and subsequently will inform the accused in writing of its decision. That decision is final.

- (e) **Timeliness of Appeals to the National Council of Administration.** Appeals received greater than thirty (30) days before the next scheduled regular meeting will be heard at that meeting. Appeals not within this timeframe may, at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, be referred to the Committee on Appeals and Council for deliberation at a future scheduled meeting.

Sec. 905 - Suspension from Office.

To effect a suspension under Section 905 of the Bylaws, the Commander-in-Chief, or the Department Commander having jurisdiction, will issue a Special Order notifying the member, the Commander-in-Chief and the respective Post, County Council, District or Department Commander of such action.

Sec. 906 - Prima Facie Case.

Under Section 906, it is not necessary for the Prosecutor to prove again what has already been established by a conviction or guilty plea. To meet the prosecutor's burden of proof, the Prosecutor must present certified copies of the court records. The burden then shifts to the defense to show the record is not true and correct or is otherwise inaccurate.

Sec. 907 - Penalties. (See Section 907 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 908 - Administrative Actions. (See Section 908 of the Bylaws)

(End of Article IX)

ARTICLE X - RULES OF ORDER

Sec. 1001 - Rules of Order Governing All Meetings.

The following Rules of Order shall govern all meetings. Any procedural matter not provided for by these Rules or Convention Rules shall be governed by the current Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. These rules may be altered or amended at any regular session of the body, upon proposition in writing, and by a majority vote of those present and voting. Any alteration or amendment of the rules provided herein shall be in accordance with procedures provided or permitted by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

1. All questions shall be presented and determined upon motion. A motion must first be properly presented and seconded, and then stated by the presiding officer, before it can be open to debate or amendment, or any further action upon it.
2. A motion may be withdrawn only under the following circumstances: (a) by the mover alone before the question has been completely stated by the presiding officer; (b) by the mover after the presiding officer has stated the question, provided no member of the body objects; and (c) by majority vote of the body after the presiding officer has stated it, regardless of objection. After a motion has been carried, it can be withdrawn only by unanimous consent. A withdrawn motion is not recorded in the minutes.

3. Not more than one primary and one secondary amendment can be before the body at one time, but any number of amendments can be successively proposed when there has been a disposition of either or both pending amendments. If two amendments are pending, the secondary amendment is first put, then the primary amendment (as amended, if the secondary amendment prevails), then the main motion (as amended, if the said primary amendment prevails). The amendment is always put first. The main motion must be put regardless of the action taken on the amendments.
4. When a member rises to speak, the member shall rise and address the presiding officer. When two or more members rise to claim the floor at about the same time, the presiding officer assigns the floor to the member who appeared to have risen first and addressed the chair. A member having the floor shall confine their remarks to the question before the body.
5. No member shall speak more than twice on the same question, nor longer than 10 minutes each time. No member shall speak a second time on the same question if any member who has not spoken on that question arises to claim the floor to speak thereon. Nominating speeches shall not exceed 5 minutes each, nor exceed two seconding speeches of two minutes each.
6. No member shall in debate impeach the motives of a fellow member or treat them with disrespect. Members shall avoid personalities and unbecoming speech. A member shall not pass between the speaker and the chair. Any conversation calculated to disturb a member while speaking or hinder the transaction of business, shall be deemed a violation of order, and, if continued, the offending member shall be reprimanded by the presiding officer and may be ordered to retire from the room. Failure to comply with an order to retire may subject a member to disciplinary action for conduct prejudicial to the good order and discipline. When a member is called to order for disorderly conduct or abusive language, if such conduct is not immediately stopped and an apology immediately proffered by said member, disciplinary action may be taken against such member.
7. No member shall be interrupted while speaking except by a call to order which shall be forthwith ruled upon by the presiding officer as being either "well taken" or "not well taken". When a question of order is raised, the interrupted member shall forthwith take their seat until the point of order is decided. No member shall be interrupted while speaking on account of misstatements spoken in debate, but they may be answered, corrected, or explained when the member has finished speaking.
8. On questions of order there shall be no debate, unless an appeal is taken. When such appeal is taken from a decision of the presiding officer, the appeal shall be put to vote thus: "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?" Those in favor of sustaining the decision of the presiding officer will say aye; those opposed will say no. "The ayes have it and the decision is sustained," or "the noes have it and the decision is not sustained," as the case may be. Instead of the above form of the question, the following may be used: "Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the body?" etc. A majority vote is required to overrule the decision of the presiding officer.
9. Questions not debatable—
 - a. To fix a time to reconvene
 - b. To adjourn
 - c. To recess
 - d. To raise a question of privilege
 - e. To call for the orders of the day
 - f. To lay on the table
 - g. To close debate and vote

- h. To limit (or extend) debate
 - i. To take up any particular item of business
 - j. To grant leave to speak
 - k. To grant leave to withdraw a report or resolution
 - l. Questions of order when no appeal has been taken, or where the presiding officer has not invited discussion
10. Except by unanimous consent, no question on which debate has been closed shall be debatable further. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required to close debate.
 11. When there is no further debate, or debate has been closed, the presiding officer shall put the question to vote thus: "Those in favor of the motion will say aye; opposed will say no". The presiding officer shall then announce the results thus: "The ayes have it and the motion is carried," or "The noes have it and the motion is lost," as the case may be.
 12. When the decision of any voice vote is doubted, the presiding officer shall direct the vote be taken by show of hands or by rising vote. When the decision of any written secret ballot is doubted, the presiding officer shall appoint a committee of two members, one of whom shall be the Adjutant, to recount the ballots and report to the presiding officer.
 13. The ayes and noes shall be taken by roll call only when ordered by a majority vote of the body. The result shall be recorded in the minutes.
 14. When a question is before the body, the following motions shall be in order:

Privileged Motions

1. To fix a time to adjourn
2. To adjourn
3. To recess
4. To raise a question of privilege
5. To call for the orders of the day

Subsidiary Motions

1. To lay on the table
2. To close debate and vote
3. To limit (or extend) debate
4. To postpone definitely
5. To commit, or refer
6. To amend
7. To postpone indefinitely

These motions take precedence in the order named, that is: the higher the motion shown above, the higher its order of precedence or rank. A motion of higher order or rank can be entertained while a motion of lower order or rank is pending before the body. If more than one of the above motions are pending at the same time with a main question, the motion of the highest order is put to vote first and then successively the next motion of highest rank up to disposition of the main question by the body. Any number of the motions specified above can be pending with the main question, provided each one has been proposed in accordance with its admitting order, or rank, as shown above.

All privileged motions and subsidiary motions, 1, 2 and 3 shall be decided without debate.

15. None of the privileged motions, shown above, can be reconsidered except the top motion "to fix a time to reconvene." All of the subsidiary motions can be reconsidered except the motion "to lay on the table."
16. When a main motion or resolution has been defeated, the same or substantially the same question shall not be renewed during the same session, but the vote on the question can be reconsidered once at the session.

17. A main motion can be reconsidered whether it was adopted or defeated. Reconsideration of a motion shall not be in order unless it has been moved by one who voted with the prevailing side. The prevailing side shall be the winning side, whether it be the affirmative or negative. On tie votes, the negative side is the prevailing side. In the case of a two-thirds (2/3) vote, the negative side is the prevailing side if the two-thirds (2/3) vote loses, and the affirmative is the prevailing side if it wins. A motion to reconsider once made and negative shall not again be in order upon the same question any time. Reconsideration shall always require a majority vote regardless what motion is reconsidered. If reconsideration is defeated, the motion to rescind that question shall be in order any time, provided the question has not been carried out or executed. To rescind requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote, unless previous notice is given in which case a majority vote shall be required at the next session.
18. A motion to adjourn shall be in order, except:
 - a. While a member is speaking
 - b. While a vote is being taken
 - c. When a motion to adjourn was the last preceding motion
 - d. When the privileged motion "to fix a time to reconvene" is the immediate pending motion

A simple motion "to adjourn" shall be neither debatable nor amendable, but when qualified by the addition of other words, such as "to adjourn a half-hour from now," or "to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair," it becomes both debatable and amendable and is subject to all privileged and subsidiary motions outlined in paragraphs 14 and 15.
19. An appeal is debatable and the presiding officer is entitled to debate it without being required to surrender the Chair. However, appeals are not debatable when they relate to (a) indecorum—as when a member is deprived of the floor by the presiding officer for disorderly conduct; abusive language, or because of impugning the motives of members of the assembly, or otherwise indulging in personalities; (b) transgression of the rules of debate—as when a member is denied the floor because they have already spoken twice on the question, or because they have exceeded their 10 minute debate when they had the floor or for failure to confine oneself to the pending question, and (c) when the immediately pending motion is not debatable or debate has been voted closed.
20. The presiding officer may speak to points of order in preference to other members rising for that purpose. The presiding officer shall announce all votes and decisions and shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal by any two members (mover and seconder of the appeal).
21. The reading of any report relating to the subject under consideration shall always be in order. All reports and resolutions shall be in writing. When reports and resolutions are from a committee they must be signed by a majority thereof. When a report has been read it is properly before the body without motion to accept.

Motions and resolutions of committees shall not require a second when moved for adoption by the committee directly, but when moved for adoption by a non-committee member a second is necessary.

On matters or questions previously referred to a committee by the body, all motions or resolutions of such committee based on such matters may be properly acted upon during "Reports of Committees" in the order of business. However, if a committee originates motions or resolutions on matters not previously referred to such committee by the body, such motions or resolutions are properly actionable at that time unless the body otherwise agrees to entertain such motions or resolutions at some other time in the order of business.

Recommendations in reports must be accompanied by appropriate written motion or resolution in order to be acted upon.

22. When a report is submitted with a motion or resolution attached, action shall be held on such motion or resolution only, unless such report may be considered improper or incomplete. In that event, such improper or incomplete report can be recommitted, or such report can be amended and an appropriate resolution incorporated in it. No report, or resolution thereon, properly before the body shall be withdrawn without permission of the body, such withdrawal to be decided without debate.
23. All members entitled to vote may vote on all questions. The presiding officer shall have a vote like any other member.
24. Members may change their vote from one side of the question to the other, provided they do so before announcement of the final result.
25. The dispensation and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of smoking/vaping products in VFW meeting rooms during VFW meetings are prohibited.

Sec. 1002 - Order of Business - National and Department Conventions.

1. Opening of the Convention in due form
2. Roll call of officers
3. Adopt Convention rules as appropriate
4. Appointment of committees
5. Reports of officers (Reports of National and Department officers may be submitted in printed form to assembled delegates)
6. Reports of committees
7. New business
8. Election and installation of officers
9. At the second and each succeeding session, a summary of the preceding session may be furnished the delegates assembled
10. Closing of the Convention in due form. This order of business may be suspended at any time by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates assembled at a Convention, to be taken without debate.

Sec. 1003 - Order of Business-Districts.

1. Opening in due form
2. Roll call of officers
3. Roll call of Posts
4. Read minutes of last meeting
5. Report of Quartermaster in detail
6. Read communications
7. Reports of committees
8. Read bills
9. Unfinished business
10. New business
11. Election and installation of officers
12. Good of the Order
13. Closing in due form

Sec. 1004 - Order of Business-Posts.

(a) Order of Business Traditional:

1. Opening in due form
2. Commander: Recitation of the purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Section 230102 of the Charter
3. Roll call of officers
4. Read, refer membership applications
5. Report of Investigating Committee
6. Ballot on applications
7. Muster in recruits
8. Read minutes
9. Quartermaster's report; disbursements
10. Quartermaster's report; receipts
11. Read bills
12. Report of Service Officer
13. Report on Comrades or the families of Comrades in distress
14. Report of all committees
15. Remember our National Home
16. Unfinished business (Read communications associated with unfinished business and vote)
17. New business (Read communications associated with new business and vote)
18. Nominations, elections and installation of officers
19. Good of the Order (Read communications associated with the good of the order and vote)
20. Closing in due form

(b) Order of Business Contemporary:

1. Call to order
2. Check dues cards
3. Roll call of officers
4. Read, refer membership applications
5. Read minutes
6. Quartermaster's report
7. Report of Benefits Advisor
8. Report on Comrades or the families of Comrades in distress
9. Committee report(s)
10. Unfinished business
11. New business
12. Good of the Order
13. Close meeting

Sec. 1005 - Title of Address.

In meetings of units of this organization, members holding office shall be addressed as "Comrade" followed by the title of the office they hold. All other members shall be addressed as "Comrade."

(End of Article X)

ARTICLE XI - AUXILIARY

Sec. 1101 - Organization, Disbandment, and Transition of Auxiliaries.

- (a) **Formation.** Auxiliaries shall be hereafter formed and approved in accordance with the following provisions. Auxiliaries approved and chartered prior to the adoption of these provisions need not be reapproved.
- (1) **By Departments.** No auxiliary to a Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved by two-thirds vote of the delegates assembled at an annual Department Convention. Each Department of the Auxiliary shall be identical in geographical limits with the respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and shall be known and identified by the same name as the Department whose name it bears.
 - (2) **By Districts.** No auxiliary to a District of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved at a regular or special meeting by two-thirds vote of the delegates assembled in such District. Notice of the proposed formation of an auxiliary to the District shall be given all Posts in the District in writing at least twenty (20) days prior to any meeting during which a vote to determine the formation of an auxiliary to the District will be made. Each District of the Auxiliary shall be identical in geographical limits with the respective District of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and shall be known and identified by the same number as the District whose number it bears.
 - (3) **By County Councils.** No auxiliary to a County Council of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved at a regular or special meeting by two-thirds vote of the delegates assembled in such County Council. Notice of the proposed formation of an auxiliary to the County Council shall be given all Posts of the County Council in writing at least twenty (20) days prior to any meeting during which a vote to determine the formation of an auxiliary to the County Council will be made. Each County Council of the Auxiliary shall be identical in geographical limits with the respective County Council of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and shall be known and identified by the same name as the County Council whose name it bears.
 - (4) **By Posts.** No auxiliary to a Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved by a two-thirds vote of the Post membership present and voting at a regular or special meeting, due notice of the proposed formation of an auxiliary having been given the entire membership in writing at least twenty (20) days prior to a regular meeting, or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose. Each Auxiliary shall be assigned the name and number of the Post with which it is affiliated.
- (b) **Governance.**
- (1) **Department Auxiliaries.** Department Auxiliaries shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Convention and Council of Administration of the respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Department Auxiliaries shall be governed by the Bylaws, Ritual, and Rules and Regulations of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary and the Department Auxiliary and lawful orders issued by their respective officers, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws or Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Bylaws of the Department whose name it bears or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration or the Department Council of Administration.

- (2) **District, County Council and Post Auxiliaries.** The Auxiliary to a District, County Council or Post shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the respective District, County Council or Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States whose name or number it bears.

Such auxiliary shall be governed by the Bylaws, Ritual and Rules and Regulations of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary and the Department Auxiliary and lawful orders issued by their respective officers provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws or Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department Bylaws or the Bylaws of the District, County Council or Post whose name and number it bears, or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, or the Department Council of Administration.

(c) **Suspension and Discontinuance.**

- (1) **National.** The Commander-in-Chief may suspend the Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary if its conduct, or that of its officers or Council of Administration, is determined to be detrimental to the interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary may not be suspended by the Commander-in-Chief for a period longer than thirty (30) days without the consent of the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such consent shall be given only if a majority of the members of the Council determines that it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to suspend the Charter for a longer period of time.

While the Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary is suspended, its officers shall have no authority and shall not issue any orders other than those necessary to keep a National Headquarters office in operation.

- (2) **Departments.** The Commander-in-Chief may direct the suspension of the charter of any Department Auxiliary upon the recommendation of the National President of the Auxiliary or the Commander of such Department when it is shown to the satisfaction of the Commander-in-Chief that the conduct of such Department Auxiliary, or its officers or Council of Administration, is detrimental to the interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. A Department Auxiliary charter may not be suspended by the Commander-in-Chief for a period longer than thirty (30) days without the consent of the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such consent shall be given only if a majority of the members of the Council determines it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to suspend the charter for a longer period of time.
- (3) **Districts, County Councils and Posts.** The Commander-in-Chief may direct the suspension of the charter of any District, County Council or Post auxiliary for a definite or indefinite period of time and may order the National President to order the cancellation of the charter of any District, County Council or Post auxiliary if the conduct of such auxiliary or its officers is determined to be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(d) **Cancellation.**

- (1) **By Departments.** A Department may, by a vote of eighty percent of the delegates assembled at an annual Department Convention, following written notice mailed to each Post in the Department at least twenty (20) days before such Convention, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefor. If the Department votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary, the Department Commander

shall certify that action in writing and forward such certification to the Commander-in-Chief. If determined it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the National President to cancel the charter of the Department Auxiliary.

(2) **By Districts or County Councils.** A District or County Council may, by a vote of eighty percent of the delegates assembled at a regular or special meeting following written notice to each Post in the District or County Council at least twenty (20) days before such meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefor. If the District or County Council votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander who shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with a recommendation. After review and if the Commander-in-Chief determines it to be in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the National President to cancel the charter of the District or County Council Auxiliary.

(3) **By Posts.** A Post may, by vote of eighty percent of its members present and voting at a meeting following written notice mailed to each member of the Post in good standing at least twenty (20) days before said meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefor. If the Post votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander who shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with a recommendation. After review and if the Commander-in-Chief determines it to be in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the National President to cancel the charter of the Post Auxiliary.

(e) **Disposition of Property.**

(1) **National.** In the event of the surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of the Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary, its records, monies and all other property shall immediately become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(2) **Department, District, County Council and Post Auxiliaries.** In the event of the surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of the charter of the Auxiliary to a Post, County Council, District or Department, all monies, official records and all other property shall immediately be surrendered to such officer or officers as may be provided by the Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary for disposition in accordance with those Bylaws and Rules and Regulations. Notice of such contemplated action shall be given to the Post, County Council, District and Department Commander thirty (30) days prior to the surrender or cancellation of an Auxiliary charter.

(f) **Reports.**

(1) **National.** The National President of the Auxiliary shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the Auxiliary to the Commander-in-Chief for information and for submission to the National Council of Administration.

The National Treasurer of the Auxiliary shall prepare a quarterly report for the National President and the National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary, and submit copies thereof to the Department Presidents of the Auxiliary and to the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The National Treasurer of the Auxiliary also shall prepare for the National President, before each National Convention, a list showing the Auxiliaries in good standing and the number of delegates to which each is entitled.

No less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting of the National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary at which the annual budget is adopted, the National Treasurer shall submit a proposed budget to the National President, and each member of the National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary. Immediately following the adoption of the annual budget by the National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary, the National Treasurer shall submit a copy of the approved budget to the Commander-in-Chief.

- (2) **Department.** The Department President of the respective Department Auxiliary shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Department Commander the last quarterly audit, membership status report, and such additional reports as may be required by the liaison committee of the Department Auxiliary for information and for submission by the Department Commander to the Department Council of Administration.
- (3) **Districts, County Councils, Posts.** The President of the Auxiliary to a District, County Council or Post shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Commander of the respective District, County Council or Post the last quarterly audit, membership status report and such additional reports as may be required by the liaison committee of the auxiliary. Such reports will be acknowledged by each respective Commander during the next regular meeting and may be read to the members assembled.
- (g) **Liaison.** There is established a committee composed of the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant General who shall meet with a corresponding committee composed of the Senior Vice President, Junior Vice President and the National Secretary of the Auxiliary. This combined committee shall meet each year, at the call of the Commander-in-Chief, to consider all matters affecting the welfare of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary. The purpose of the committee shall be to coordinate the activities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the activities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary, and to ensure full compliance with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and the mandates of the National Convention and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Sec. 1102 - Eligibility. (See Section 1102 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 1103 - Ritual, Bylaws and Regulations. (See Section 1103 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 1104 - Incorporation.

National. The Articles of Incorporation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must include the following provisions:

- (1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary.
- (2) This incorporated organization shall be and remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

- (3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation, or the simultaneous dissolution of this corporation and the forfeiture of the Charter issued to it by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, title to all of the assets shall pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to be disposed of according to its Bylaws. At no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.
- (4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.

Department, Districts, County Councils, Posts. The Articles of Incorporation of any Department, District, County Council or Post Auxiliary, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must include the following provisions:

- (1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the (Department of _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary) or (Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary).
- (2) This incorporated organization shall be and at all times remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, National President and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary, the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the (Department of _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) and subject to the Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary and the Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation, all the assets shall be the property of (Department of _____) or (the Post _____) Auxiliary, and in the event of any dissolution of their corporation and the forfeiture of the charter issued by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary entitled to all assets of this corporation shall pass through the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary or the Department to be disposed of in accordance with the Bylaws, rules and regulations of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary, and at no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.
- (4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.

(End of Article XI)

ARTICLE XII - MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

Sec. 1201 - Formation.

(a) Formation.

- (1) **Pup Tents.** Pup Tents may be formed and chartered in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws of the Military Order of the Cootie provided that no Pup Tent shall be formed by less than fifteen (15) members in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and, provided further that no Pup Tent shall be chartered unless the Post with which such Pup Tent is to be affiliated has consented to the chartering thereof. Consent shall require two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting, provided that Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

Each Pup Tent shall be assigned a number by the Military Order of the Cootie.

Each Pup Tent shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Post with which it is affiliated. It shall also be subject to the jurisdiction of the Department Convention, Council of Administration and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States with respect to matters within their authority.

Each Pup Tent shall function in accordance with the National Bylaws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie and lawful orders issued by Supreme (National) and Department officers of the Order, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Bylaws of the Department in which it is situated or the Post with which it is affiliated or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National or Department Council of Administration or Department Commander.

- (2) **Grand Pup Tents (Department Units).** Grand Pup Tents may be formed by a vote of the Department Convention. Each Grand Pup Tent of the Military Order of the Cootie shall be governed by and under the jurisdiction of the Convention, Council of Administration, and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, who shall decide questions of law and usage for the Grand Pup Tent subject to an appeal to the Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration; but the Grand Pup Tent shall function in accordance with the Supreme (National) Bylaws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie and lawful orders issued by National and Department officers thereof, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Bylaws of the Department with which the Grand Pup Tent is affiliated or the lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief and/or National or Department Council of Administration and the Department Commander.

(b) Suspension and Discontinuance.

- (1) The Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may suspend the Supreme National Charter of the Military Order of the Cootie for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, for conduct of the organization, its Convention, National Officers or National Council of Administration which may be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Upon recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration may, by two-thirds (2/3) vote, cancel and revoke the charter of the Military Order of the Cootie, provided written notice of such recommendation is given to the Supreme Commander and the Supreme Quartermaster/Adjutant at least ten (10) days prior to any National Council action and the Supreme Commander or their designee has been afforded an opportunity to appear before the National Council and be heard concerning such recommendation.
- (2) The Commander-in-Chief may direct the suspension, for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, or the cancellation of the charter of any subordinate unit (Grand Pup Tent or Pup Tent) of the Military Order of the Cootie, upon recommendation of the Commander of the Department wherein such unit is located, when it is shown the conduct of officers or members thereof may be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (3) **Disbanding of Pup Tent by a Post.** A Post may, by vote of eighty percent of its members present and voting at a meeting following a written notice mailed or delivered to each member of the Post in good standing at least ten (10) days before said meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Pup Tent. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefor. If the Post votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Pup Tent, it shall certify the action in writing

and forward same to the Department Commander who shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with their recommendations. If the Commander-in-Chief believes that it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie to cancel the charter of the Pup Tent.

- (4) **Change of Post Affiliation.** For a Pup Tent to change affiliation, it must first receive consent from two-thirds vote of the members of the Post to which it is now affiliated present and voting at a regular or special meeting providing the Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

The new Post to which the Pup Tent will be affiliated must provide consent by two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting, providing the Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

The change of affiliation then must be approved by the Grand Commander, as well as the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie.

Once approval has been given, all records and properties of the Pup Tent will then be transferred with the Pup Tent to the new Post of affiliation.

- (5) While the charter of the Supreme (National) Organization of the Military Order of the Cootie, or a subordinate unit thereof, is suspended said unit shall not be permitted to function and the officers thereof shall be without authority; provided, however, it or its officers shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief to lift the suspension; and in the case of suspension of the charter of the National Organization, an appeal may be made to the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (c) **Suspension of Officers.** The officers (elected and appointed) of the Military Order of the Cootie or of subordinate units thereof may be suspended by action of the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, subject to review by the National Council of Administration. While so suspended, the offending officer or officers of the Military Order of the Cootie shall be without authority, and if it is found that the conduct of an officer or officers thereof is detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may order the removal of such officer or officers.
- (d) **Disposition of Property.** In the event of a surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of a charter of a subordinate unit of the Military Order of the Cootie, all official records, money and other property shall be surrendered to such officer or officers as is provided in the Supreme (National) Bylaws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie.
- (e) **Reports.**
- (1) The Supreme (National) Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Commander-in-Chief an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the National Organization of the Military Order of the Cootie for their information and for submission by the Commander-in-Chief to the National Council of Administration.
- (2) The Grand Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie shall within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Department Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the Grand Pup Tent (Department Unit) of the Military Order of the Cootie for their information and for submission by the Commander to the Department Council of Administration.

- (f) **Liaison.** The Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall appoint a committee who shall meet with a committee appointed by the Supreme (National) Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie. This combined committee shall meet at intervals between National Conventions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to consider all matters affecting the welfare of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States insofar as the activities of the Military Order of the Cootie are concerned. The purpose of this committee shall be to coordinate the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the activities of the Military Order of the Cootie so that there shall be full compliance with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and best interest of both the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Military Order of the Cootie are furthered.
- (g) **Auxiliary Approval by Post.** No Pup Tent Auxiliary shall be chartered unless the Post with which such Pup Tent is affiliated has consented to the chartering thereof. Such consent shall be given in the same manner as consent to the chartering of the Pup Tent as provided in this section.

Sec. 1202 - Eligibility.

An application for membership in the Military Order of the Cootie must be accompanied by a certificate verifying satisfaction of the requirements for membership specified in the Bylaws. The certificate shall bear the endorsement of the Post Commander attested by the Post Adjutant.

Sec. 1203 - Bylaws, Ritual. (See Section 1203 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 1204 - Incorporation.

- (a) The Articles of Incorporation of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must have the following provisions:
 - (1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
 - (2) This incorporated organization shall be and remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and the Bylaws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie.
 - (3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation, or the simultaneous dissolution of this corporation and the forfeiture of the charter issued to it by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, title to all of the assets shall pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to be disposed of according to its Bylaws. At no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.
 - (4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.
- (b) The Articles of Incorporation of any Grand Pup Tent, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must include the following provisions:
 - (1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the (Grand Pup

Tent, Military Order of the Cootie, Department of, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Pup Tent, Military Order of the Cootie, Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States).

- (2) This incorporated organization shall be and at all times remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, Supreme Commander and National Council of Administration of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the (Department of_____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Post No._____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) and subject to the Bylaws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States and the Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation or the simultaneous dissolution this corporation and loss or forfeiture of its charter, title to all assets shall pass to the Grand Pup Tent of _____ Military Order of the Cootie of the United States to be disposed of according to the Bylaws. At no time shall the assets of this corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.
- (4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.

(End of Article XII)

ARTICLE XIII – NATIONAL VFW RIDERS GROUP

Sec. 1301 - Formation.

(a) Formation.

- (1) **Chapters.** Chapters may be formed and chartered in accordance with the National Bylaws of the VFW Riders *Group* provided no chapter shall be formed by less than eight (8) members in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or its Auxiliary, and, provided further that no chapter shall be chartered unless the Post with which such chapter is to be affiliated has consented to the chartering thereof. Consent shall require two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting, provided that Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

Each chapter shall be assigned a number by the VFW Riders *Group*.

Each chapter shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Post with which it is affiliated. It shall also be subject to the jurisdiction of the Department Convention, Council of Administration and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States with respect to matters within their authority.

Each chapter shall function in accordance with the National Bylaws, Ritual and lawful orders issued by National and Department officers of the VFW Riders *Group*, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Bylaws of the Department in which it is situated or the Post with which it is affiliated or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National or Department Council of Administration or Department Commander.

- (2) **Department Chapters.** Department Chapters may be formed by a vote of the Department Convention. Each Department Unit of the VFW Riders *Group* shall be governed by and under the jurisdiction of the Convention, Council of Administration, and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, who shall decide questions of law and usage for the Department Unit subject to an appeal to the Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration; but the Department Chapter shall function in accordance with the National Bylaws and Ritual of the VFW Riders *Group* and lawful orders issued by National and Department officers thereof, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Bylaws of the Department with which the Department Chapter is affiliated or the lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief and/or National or Department Council of Administration and the Department Commander.
- (b) **Suspension and Discontinuance.**
- (1) The Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may suspend the National Charter of the VFW Riders *Group* for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, for conduct of the organization, its Convention, National Officers or National Council of Administration which may be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Upon recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration may, by two-thirds (2/3) vote, cancel and revoke the charter of the VFW Riders *Group*, provided written notice of such recommendation is given to the National Commander at least ten (10) days prior to any National Council action and the National Commander of the VFW Riders *Group* or their designee has been afforded an opportunity to appear before the National Council and be heard concerning such recommendation.
- (2) The Commander-in-Chief may direct the suspension, for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, or the cancellation of the charter of any subordinate chapter of the VFW Riders *Group*, upon recommendation of the Commander of the Department wherein such chapter is located, when it is shown the conduct of officers or members thereof may be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (3) **Disbanding of Chapter by a Post.** A Post may, by vote of eighty percent of its members present and voting at a meeting following a written notice mailed or delivered to each member of the Post in good standing at least ten (10) days before said meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its chapter. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefor. If the Post votes to request cancellation of the charter of its chapter, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander who shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with their recommendations. If the Commander-in-Chief believes that it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the National Commander of the VFW Riders *Group* to cancel the charter of the chapter.
- (4) **Change of Post Affiliation.** For a chapter to change affiliation, it must first receive consent from two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Post to which it is now affiliated present and voting at a regular or special meeting providing the Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.
- The new Post to which the chapter will be affiliated must provide consent by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special

meeting, providing the Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

The change of affiliation then must be approved by the Department Commander, as well as the National Commander of the VFW Riders *Group*.

Once approval has been given, all records and properties of the chapter will then be transferred with the chapter to the new Post of affiliation.

- (5) While the charter of the National Organization of the VFW Riders *Group*, or a subordinate chapter thereof, is suspended said chapter shall not be permitted to function and the officers thereof shall be without authority; provided, however, it or its officers shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief to lift the suspension; and in the case of suspension of the charter of the National Organization, an appeal may be made to the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (c) **Suspension of Officers.** The officers (elected and appointed) of the VFW Riders *Group* or of subordinate chapters thereof may be suspended by action of the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, subject to review by the National Council of Administration. While so suspended, the offending officer or officers of the VFW Riders *Group* shall be without authority, and if it is found that the conduct of an officer or officers thereof is detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may order the removal of such officer or officers.
- (d) **Disposition of Property.** In the event of a surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of a charter of a subordinate chapter of the VFW Riders *Group*, all official records, money and other property shall be surrendered to such officer or officers as is provided in the National Bylaws and Ritual of the VFW Riders *Group*.
- (e) **Reports.**
 - (1) The National Commander of the VFW Riders *Group* shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Commander-in-Chief an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the National Organization of the VFW Riders *Group* for their information and for submission by the Commander-in-Chief to the National Council of Administration.
 - (2) The Department Commander of the VFW Riders *Group* shall within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Department Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the Department Chapter of the VFW Riders *Group* for their information and for submission by the Commander to the Department Council of Administration.
- (f) **Liaison.** The Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may appoint a committee who shall meet with a committee appointed by the National Commander of the VFW Riders *Group*. This combined committee when appointed shall meet at intervals between National Conventions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to consider all matters affecting the welfare of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States insofar as the activities of the VFW Riders *Group* are concerned. The purpose of this committee shall be to coordinate the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the activities of the VFW Riders *Group* so that there shall be full compliance with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and best interest of both the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the VFW Riders *Group* are furthered.

Sec. 1302 - Eligibility.

An application for membership in the VFW Riders *Group* must be accompanied by a certificate verifying satisfaction of the requirements for membership specified in the VFW Riders *Group* Bylaws. The certificate shall bear the endorsement of the Post Commander attested by the Post Adjutant.

Sec. 1303 - Bylaws, Ritual. (See Section 1303 of the Bylaws)

Sec. 1304 - Incorporation.

- (a) The Articles of Incorporation of the National VFW Riders *Group*, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must have the following provisions:
 - (1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the VFW Riders *Group*.
 - (2) This incorporated organization shall be and remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and the Bylaws and Ritual of the VFW Riders *Group*.
 - (3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation, or the simultaneous dissolution of this corporation and the forfeiture of the charter issued to it by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, title to all of the assets shall pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to be disposed of according to its Bylaws. At no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.
 - (4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.
- (b) The Articles of Incorporation of any Department Chapter should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must include the following provisions:
 - (1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the (Department Chapter, VFW Riders *Group*, Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Chapter, VFW Riders *Group*, Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States).
 - (2) This incorporated organization shall be and at all times remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, National Commander and National Council of Administration of the VFW Riders *Group*, the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the (Department of _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) and subject to the Bylaws and Ritual of the VFW Riders *Group* and the Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
 - (3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation or the simultaneous dissolution this corporation and loss or forfeiture of its charter, title to all assets shall pass to the Department Chapter of the VFW Riders *Group* to be disposed of according to the Bylaws. At no time shall the assets of this corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.
 - (4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.

(End of Article XIII)

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Sec. 1401 - Amendments.

Manual of Procedure and Ritual: The Manual of Procedure and Ritual may be amended by the Council of Administration by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting as prescribed in Section 622 of the Bylaws.

The Manual of Procedure and Ritual may be amended by the National Convention by a majority vote of the delegates present and voting provided that such amendments have been forwarded, through channels; have been properly approved; and, have been proposed by a Post, a District, a Department, or recommended by a National officer. All proposed amendments will be available to Posts by the Adjutant General at least fifteen (15) days before the assembling of the National Convention for those amendments being proposed for consideration at the convention.

The Adjutant General shall be authorized to correct article and section designations, punctuation and cross references and to make such other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the intent of the National Convention in connection with the Manual of Procedure and Ritual.

(End of Article XIV)

APPENDIX

(Article IX Forms)

SPECIAL ORDER INITIATING DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Special Order No. _____ Date: _____

Headquarters, VFW Post No. (or Department) _____

To: <Insert Accused Name & Address>

Please be advised that a disciplinary action has been initiated against you pursuant to Article IX of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Attached to this order is a copy of the Charges and Specifications (Form DA-2), Materials Relied Upon, Request for Hearing (DA-6), Request for Summary Disposition (DA-8).

Pursuant to Article IX of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, you are advised that you may request a Disciplinary Hearing or a Summary Disposition. To request a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition, you must notify:

<Insert Name of Commander (Initiating Officer) & Address>

in writing, within fifteen (15) days of the date that this order was received by registered or certified mail or either personally delivered to you. If not using the attached forms DA-6 or DA-8, the notification must specifically state that a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition is requested and sent via **Registered or Certified Mail**. Upon mutual written consent of the initiating officer or designated initiating member and the accused, delivery of documents, including the initiating documents may be electronic. If you do not request a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition within the time stated, the initiating officer may order penalties pursuant to Section 903(d) of the National Bylaws.

Copies of Article IX of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure as well as the Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions may be obtained electronically behind the member login at VFW.org or by request made to the National Headquarters.

By order of _____
Commander (Initiating Officer)

Post Name & Post No. (or Department)

Official: _____
Adjutant

CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS

Charge 1: _____

Specification 1: _____

Specification 2: _____

Charge 2: _____

Specification 1: _____

Specification 2: _____

On my oath or affirmation as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I declare that I have a reasonable belief that the above-described act or acts have been committed.

Initiating Officer (Name & Signature) Date

Official: _____
Adjutant (Name & Signature) Date

(If additional Charges and Specifications are required, continue on a separate page and attach to this form.)

ORDER APPOINTING A DISCIPLINARY HEARING
PANEL AND SPECIAL ORDER

Special Order No. _____ Date: _____

Headquarters, VFW Post No. (or Department): _____

In Accordance with the provision of section 903 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, the following Disciplinary Panel is hereby assigned:

DETAIL FOR THE PANEL

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, President of Panel.

The following have been identified as participants in the hearing:

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Prosecutor

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Defense Counsel

The Disciplinary Hearing Panel shall convene at _____

_____ on _____, 20____,

or as soon after this date as practicable for the purpose of trying such person or persons as may be properly brought before it, including: _____.

By order of: _____

Commander (as appropriate)

Post Name & Post No. (or District or Department as appropriate)

Official:

Adjutant

FINDINGS AND SENTENCE

The panel was closed (or adjourned for the purpose of taking a ballot) and reported back as follows:

On all Charges and Specifications: _____
(Guilty or Not Guilty)

OR

On Charge 1, Specification 1: _____

On Charge _____, Specification _____

On Charge _____, Specification _____

On Charge _____, Specification _____

On Charge _____, Specification _____

On Charge _____, Specification _____

On Charge _____, Specification _____

On Charge _____, Specification _____

On Charge _____, Specification _____

The panel imposed the following sentence: _____

Prosecutor (Name & Signature)

President of the Panel (Name & Signature)

Date

Accused or counsel (Name & Signature if present)

Note: In the event the accused is not present or fails to sign this document, a copy of the Findings and Sentence shall be mailed to the accused last known address within seven (7) days after the hearing.

FORM OF RECORD OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Proceedings of a Disciplinary Hearing Panel convened at _____
_____ on _____, 20_____, pursuant to an order issued by

PRESENT

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, President of
Panel Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Prosecutor
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Defense Counsel
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Panel Member
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Panel Member
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Panel Member
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Panel Member
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Panel Member
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Panel Member
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, Panel Member

ABSENT

Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, _____
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, _____
Comrade _____ of Post No. _____, _____

The accused received notice of the Charges and Specifications in accordance with Section
903(b) and requested a hearing. Yes ___ No ___

The following panel member(s) were challenged by the Prosecutor for cause and excused:

Panel member(s) challenged by the Prosecutor for cause; challenge denied:

The following panel member(s) were challenged by the defense for cause and excused:

Panel member(s) challenged by the defense for cause; challenge denied:

Accused (or Defense Counsel) stated that he had no objection to trial by any member remaining on the panel. Yes____No____

The members of the panel were sworn. Yes____No____

The Charges and Specifications were read to the accused, or the accused stated that he had read the charges and he responded as follows (PLEAS):

To all Charges and Specifications: _____

OR

On Charge 1, Specification 1: _____

On Charge____, Specification____:

On Charge____, Specification____:

On Charge____, Specification____:

On Charge____, Specification____:

On Charge____, Specification____:

On Charge____, Specification____:

The following witnesses testified: _____

The following documents were used in evidence: _____

The defense was given full opportunity to examine each witness? Yes____No____

The rights of the accused, as a witness, were explained? Yes____No____

An argument was made by the Defense Counsel on behalf of the accused? Yes____No____

The accused took the witness stand in own defense? Yes____No____

The accused was present at the trial? Yes____No____

President of the Panel Name & Signature

REQUEST FOR HEARING

I have received Special Order No. _____ dated _____ with attached charges and specifications, indicating that a disciplinary action has been initiated.

The following have been identified as participants in the hearing:

Accused _____
Printed Name

Defense Counsel _____, (If known)
Name, Member #, Post # (if applicable)

As a result of this action, I request a hearing in accordance with Section 903 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Accused Name & Signature

Date

Note: This request is to be mailed, registered or certified mail, and must be received, not postmarked, within fifteen (15) days by the initiating authority listed on the Special Order (Form DA-1).

NOTIFICATION OF PENALTY (NO HEARING/SUMMARY DISPOSITION REQUESTED)

(Insert Date)

(Accused Name), Member
VFW Post XXXX
Address 1
City, State, ZIP

Certified Mail Return Receipt Requested
No.

Comrade (Accused Name):

Special Order No. XXXX initiated an Article IX Disciplinary Action against you. The order, along with the required copies of the Charges and Specifications (Form DA-2), Materials Relied Upon, Request for Hearing (DA-6), Request for Summary Disposition (DA-8) were sent to you certified mail, return receipt requested pursuant to Section 903 of the VFW Manual of Procedure. You were advised that you may request a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition; you failed to do so.

As such, and in accordance with Section 903 of the National Bylaws, In the event that the accused member does not properly request a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition within fifteen (15) days or, prior to the expiration of the fifteen (15) day period, advises the Commander or the designated member initiating the action that a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition is not desired, the Commander or the designated member initiating the charges, may take such action as is deemed appropriate including the ordering of any penalties pursuant to Section 903(d) of the National Bylaws.

Therefore, I have ordered with concurrence of the Post the penalty of (state penalty; if desired you may add the reason for your penalty, but it is not required.)

Pursuant to Section 903(d) of the National Bylaws, this order is not subject to appeal.

By order of:

Commander (date)

Post No.

Official:

Adjutant (date)

cc:

Department Adjutant

NOTIFICATION OF PENALTY (NO HEARING/SUMMARY DISPOSITION REQUESTED)

(Insert Date)

(Accused Name), Member
VFW Post XXXX
Address 1
City, State, ZIP

Certified Mail Return Receipt Requested
No.

Comrade (Accused Name):

Special Order No. XXXX initiated an Article IX Disciplinary Action against you. The order, along with the required copies of the Charges and Specifications (Form DA-2), Materials Relied Upon, Request for Hearing (DA-6), Request for Summary Disposition (DA-8) were sent to you certified mail, return receipt requested pursuant to Section 903 of the VFW Manual of Procedure. You were advised that you may request a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition; you failed to do so.

As such, and in accordance with Section 903 of the National Bylaws, In the event that the accused member does not properly request a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition within fifteen (15) days or, prior to the expiration of the fifteen (15) day period, advises the Commander or the designated member initiating the action that a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition is not desired, the Commander or the designated member initiating the charges, may take such action as is deemed appropriate including the ordering of any penalties pursuant to Section 903(d) of the National Bylaws.

Therefore, I have ordered with concurrence of the Department Council of Administration the penalty of (state penalty; if desired you may add the reason for your penalty, but it is not required.)

Pursuant to Section 903(d) of the National Bylaws, this order is not subject to appeal.

By order of:

Commander (date)

Department

Official:

Adjutant (date)

cc:

Adjutant General

REQUEST FOR SUMMARY DISPOSITION

I have received Special Order No. _____ dated _____ with attached charges and specifications, indicating that a disciplinary action has been initiated.

As a result of this action, I request a summary disposition in accordance with Section 903 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. I understand under this procedure I cannot contest that the facts alleged in the Charges and Specifications, but request an assessment of the penalty by a Panel of members of the National Council of Administration independent of the initiating officer or designated initiating member.

Accused Name & Signature

Date

Note: This request is to be mailed, registered or certified mail, and must be received, not postmarked, within fifteen (15) days by the initiating authority listed on the Special Order (Form DA-1).

INDEX

BYLAWS AND MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

	BYLAWS PAGE	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE PAGE
ADDRESS, TITLE (1005).....		113
MEMBER DUES (104).....	10	64
AMENDMENTS (1401).....	55	126
APPEALS (See Article IX Discipline) (904)	49	106
APPEALS		
Right of Appeal (109).....	11	65
Rights of Members (110).....	11	67
APPLICATIONS - AFFILIATION OF NEW MEMBERS (102)	9	63
APPOINTED OFFICER (See Officers)		
ARREARAGES		
Department (513).....	24	88
District (413).....	20	80
Post (213).....	15	71
AUXILIARY (1101, 1102, 1103, 1104).....	50-52	114-117
AWARDS AND CITATIONS (619)	34	96
BADGES, SEALS, EMBLEMS, UNIFORMS, INSIGNIA, MANUFACTURE AND USE OF (803).....	44	101
BONDS		
Accountable Officers (703).....	39	97
BUDDY POPPY		
Proceeds to Relief Fund (219)	16	76
Sale of, and Distribution of Proceeds (711)	41	99
BYLAWS (Power to Fix)		
Department (502).....	22	86
District (402)	18	79
Auxiliary (1103).....	51	117
Military Order of the Cootie (1203)	53	121
National VFW Riders Group (1303)	54	125
Post (202).....	13	68
CHAIRMEN (See Officers)		
CHANGE OF POST LOCATION, MEETING PLACE, DAY OR TIME (205)	14	68
CHANGE OF POST NAME (208)	14	69
CHARTER (County Council)		
Formation, Chartering (301).....	17	78
CHARTER (Department)		
Formation, Institution and Chartering (501).....	22	86
Surrender or Forfeiture (510)	23	87
Suspension and Revocation (511)	23	87
CHARTER (District)		
Formation, Institution and Chartering (401).....	18	78
Surrender or Forfeiture (410)	19	79
Suspension and Revocation (411)	19	79
CHARTER (Post)		
Consolidated Post (209)	14	69
Formation, Institution and Chartering (201)	13	67
Surrender of Charter (210).....	14	70
Suspension and Revocation of Charter (211).....	14	70
CLUBS, INCORPORATION AND CONTROL (708, 709).....	39-40	98-99
COLORS, OFFICIAL (802)	44	101
COMMEMORATIVE DATES (223).....	17	78
COMMITTEES (See Officers)		
COMMITTEE AWARDS AND CITATIONS (619).....	34	96
CONSOLIDATION OF POSTS (209)	14	69

	BYLAWS PAGE	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE PAGE
CONTROL OF UNITS (709)	40	99
CONVENTIONS (See Delegates also)		
Department (503).....	22	86
District (403)	18	79
National (603).....	27	94
COOTIE (See Military Order of)		
COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION (Department)		
Composition, Powers and Duties (522)	26	94
COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION (National)		
Composition, Powers and Duties (622)	36	97
Council Members, How Elected (623)	37	97
COUNTY COUNCIL		
Formation, Chartering (301).....	17	78
DEFUNCT POSTS (See Charter, Post) DELEGATES		
County Council (222)	17	78
Department Convention (222).....	17	78
District Convention (222)	17	78
National Convention (222)	17	78
DEPARTMENTS		
Arrearages (513).....	24	88
Bylaws (502).....	22	86
Council of Administration-Composition.		
Powers and Duties (522)	26	94
Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees (503)	22	86
Defunct (512).....	24	88
Dues (506).....	23	86
Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and		
Committees (516)	24	89
Eligibility to Office (515)	24	89
Formation, Institution and Chartering (501)	22	86
Governing Body; Composition (504)	22	86
Nomination, Election, Installation and		
Term of Office (517).....	25	89
Officers: Duties and Obligations (518).....	25	90
Solicitation of Funds (514)	24	88
Surrender of Charter (510).....	23	87
Suspension and Revocation of Charter (511).....	23	87
Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members (520).....	25	93
Voting (521).....	25	94
DISCIPLINARY ACTION		
Administrative Actions (908)	50	108
Appeal (904)	49	106
Discipline of Members (901)	45	102
Offenses (902).....	45	102
Penalties (907)	50	108
Prima Facie Case (906).....	50	108
Procedure for Disciplinary Actions (903)	46	102
Suspension from Office (905)	49	108
DISTRICTS		
Bylaws (402).....	18	79
Convention (403)	18	79
Defunct (412).....	20	80
Dues (406).....	19	79
Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees (416).....	20	81
Eligibility to Office (415)	20	81
Formation, Institution and Chartering (401)	18	78
Governing Body; Composition (404)	18	79
Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office (417)	21	81
Officers: Duties and Obligations (418).....	21	82

	BYLAWS PAGE	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE PAGE
Regular, Special and Committee Meetings, Convention, Quorum,		
Authorized Attendees (403)	18	79
Solicitation of Funds (414)	20	80
Surrender of Charter (410).....	19	79
Suspension and Revocation of Charter (411).....	19	79
Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers		
or Committee Members (420)	21	85
Voting (421).....	21	85
DUAL MEMBERSHIP (102)	9	
DUES		
Department (506).....	23	86
District (406)	19	79
National (606).....	28	95
Post (104).....	10	64
Remission of (104).....	10	
ELECTION (103)	10	63
ELECTION TO OFFICE (See OFFICERS)		
ELECTED OFFICERS (See OFFICERS) ELIGIBILITY		
Challenging Members Eligibility (108)	11	64
Membership (101).....	9	58
FORMER MEMBERS - REINSTATEMENT (106)	10	64
HOMES (See CLUBS) INCORPORATION OF UNITS AND		
OTHER ACTIVITIES (708).....	39	
INCORPORATION OF UNITS-		
PERMISSION TO INCORPORATE (708)		98
INSIGNIA (See BADGES, UNIFORMS, Etc.)		
INSPECTION		
Authority For (710).....	41	99
Department Inspector (518)		90
Inspector General (618)	29	
INSTALLATION (See OFFICERS)		
INSTITUTION (See POST)		
AUXILIARY		
Eligibility (1102)	51	117
Incorporation (1104)	52	117
Organization, Disbandment, and Transition of Auxiliaries (1101)	50	114
Ritual, Bylaws and Regulations (1103).....	51	117
LANGUAGE PRESCRIBED		
Conduct Meetings in English Language (713).....	42	100
LIFE MEMBERS (111).....	11	67
MAGAZINE, VFW (Official Publication) (705).....	39	98
MAILING LIST (714)	42	100
MEETINGS; QUORUM		
Department (503).....	22	86
District (403)	18	79
National (603)	27	94
Post (203).....	13	68
MEMBERS-AT-LARGE (102).....	9	
MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING (105)	10	64
MEMBERSHIP (See POST also)		
Application, New Members (102).....	9	63
Election (103)	10	63
Eligibility (101)	9	58-63
Former Members, (106)	10	64
Life Members (111).....	11	67

	BYLAWS PAGE	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE PAGE
Members-at-Large (102).....	9	
Member Dues (104).....	10	64
Members in Good Standing (105).....	10	64
Right of Appeal (109).....	11	65
Rights of Members (110).....	11	67
Transfers (107).....	10	64
MEMORIAL DAY		
Observance (223).....	17	78
MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE		
Bylaws, Ritual (1203).....	53	121
Eligibility (1202).....	53	121
Formation (1201).....	52	118
Incorporation (1204).....	53	121
Reports (1201).....	52	118
Suspension (1201).....	52	118
M.O.C. (1201).....	52	118
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS		
Bonds (703).....	39	97
Buddy Poppy (711).....	41	99
Control of Units (709).....	40	99
Incorporation of Units and Other Activities (708).....	39	
Incorporation of Units - Permission to Incorporate (708).....		98
Inspection (710).....	41	99
Language Prescribed (713).....	42	100
National Home Funds (706).....	39	98
National Honor Guard (712).....	41	100
Official Publication (705).....	39	98
Politics (702).....	38	97
Ritual, Distribution (701).....	38	97
NAME, USE OF (208, 805).....	14, 45	69, 102
NATIONAL CONVENTION		
Eligibility to Office (615).....	29	95
Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees (603).....	27	94
National Council of Administration,		
Composition, Powers and Duties (622).....	36	97
National Committees (619).....	34	96
National Council Members, Department Members-Election,		
Vacancies and Removal (623).....	37	97
National Dues (606).....	28	95
National Headquarters (613).....	28	95
Nomination, Election, Installation and		
Term of Office (617).....	29	95
Officers, Elected and Appointed (616).....	29	95
Officers, Powers and Duties (622).....	36	97
Solicitation of Funds (614).....	29	95
Supreme Governing Body; Composition (601).....	27	94
Vacancies and Inactive Officers (620).....	35	96
Voting (621).....	35	97
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS (613).....	28	95
NATIONAL HOME		
Buddy Poppy Proceeds (711).....	41	99
Solicitation of Funds (706).....	39	98
NATIONAL HONOR GUARD		
Eligibility, Bylaws, Inspection (712).....	41	100
Name and Control (712).....	41	100
NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMITTEE		
Composition and Duties (619).....	34	96

	BYLAWS PAGE	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE PAGE
NATIONAL VFW RIDERS GROUP		
Bylaws, Ritual (1303).....	54	125
Eligibility (1302)	54	125
Formation (1301).....	54	122
Incorporation (1304)	54	125
Reports (1301).....	54	122
Suspension (1301).....	54	122
NEW MEMBERS (See MEMBERSHIP)		
NEW POST - FORMATION, INSTITUTION AND CHARTERING (201)	13	67
NOMINATION OF OFFICERS (See OFFICERS)		
OBLIGATION		
New Members (103)	10	63
Officers (See OFFICERS)		
OFFENSES (See DISCIPLINARY ACTION)		
OFFICERS (Department)		
Appointed (516).....	24	89
Elected (516)	24	89
Duties and Obligations (518).....	25	90
Eligibility to Office (515)	24	89
Removal of Elected Officers (520)	25	93
Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office (517)	25	89
Vacancies (520).....	25	93
OFFICERS (District)		
Appointed (416)	20	81
Duties and Obligations (418).....	21	82
Elected (416)	20	81
Eligibility to Office (415)	20	81
Removal of Elected Officers (420)	21	85
Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office (417)	21	81
Vacancies (420).....	21	85
OFFICERS (National)		
Appointed (616)	29	95
Duties and Obligations (618).....	29	96
Elected (616)	29	95
Eligibility to Office (615)	29	95
Inactive (620).....	35	96
Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office (617)	29	95
Vacancies (620).....	35	96
OFFICERS (Post)		
Appointed (216).....	16	72
Duties and Obligations (218).....	16	73
Elected, Chairmen and Committees (216)	16	72
Eligibility to Office (215)	15	72
Removal of Elected Officers (220)	16	77
Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office (217)	16	72
Vacancies (220).....	16	77
ORDER OF BUSINESS		
Department Convention (1002).....		112
District Convention (1003)		112
National Convention (1002)		112
Post (1004)		113
PAST OFFICERS (719)	42	100
PER CAPITA TAX (See DUES)		
POLITICS (702).....	38	97
POPPY (See BUDDY POPPY)		
POST (See MEMBERSHIP also)		
Arrearages (213).....	15	71
Bylaws (202).....	13	68
Change of Location; Meeting Place, Day or Time (205)	14	68

	BYLAWS PAGE	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE PAGE
Chairmen and Committees (216)	16	72
Change of Name (208)	14	69
Challenging Members Eligibility (108)	11	64
Commemorative Dates (223)	17	78
Consolidation of Posts (209)	14	69
Defunct Posts (212)	15	71
Delegates, County Council, District, Department and National Conventions (222)	17	78
Eligibility to Office (215)	15	72
Formation, Institution and Chartering (201)	13	67
Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office (217)	16	72
Officers, Elected and Appointed (216)	16	72
Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations (218)	16	73
Regular and Special Meetings; Quorum; (203)	13	68
Sale of Post Property (709)	40	99
Solicitation of Funds (214)	15	71
Surrender of Charter (210, 212)	14, 15	70, 71
Suspension and Revocation of Charter (211)	14	70
Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members (220)	16	77
Voting (221)	17	78
POWERS AND DUTIES, OFFICERS (See OFFICERS)		
POWERS AND DUTIES		
Department Council of Administration (522)	26	94
National Council of Administration (622)	36	97
PROVISIONAL DEPARTMENTS (See DEPARTMENT)		
PUBLICATIONS		
Official National (705)	39	98
Use of Name in (708, 805)	39, 45	98, 102
QUORUM		
Department Convention (503)	22	86
District Convention (403)	18	79
National Convention (603)	27	94
Post Meeting (203)	13	68
REBATE ON SALES (715)	42	100
REINSTATEMENT FORMER MEMBERS (See MEMBERSHIP)		
REMISSION OF DUES (219)	11	76
RIGHT OF APPEAL, ADMINSTRATIVE (109)	11	65
RIGHTS OF MEMBERS (110)	11	67
No Member Be Deprived of (110)	11	67
RITUAL		
Adoption, Distribution, Entitlement (701)	38	97
Auxiliary (1103)	51	117
Military Order of Cootie (1203)	53	121
VFW Riders Group (1303)	54	125
RULES OF ORDER		
Governing All Meetings (1001)	50	108
SALE OF POST PROPERTY (709)	40	99
SEALS (801)	43	101
SERVICE MARKS (805)	45	
SERVICE OFFICERS (See Officers)		
SOLICITATION OF FUNDS		
By Department (514)	24	88
By District (414)	20	80
By National (614)	29	95
By Post (214)	15	71

	BYLAWS PAGE	MANUAL OF PROCEDURE PAGE
SPECIAL MEETINGS		
District (403)	18	79
Post (203)	13	68
REGULAR MEETINGS		
District (403)	18	79
Department (503)	22	86
National (603)	27	94
Post (203)	13	68
SUBORDINATE UNITS (708, 709)	39, 40	98, 99
SURRENDER OF CHARTER (See CHARTER)		
SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF CHARTER (See CHARTER)		
SUSPENSION FROM OFFICE (See DISCIPLINARY ACTION)		
TERM OF OFFICE (See OFFICERS)		
TITLE OF ADDRESS (1005)		113
TRADEMARKS (805)	45	
TRANSFERS (107)	10	64
UNIFORMS, BADGES, INSIGNIA (803)	44	101
USE OF NAME (708, 805)	39, 45	98, 102
VACANCIES (See OFFICERS)		
VETERANS SERVICE COMMITTEE (619)	34	96
VOTING		
Department Convention (521)	25	94
District Convention (421)	21	85
National Convention (621)	35	97
Post Meetings (221)	17	78

VFW RITUAL



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

July 2026



Americanism is an unfailing love of country; loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity.



Men and women returning from all quarters of the globe stand before our altars of comradeship, pledging loyalty to the nation and to one another.

Through the generations we give life to our impressive ritual, for it solemnly binds young and old who have fought for America on land, on sea and in the air.

CHAPTER TITLES

Foreword	1
Open Meetings	1
General Rules	2
Commemorative Tributes	3
Special Prayers	4
Balloting for Candidates	8
Opening Post Ceremonies	9
Order of Business, Post	13
Closing Ceremonies, Post	15
Initiation Ceremony, Brief Form	16
Ceremonial Initiation	23
Presentation of Insigne	36
Instituting New Post	39
Dedicating Post Colors	45
Installation of Post Officers	48
Installation of District Officers	52
Installation, Department, National Officers	57
Honoring Gold Star Parents	64
Memorial Service	65
Memorial Day Service (May 30)	70
Dedicating a Memorial	75
Flag Presentation Ceremony	79
Funeral Ceremonies	80
Parade Regulations	100
Honoring Visiting Officers	101
Tribute to Comrades-POW or MIA	102
Unserviceable Flags Ceremony	106

SUBJECTS, INDEXED

ALTAR, BIBLE

Altar, Sacred Area	2, 3, 20, 34
Dedicating Post Colors	45
Initiation Ceremonies	16, 23
Memorial Service	65
Obligations	18, 28, 40, 42, 49, 54, 59, 63

CAPS

Removal of caps (Item 13)	3
---------------------------------	---

COLOR GUARD

Advancing Colors	9-10
Dedicating Post Colors	45
Funerals, at	80
Memorial Dedication	75
Memorial Day	70
Retiring Colors	15

CROSS OF MALTA

History of	36, 41
Memorial Floral Piece	68
Presentation to Members	22, 36

FLAG

Allegiance, Pledge of.....	11, 46
Altar	2, 3, 9, 21, 28, 45, 66
Dedicating a Memorial.....	75
Dedicating Post Colors	45
Flag Presentation Ceremony.....	79
Memorial Day Service.....	70
On Casket, Grave.....	80-96
Parade, in	100-101
Placing of, and U.S. Code.....	11, 47, 75

FUNERALS

Military Regulations	81, 89, 98
Band.....	82
Body Bearers.....	87
Bugler, Taps.....	85, 98
Burial Flag	80
Chapel, in	80, 98
Chaplain	81, 97
Color Guard.....	86
Committal, Benediction.....	97
Cremated Remains	98
Escort	83
Firing Squad	83-85
Grave Services	85
Headdress, Removing	81, 82
Honorary Pallbearers.....	87
VPW Burial Ritual	93

GUESTS

At Post Sessions.....	12, 101
-----------------------	---------

INITIATION CEREMONIES

Altar	24
Arrangements, Post Room	23
Arch of Chivalry	23, 37
Chaplain	17-36
Commander.....	24-29
Grave, Symbolology	25-26
"In Flanders Field"	31
Instructing New Members.....	30
Junior Vice-Commander	26-34
Needy Wounded Comrade	32
Officer of the Day.....	24-35
Prayer for New Members	19, 29, 40
Presentation of Insigne	22, 36
Recruits' Obligation.....	18, 28, 40
Senior Vice-Commander	20-33
Sentry	26, 35

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Burial Ritual	93
Draping Post Charter	99
Memorial Day.....	70
General Logan's Order No. 11	70-72
Post, Department, National.....	65

OBLIGATION, VFW

For New Members	18, 28, 40
-----------------------	------------

OFFICERS

Duties of Office	42, 49, 54, 59, 67
Installation	48, 52, 57
Instituting	39
Obligation	42, 49, 54, 59, 67

PASSWORD

Dues, Card, Substitute for	33
----------------------------------	----

PRAYERS

Burial Ceremony	90, 92, 94
Dedicating a Memorial	78
Dedicating Post Colors	47
For National Home	14
For New Members	19, 29, 41
Memorial Service	66
Officers, Instituted, Installed	43, 50, 55, 60
Post Meetings, Open, Closing	11, 15
Special Prayers	4
Stand During Prayers (item 13)	3
Pearl Harbor Day Memorial Prayer	5

SONGS

America	69
Nearer, My God to Thee	67
Sleep, Soldier Boy, Sleep	2, 68

TRIBUTES

Commemorating Special Days	3-4
Dedicating a Memorial	75
Eaton Rapids Home	12
Gold Star Parents	64
Memorial Service	65
Ceremony for Draping Charter	99
Visiting Officers	101
Tribute to Comrades-P.O.W. or M.I.A.	102

FOREWORD

The ceremonies described in our Ritual symbolize the high ideals for which we strive. All ceremonies should be presented expressively and accurately so that recruits and members alike are impressed by the full meaning of every action.

The altar with its flag and Bible, the prayers, pledges and the official stations comprise the inner sanctum of our order. They express the distinctive character of the world's oldest overseas war veterans' organization.

Every comrade interpreting the ritual should memorize thoroughly the portrayal of their part. A smooth performance is necessary to make the proper impression on the audience.

Veterans coming to us from military forces of all wars appreciate painstaking attention to details. Our first influence upon recruits and new members will be through presentation of the VFW ritual. Every participant is urged to give their best.

OPEN MEETINGS

OPEN MEETINGS

When open meetings are to be held these instructions should be followed:

OPENING CEREMONIES

Full ritualistic work is permissible in meetings open to the public. All persons present shall salute the colors at proper times.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

Colors are presented. All rise and salute the colors. Colors are retired. Commander states: "This meeting is closed."

OBLIGATION OF RECRUITS

Recruits may be obligated publicly. For instructions see page 16, "Initiation Ceremony, Brief Form," and page 23, "Ceremonial Initiation."

INSTITUTION OF NEW POSTS

This ceremony may be used in openings as prescribed including obligation of candidates and installation of officers.

GENERAL RULES

This Ritual may not be changed except by the National Council of Administration or the National Convention.

1. Officers are personally responsible for their Rituals. They shall permit only properly authorized persons to read the Ritual.
2. While the Post is in session, no member will pass between the altar and the Commander's station, except as prescribed by the Ritual.
3. All officers should memorize their parts and practice with co-workers in order to render all ritual work correctly and impressively. See the Foreword.
4. The officer of the day shall act as master of ceremonies.
5. When addressing the Commander all officers salute in a military manner. The Commander will return similar salutes. All officers exchange salutes when addressing each other.
6. One rap of the gavel calls attention or seats the body when standing. Two raps of the gavel call everyone to standing attention.
7. At National and Department conventions the "Star Spangled Banner" should be played or sung at the Opening Session, immediately after the colors are placed.
8. All Posts should hold a public memorial service for their departed comrades, at least once a year. This may be held as a special ceremony or in conjunction with a public meeting.
9. "Sleep, Soldier Boy," by Dorothy Alexander, Auxiliary No. 409, or any other appropriate song may be used at all VFW memorial services.
10. All VFW military formations and procedures shall conform with the current Infantry Drill Regulations, United States Army.
11. The military salute shall be given in all ceremonials and meetings when a member wishes to address the Commander or presiding officer. The military salute shall also be used in the ceremonial work, as set forth in this Ritual.

12. In compliance with directives approved by the Veterans of Foreign Wars 59th National Convention and the VFW National Council of Administration "the Flag of the United States, of appropriate size and attached to a standard, shall be placed upright upon the VFW altar to the left of a Bible—(to the left of the Bible as viewed by one standing before the altar and facing the Commander's station). The POW/MIA flag may be placed to the right of the American Flag. Both the flags and Bible shall be upon a regulation VFW altar cloth."
13. (a) All members who are able will stand during the offering of the prayers; (b) members will follow the action of the Chaplain or presiding officer relative to removal of caps during prayers; if uncovering, the hat shall be placed on the extended closed fingers of the right hand in such a way that the Cross of Malta is exposed and held over the heart; (c) official caps will not be worn during luncheons, banquets or other meals; (d) Official caps will be the only head covering allowed to be worn at regular meetings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMEMORATIVE TRIBUTES

Posts should arrange special ceremonies and all Commanders shall alert comrades to their obligations for appropriate commemoration of the following outstanding action dates in U.S. history:

THE DATES

January 27 - Signing of the Vietnam Peace Accord in 1973.
February 15 - Sinking of U.S.S. Maine, 1898.
February 28 - Liberation of Kuwait—Operation Desert Storm 1991.
March 24 - Start of Kosovo Campaign 1999.
March 29 - National Vietnam War Veterans Day.
March 31 - End of Operation Restore Hope—Somalia 1995.
May 1 - Loyalty Day, annually.
May 8 - VE Day: German unconditional surrender signed, 1945.
May 30 - Memorial Day.
June 6 - D Day: Allied invasion of Europe, 1944.
June 12 - Recognition of Women in Military Service.
June 14 - Flag Day.
July 4 - Independence Day.
July 27 - Signing of the Korean Armistice in 1953.

August 31 - End of Operation Iraqi Freedom 2010.

September 2 - VJ Day: Japan surrendered, 1945, ending World War II fighting.

September 11 - Patriot Day.

September, 3rd Friday - POW/MIA Recognition Day.

October 7 - Start of Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan 2001.

October 23 – Beirut Bombing.

November 11 - Signing World War I Armistice, 1918. Veterans Day.

December 7 - Pearl Harbor Day, since 1941.

SPECIAL PRAYERS

PRAYER OF THANKS

Our Heavenly Father, we come to You in this moment because we believe that You are our God and we are Your people, and You are the creator and sustainer of life.

We acknowledge that every good and perfect gift comes from above and that all that we have comes from Your divine beneficent hand.

We thank You for this food and ask for Your blessing upon us as we partake. Teach us to be always mindful of Your loving kindness and tender mercies. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Our Heavenly Father, we ask that You will dismiss us with Your blessing, and grant that we may continually experience the calmness and serenity of heart and soul which comes from You. Make us useful servants in all things. Amen.

VETERANS DAY PRAYER

Almighty God, Father of us all! We, Your servants, turn to You for continuance of Your blessings upon us. You who have spared us veterans from the grasp of our enemies, grant us the full understanding of Your precious comfort.

We thank You for the privileges of life and the blessings we enjoy through Your graciousness in our country, the land in which we are given the freedom of speech, religion and the pursuit of happiness.

Assist us to know You better and the wisdom to acknowledge You as the God of the universe and our ideal.

In Your mercy, may we the living find our peace. Grant us from above, this day, the challenge of high endeavor, the beauty of an humble spirit, the strong courage and will, without exertion, to continue to glorify You; to praise You, and to love You to the end of time. Amen.

PEARL HARBOR DAY MEMORIAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we are gathered here to commemorate those among Your servants who gave their lives at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Because of their dedication to duty we still enjoy the freedoms we inherited from our forefathers. Because they served well, we are proud to call them our own. We ask that, following in their footsteps, we may continue in Your service until Your summons comes. Then, in the knowledge that we have striven to observe Your councils and precepts, may be worthy to be united with them and with You forever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR GOLD STAR PARENTS

O Lord, we thank You for the many blessings You have bestowed upon us and on our Country. We ask You to bless and to comfort our Gold Star Parents who are here today. Give them the strength to do their daily tasks and the courage to meet the problems of life. Grant that their example may be our inspiration. Amen.

PRAYER ATTRIBUTED TO GEORGE WASHINGTON

Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of obedience to government, and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large; and, finally, that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion,

and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy Nation.

Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, O Lord!

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Lord, Almighty God, we pray Your healing grace in behalf of (Name of Person). May (Name) know the blessing of good health in this hour and throughout life. Bless all who minister to (Name) in body, mind and spirit and grant that we may always give praise to You, our heavenly Father. Amen.

PRAYER AT A FUNERAL WITHOUT FORMAL RITUAL

Eternal Father, giver and sustainer of life, we come before You in the joy of our Faith and in thanksgiving for the life of (Name of Deceased). We commend the soul of our departed Comrade (Auxiliary Member) to You. Lord, we ask You to help us honor the memory of (Name) by service to the living. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE OPENING OF AN INFORMAL MEETING

Almighty God, we thank You for bringing us together this day. Inspire us to worthy deeds and sound decisions and direct us toward the attainment of our goal. We pray that You would bless and protect all of our people. Guide us on the path to unity and harmony that we may serve You and Your people in keeping with Your holy will. Amen.

PRAYER AT THE CLOSING OF AN INFORMAL MEETING

Glory be to You our Lord and our God as we behold the blessings You have given us as citizens of these United States of America. We thank You Lord, for this blessed and bountiful Land. Help us to renew our loyalty to this great Country and enable us to rededicate ourselves in Faith to Your service. We pray Lord, in Your holy name. Amen.

PRAYER FOR DECEASED COMRADES AND/OR MEMBERS OF THE AUXILIARY

Heavenly Father, we are gathered here to commemorate those among Your servants who have been called to Your bosom in the land of light. We pray that Your mercy and justice have made right their human failings and faults. We pray that whatever justice was denied them in this vale of tears has been granted them a hundredfold. We pray that whatever comforts they were denied in this life, whatever evil they endured, may now redound to their everlasting happiness.

We are thankful for their companionship and association in this life. By their efforts we are assured security and strength. Because they served well, we are proud to call them our own.

We ask that, following in their footsteps, we may continue in Your service until Your summons comes. Then, in the knowledge that we have striven to observe Your truths and precepts, may we be judged worthy to be united with them and with You forever in heaven. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD

O God, source of all holy desires, right counsels and just works, grant us that peace which the world cannot give, so that we may be obedient to Your commands and that under Your protection we may enjoy peace in our days and freedom from fear of our enemies. We ask this in Your great and holy Name. Amen.

A PRAYER AT THE CONCLUSION OF A MEMORIAL SERVICE

Almighty God, our gratitude for Your generosity grows with each passing day. We acknowledge this day's special blessings. We have honored those who now enjoy Your eternal embrace. We ask Your blessing on all here present. Especially do we seek Your consolation for those recently bereaved. May Your grace be with them and with us now and forever. And, if it be Your will, may we all be favored to gather again in these circumstances and in this company before another year has passed. Amen.

VETERANS PRAYER OF THANKS

Almighty God, Father of us all! We, Your servants, turn to You for Your continuing blessings upon us. You, who spared us, combat veterans, from the grasp of our enemies, grant us the full understandings of Your precious comfort.

We thank You for the privileges of life and the blessings we enjoy through Your graciousness to our country, the land in which we are given freedom of speech, religion and the pursuit of happiness. Continue Your presence with us always and may we continue to serve you faithfully. Amen.

BALLOTING FOR CANDIDATES

Section 103 of the Manual of Procedure, provides that applications for membership may be grouped and accepted by viva voce vote. Upon request of any one member, any individual's application must be voted upon separately by written ballot; and upon the request of any three members, all applications must be voted upon separately by written ballot.

Regardless of the method of voting, acceptance or rejection of candidates is by majority of votes cast. Following is the procedure for written balloting. The Adjutant reads the name and brief service record of each candidate.

Commander: Comrades, you are about to ballot upon the applications of (give names) who desire to become comrades of this Post.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will prepare the ballot.

(Officer of the day distributes the ballots.)

Commander: Comrades, you will now cast your ballots. Vote for the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(After each member has marked their ballot, the ballots are collected by the officer of the day and counted by the Senior Vice Commander and Junior Vice Commander.)

Commander: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, how do you find the ballot?

Senior Vice Commander: Comrade Commander, I find the ballot favorable (or unfavorable).

(A majority of the votes cast by ballot shall determine whether the applicant shall be admitted to membership. Less than a majority shall reject the applicant for one year, after which the applicant may again apply for membership.)

Commander: By your ballots you have (or have not) elected _____ to membership. Comrade Adjutant, you will notify the recruit(s) to present themselves for initiation at the proper time.

OPENING POST CEREMONIES

The hour of opening having arrived, the officer of the day displays the Flag of the United States and Bible on the altar, leaving Bible closed, after which the Commander takes station and gives one rap for attention.

Commander: The officers will take their respective stations. Unauthorized guests will kindly retire, and the guard will close the doors.

(The Commander ascertains if unauthorized guests have retired.)

Commander: By the power and authority vested in me, I am about to open _____ Post No. _____ for the transaction of any business that may lawfully come before it (two gavel raps). Officer of the Day, satisfy yourself that all present are entitled to remain.

(The officer of the day will examine each comrade, assisted as directed by the Commander. Those found in possession of official VFW dues receipts for the current calendar year take seats. Officer of the day then advances to the altar, salutes the Commander and says):

Officer of the Day: Comrade Commander, I find all, except those standing, in possession of official VFW dues receipts for the current calendar year.

(Commander instructs the Quartermaster to determine the status of members standing. Those who have not paid their current dues will be required to pay said dues or leave the meeting room. Quartermaster will report their findings to the Commander.)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will prepare the Post room for the salute to the colors. (Two gavel raps.)

Officer of the Day: Color Bearers and Guard fall in!

(After bearers and guard if used fall in at altar.)

Officer of the Day: Present Arms! Order Arms!

(Using appropriate commands Officer of the Day marches color guard from Post room. When ready to enter with colors Officer of the Day knocks on door and announces to guard.)

Officer of the Day: Officer of the Day with the colors.

Guard: Comrade Commander, Officer of the Day with the colors.

Commander: Admit the Officer of the Day with the colors.

Present Arms! Order Arms!

Commander: Attention!

(Chaplain proceeds to altar, taking their station between it and Senior Vice Commander's station. Chaplain faces altar and opens Bible.)

Commander: Parade rest!

(Both colors execute parade rest with the heel of the pikes resting on the floor as in "Order Colors." Pikes are held with both hands front center of the body, left hand uppermost.)

PRAYER

Chaplain: Let us bow our heads. O, Sovereign Ruler of the Universe who art the Lord of Hosts and God of Peace, without Thee our efforts are vain. Continue Thy blessings upon us and our families, we pray Thee, and guide us during our deliberations. We beseech Thee, O God, to bless the dependents of our departed comrades, and to comfort all who gave their loved ones to our nation's cause. Bless and strengthen the sick, the needy and the afflicted. Bless, we ask Thee, the children, families and staff of our National Home and help us to fulfill our duty toward them. Continue Thy favor upon our order, and help us to practice the spirit of true comradeship, both in our councils and with the world at large. Enable us to better the community in which we live through our devotion to duty as citizens. We now have a moment of silent prayer for our departed comrades and for those missing in action and those held as prisoners of war.

(Short pause.)

These and all other necessary blessings we ask of Thee, Mighty Ruler of the Universe. Amen.

(All respond—Amen. Chaplain takes their regular station.)

Commander: Attention. Comrades, you will join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Present Arms! "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."

Commander: Order Arms! (at attention)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will place the colors.

(Officer of the day marches color detail to positions.)

(In accordance with the Federal Flag Code (Public Law 94-344), the Flag of the United States should hold the position of superior prominence; in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the Commander's right as the Commander faces the audience.

The Post standard is placed on the Commander's left and the audience's right.

When colors are placed, officer of the day returns color detail to altar, facing the Commander's station. The Officer of the Day then dismisses color detail as follows):

Officer of the Day: Color Guards, Ground (or stack) arms!

Officer of the Day: Color Detail, Present Arms! Order Arms!

Officer of the Day: Color Detail, Face!

Officer of the Day: Color Detail, Dismissed!

(Note: The national color guard and color bearer sit by Chaplain. Post color guard and color bearer sit by Junior Vice Commander. Color detail go to their respective seats.)

Commander: Comrades, we are assembled again to transact business of mutual benefit. Do not let petty jealousies or trivial personalities influence our deliberations.

Let us uphold always the obligations of unselfish comradeship and loyalty to our organization and to the government of the United States of America.

I now declare _____ Post No. _____ duly opened for the transaction of business. Guard, you will admit any in waiting who may be worthy.

(When the Commander gives the command of "Parade Rest," a member in uniform or wearing VFW cap shall remain at parade rest; shall not remove their cap during prayer (optional), and shall remain at parade rest until another command is given.)

(If distinguished guests enter, or are in the room, the Commander will accord them the proper honors, after which a brief recess may be granted to welcome them informally. If none is present, or, after the recess, the Commander raps for order. All present take stations and seats to resume business. See page 101 for "Honoring Visiting Officers".)

(Commander should note as one item of business the brief Eaton Rapids Home ceremony, item 15 in Order of Business, page 13.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS - Traditional

(Post)

1. Opening ceremonies.
2. Commander: (Leading all members in recitation of Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter.) The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.
3. Calling the roll of officers.
4. Reading, referring, membership applications.
5. Report of Investigating Committee.
6. Balloting for applicants. See page 8.
7. Mustering in of recruits.
8. Reading of minutes.
9. Quartermaster's report; disbursements.
10. Quartermaster's report; receipts.
11. Reading of bills.
12. Report of Benefits Advisor.
13. Is there a Comrade or the family of a Comrade in distress?
14. Report of all committees.
15. Remember our National Home.
(Interrupt business at 9:00 p.m. or as close to 9:00 p.m. as is practical for National Home Ceremony.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice.) All present will rise. Parade rest. Comrade Chaplain, you will ask Divine blessings upon our National Home.

Chaplain: Almighty God, we ask for your divine blessing on the children, families and staff of our National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

May Your Spirit dwell with them forever, giving them health and guiding their lives. Help us to always be faithful to our fallen comrades by providing (shelter and guidance) support for their families. We ask in Your Holy Name. Amen.

16. Unfinished business.
(Reading of communications associated with unfinished business. Read and vote.)
17. New business.
(Reading of communications associated with new business. Read and vote.)
18. Nominations, elections and installation of officers.
19. Good of the order.
(Reading of communications associated with good of the order. Read and vote.)
20. Closing ceremonies.

ORDER OF BUSINESS - Contemporary

(Post)

1. Call to order
2. Check dues cards
3. Roll call of officers
4. Read, refer membership applications
5. Read minutes
6. Quartermaster's report
7. Report of Benefits Advisor
8. Report on Comrades or the families of Comrades in distress
9. Committee report(s)
10. Unfinished business
11. New business
12. Good of the Order
13. Close meeting

CLOSING CEREMONIES

(Post)

Commander: There being no further business, we will have our closing ceremony.

(Two raps, all rise).

Commander: Officer of the Day, prepare to retire the colors. (The Officer of the Day advances to the altar and salutes the Commander, then issues the orders to the color detail who are assumed to be in their proper seats.)

Officer of the Day: Color Bearers!

(The color bearers rise and take two steps forward, placing themselves in front of color guards.)

Officer of the Day: Color Guards!

(The color guards rise and take positions back of color bearers.)

Officer of the Day: Post!

(Color detail marches to altar.)

Officer of the Day: Face!

(Detail faces the Commander's station.)

Officer of the Day: Present Arms! Order Arms!

Officer of the Day: Take Arms!

Officer of the Day: Right Face—At Trail—March!

(The Officer of the Day remains at the altar, marching detail to position so that they will not have to make an about-face after taking colors.)

Commander: Comrade Chaplain, you will deliver the closing prayer.

(Chaplain takes position at altar.)

Commander: Parade rest!

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty God, the hour has come when we must part.

We commit ourselves to Your care. You, Who are our strong tower of defense and our protection, grant that in life's battles we may be strong and brave, living such lives of stainless integrity so that we reflect honor upon our country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and glorify Your great and Holy Name.

May Your good providence shield us from all harm, watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom, and bring us together again in true comradeship and peace. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

Commander: Attention!

(Chaplain closes Bible.)

(Officer of the day commands: "Colors, right face, at trail, forward march," or, "Forward march" if color guard is not armed.)

Commander: Bugler, sound "To the Colors."

(Post comes to salute at first note of bugler, or as flags are retired, resuming position of attention without command at conclusion of the call.)

Commander: Comrades, I now declare this business session of _____ Post No. _____ closed. Our next regular meeting will be _____.

(The officer of the day collects all Rituals, Bible, altar flag, etc.)

INITIATION CEREMONY

(Brief Form)

This brief form of initiation is to be used only in case where not enough qualified comrades are present to give the regular ceremonial. When this ceremony is used the Commander, before giving the obligation, will make it clear to the recruits that while this ceremony admits them to full membership, they will, at some future time, take part in the full ceremonial.

Note: Plural is used, if only one recruit, use singular.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire and ascertain if

there are any recruits in waiting.

(Note: Candidates are called recruits until obligated).

(Officer of the day retires to anteroom, ascertains names of any recruits, returns to altar, salutes and says):

Officer of the Day: Comrade Commander, I find in waiting____, who are desirous of becoming members of this Post.

Commander: Adjutant, have the recruits been duly proposed and elected?

Adjutant: They have.

(If not the Adjutant so states.)

Commander: Quartermaster, have all fees been paid?

(Quartermaster answers. If fees are not paid the Quartermaster will retire and collect them, return and report to the Commander.)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire to the ante room, where you will perform the duties of your office.

(The officer of the day will ask the recruits the following questions):

Officer of the Day: You have been elected to membership in this Post, but it is my duty to ask you the following questions:

Q: Have you ever been rejected, suspended or expelled from any Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States?

Q: Do you promise on your word of honor to abide by the Bylaws and Ritual of this order?

(The recruits having answered correctly, officer of the day returns to Post room and reports.)

Officer of the Day: (Salutes) Comrade Commander, I have examined the recruits and believe them to be proper persons to become members of our order.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will escort the recruits to the Post room, and by way of the Chaplain's station to the altar.

(Officer of the Day follows instructions. Party halts at Chaplain's station for advice, then proceeds to altar.)

Chaplain: What you are about to experience has a purpose. Be on your guard at all times, for there are as many dangers in time of peace, and in private life, as there were in active service. When the danger seems greatest, or you feel discouraged, you will often find friends and receive assistance from unexpected quarters. Remember well your instructions, so that you may practice true comradeship which is the fundamental object of our order.

(At Altar.)

Officer of the Day: Comrade Commander, the recruits are ready to take the obligation of our great order.

(Commander gives two raps - all rise and remain standing - absolutely no smoking. Commander advances to altar.)

Commander: Before you may become a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it will be necessary for you to take a solemn obligation in which I assure you there is nothing which will conflict with your religious or political belief, your freedom of civilian pursuits or obligations to your family. Knowing this, are you willing to become members of this Post?

Recruits: (Answer.)

Commander: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, pronounce your name when I pronounce mine, and repeat after me:

MEMBER'S OBLIGATION

In the presence of Almighty God -- and the members of this order here assembled -- I, (name), do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare that:

I will bear true allegiance - to the Constitution of the United States of America - and I will always be loyal thereto.

I do further solemnly promise and declare - that I will comply with the Congressional Charter -- Bylaws and

Ritual of this order -- and I will always be loyal thereto -- that I will never wrong or defraud this organization -- nor a member thereof --nor permit any wrong to be done to either -- if in my power to prevent it.

I will never propose for membership -- any person not eligible -- nor one whom I know to be unworthy.

I will never make known to anyone -- not authorized to receive it --- any of the work of this order.

Should my affiliation -- with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States -- cease in any way -- I will consider this pledge -- as binding outside of the order -- as though I had remained a member of same.

All this I promise and pledge -- upon the honor of a true comrade -- and a member of our great republic.

Commander: As you were. Parade, rest.

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty God, we ask Your blessing upon these our comrades who now become fellow members. May the tender ties formed amid the privations and dangers of war be drawn closer by our fellowship in this order. May our union foster among us an enduring comradeship and a spirit of mutual loyalty and support in every walk of life. May these comrades dedicate and devote their lives to Your service, and as You spared them during the perils of wars, grant that hereafter they may be spared for a useful life, to the honor and glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

Commander: Attention. (Pointing to the Holy Bible.) BEHOLD, the Great Guide of all good citizens, and especially of comrades of our order, regardless of creed or birth. In it you will find the precepts of true comradeship and citizenship to which we all aspire. (Pointing to the flag.) BEHOLD, the Flag of the United States, the Flag of our Country, for which you have fought and risked so much, for which many of our comrades

have bled and died. It is your duty to uphold it at all times, in all places, in the conflicts of peace as well as of war, that its glorious folds and its traditions may not be sullied by enemies from within or from without.

(At the word "DARKNESS" all lights are turned on and all comrades stretch forth their right hand toward their new comrades.)

BEHOLD, Out of the darkness, there are outstretched to you hands of true comradeship, backed by hearts that love you as a true comrade. See that you remain always worthy of their ready and willing service to you and yours, by remembering our motto, WE HONOR THE DEAD BY HELPING THE LIVING.

Commander: Officer of the Day, escort the comrades to the Senior Vice Commander for further instruction.

Officer of the Day: (Salutes.) Comrade Senior Vice Commander, by order of the Commander I present these comrades for their instruction.

Senior Vice Commander: I will now instruct you in the unwritten work of this order.

On approaching the door of the Post meeting room, you will give two knocks to attract the attention of the guard who will challenge, "Who knocks here?" You will answer giving your name and the number of the Post to which you belong.

The guard will then report you to the Senior Vice Commander, who will order to admit you if proper. The guard will then open the door. You will show your membership card. If you have an official dues receipt card for the current calendar year you will be admitted to the Post room, where you will advance to the altar and salute the Commander, thus (military salute). Should the Commander be busy you will face about and salute the Senior Vice Commander.

This will be answered by the Commander, or Senior Vice Commander, thus (military salute), after which you will be seated.

Never cross between the altar and the Commander's station during business sessions unless directed by an officer on duty.

This space represents the sacred ground where our comrades who have answered the final roll call are at rest.

Wishing to retire while the Post is in session, you will advance to the altar and use the same sign as when entering, to the Commander or Senior Vice Commander and when answered you may retire.

This concludes the unwritten work of the order. With my best wishes for your future welfare, I now commend you to the care of the Junior Vice Commander.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades to the Junior Vice Commander for further instructions.

(Officer of the day salutes and guides recruits to Junior Vice Commander.)

Officer of the Day: (Salutes.) Comrade Junior Vice Commander, by direction of the Senior Vice Commander, I present these comrades for further instruction.

Junior Vice Commander: (Salutes.) My comrades: Ours is a great work, lasting through life; for just as long as there is a soldier, sailor, marine, airman or guardian, so long must our work continue. As members of this Post we shall expect you to do your share. To care for comrades in distress, and those who depend upon them is part of the work of this order and when death shall lay its cold hand upon any of our number, it is our duty to see that they are laid in the bosom of Mother Earth with the honors of war, if possible.

We also owe a duty to our order and to our comrades at all times. Therefore, we caution you to be careful in your conduct, even when surrounded by those whom you may think to be your friends, for the friends of today may prove the enemy of tomorrow. Therefore, do or say nothing that may be used against you or our noble order. When the breath of scandal touches the character of a comrade, many are ready to condemn, and to accept a bare statement as proof of guilt. Be not too hasty in dealing with the weakness of a comrade. Neither think nor speak ill of any until you have exercised the prudence of a true soldier. The lives of many have been

blasted by thoughtless and unkind words. Therefore, be very cautious in your conversation, prudent in your conduct and charitable in your judgment. And, remember always the obligation you have taken here at our altar. Remember every obligation of life; be true to yourself, your home and your loved ones, and these comrades will ever be your strong defenders.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades to the altar in order that they may be decorated with the beautiful Cross of Malta.

(Junior Vice Commander and officer of the day exchange salutes. Officer of the Day aligns recruits before the altar. Then the Officer of the Day addresses Commander.)

Officer of the Day: (Salutes.) Comrade Commander, by direction of the Junior Vice Commander, I present these comrades for presentation of insigne.

PRESENTATION OF INSIGNE

Commander: (Two raps, then advances to the altar and says): My comrades, I shall now decorate each of you with the Cross of Malta. It is a real foreign service decoration and the official insigne of our beloved order, recognized and protected by the United States Government as such. It is a time honored cross and has been worn with dignity from the days of the Crusades, and is especially fitting for its present purpose. I trust you will wear it with credit to yourself and honor to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Comrades, you are admonished to cherish this your latest decoration, to live up to high ideals that have won it for you, to serve honorably in the new and greater war of American citizenship.

I now give you the hand of comradeship, assuring you that in this great organization you will find help and comradeship, just as you will give the same to others who have proved worthy.

This, comrades, concludes your instructions. With my best wishes for your future, I commend you to the care of the members of the Post who will now extend to you a hearty and cordial welcome. The Post is at rest for three minutes.

(Business resumed afterward.)

CEREMONIAL INITIATION

At the discretion of a Post the ceremonial initiation may be exemplified in public. The ceremony should be used at least quarterly and every time there are two or more recruits, if it is at all possible to do so. Every quarter a large class should be arranged for, and during the ceremonial all officers should be in uniform, if possible.

Officers shall make every effort to memorize their parts.

Officers take stations.

There shall be absolutely no smoking, and quiet must be observed during the entire ceremony.

A comrade should be stationed and ready to turn on all lights and all comrades shall stretch forth their right hands in token of comradeship at the proper time.

Candidates are called recruits until obligated, then called comrades.

Senior and Junior Vice Commanders carry swords and take positions. They will hold their swords with the tips resting on the floor, the officers facing each other. When the Commander makes an about-face and commands "Form the arch of chivalry," the swords are brought up, the tips touching, thus forming an arch.

When addressing the Commander all officers salute in a military manner. The Commander will return the salute. All officers exchange salutes when addressing each other.

PREPARATION OF ROOM

Small tent should be erected to right and in front of the Adjutant's station, artificial campfire in front of tent, on right side, stack of arms on left side, as you face it.

Replica of VFW insignia outlined on transparency with light back of it is placed at or above the Commander's station; if this does not give light enough a very dim light may be used at or over altar. All other lights out.

Sentry in uniform, with cartridge belt, rifle and bayonet,

marching post between the Adjutant's and Junior Vice Commander's stations.

In path between the Quartermaster's and Chaplain's stations, a comrade dressed in military uniform, with bandage about the head and with ghastly countenance, is concealed behind a grave. The grave shall be of green matting with sprinkling of poppies and wreaths. At the head shall be a canvas with the image or painting of a battleground scene, and behind this the departed comrade conceals themselves. At the foot of the grave shall be a cross with overseas helmet hung on it.

Spot or floodlights out in front of cross, operated by departed comrade; spotlight comes on as officer of the day approaches.

As officer of the day approaches with the new comrades, the departed comrade slowly rises from their position behind the canvas, exhibiting their ghastly form.

In the path between the Chaplain's and Senior Vice Commander's stations, a comrade in civilian clothes and with arm in sling and head bandaged will be seeking alms. Musicians as on chart -- VFW members.

CEREMONIAL

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire and ascertain if there are any recruits in waiting.

(Officer of the day retires and ascertains the names of the recruits, returns to the Post room, advancing to the altar, salutes and says - plural or singular.)

Officer of the Day: Comrade Commander, I find in waiting the following recruits who desire to become members of this Post.

(Here gives names of recruits.)

Commander: Adjutant, have the recruits been duly proposed and elected?

(Adjutant answers. If answer is favorable, says: "They have".)

Commander: Quartermaster, have all fees been paid?

(Quartermaster answers. If answer is favorable, says: "They have." If

not, Quartermaster will retire and collect the fees, return and report to the Commander. Only those recruits from whom all answers are favorable and who have paid their fees in full shall be admitted.)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire to the ante room, perform the duties of your office and if the answers are favorable, prepare the recruits and escort them to the Post room by gaining admittance in the proper manner, halting them at the Senior Vice Commander's station.

(Officer of the day retires and asks the recruits the following questions):

Q: Have you ever been rejected, suspended, or expelled from any Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States?

Q: Do you promise, on your word of honor, to abide by the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Ritual of this order?

(If the answers are correct officer of the day places recruits in column of twos and notifies guard.)

Guard: Comrade Commander! Officer of the day with recruits.

Commander: Senior Vice Commander, it is your duty to see that the recruits are properly guided during their initiation and aided while receiving instructions. You will instruct the guard to admit the officer of the day with recruits.

Senior Vice Commander: (To guard) Admit officer of the day with recruits.

(Commander, upon the entrance of the officer of the day, with recruits, gives two raps at which all rise and stand at attention.)

(Lights out.)

Senior Vice Commander: Officer of the Day, it is the order of the Commander that you guide these recruits during their initiation and guide them in their instructions until such time as the Commander may commend them to the members of this Post for the practice of true comradeship, such as only those who have seen foreign service may truly know.

Guard well your charge so that none may falter by the

wayside.

(Recruits are marched to the Chaplain's station via Junior Vice Commander's and Commander's stations. They face the Chaplain.)

Officer of the Day: Comrade Chaplain, I present these recruits so that they may benefit by your counsel.

Chaplain: What you are about to experience has a purpose.

Be on your guard at all times, for there are as many dangers in time of peace, and in private life, as there were in active service.

When the danger seems greatest, or you feel most discouraged, you will often find friends and receive assistance from unexpected quarters.

Remember well your instructions, so that you may practice true comradeship which is the fundamental object of our order.

Officer of the Day, guide the recruits further during their instruction.

(Commander seats the members—one rap.)

(Officer of the day guides the recruits past the Senior Vice Commander's station, and when they have arrived at the Junior Vice Commander's station, the sentry, still walking their post, challenges sharply):

Sentry: Halt! Who is there?

Officer of the Day: Officer of the day with recruits who wish to become members of this Post.

Sentry: Junior Vice Commander, the officer of the day, with recruits who wish to become members of this Post.

Junior Vice Commander: What credentials have these recruits that gained them admittance to our outer lines?

Officer of the Day: An honorable discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States (or still in active service, as the case may be) with a record of foreign service which has been found valid by our investigating committee.

Junior Vice Commander: Recruits, each of you in turn, with

what organization, in what wars and where did you see foreign service?

(Officer of the day prompts each recruit in turn. The recruits make their own replies, being questioned a second time if necessary.)

Junior Vice Commander: All is well at this station.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the recruits to the Senior Vice Commander.

(Sentry resumes post. Officer of the day guides recruits around the room by way of the Commander's station and halts before Senior Vice Commander's station. After exchange of salutes Officer of the Day says):

Officer of the Day: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, by direction of the Junior Vice Commander, I present these recruits whose records have been approved and who now desire to enter our inner lines, for instructions in the fundamental principles of our beloved organization.

Senior Vice Commander: Recruits, your desire to enter this Post is a worthy one.

Neither wealth, rank nor social distinction can gain you entrance.

Only your loyal service under the Flag of the United States, during time of war, on foreign soil, or in hostile waters, or in the unfriendly skies over them will admit you to our fraternal circle.

The objects of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational.

To preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members.

To assist worthy comrades.

To perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and children.

To maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws.

To foster true patriotism.

To maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom.
And to preserve and defend the United States from all her
enemies whomsoever.

Before proceeding it will be necessary for you to take a
solemn obligation, in which I assure you there is nothing which
will conflict with your religious or political belief, your freedom
of civilian pursuits or obligations to your family.

Knowing all this, are you still willing to become members of
this Post?

Recruits: (Answer.)

Senior Vice Commander: Officer of the Day, you will guide
the recruits to the altar and prepare them to assume the
obligation of a comrade of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the
United States. (Salutes.)

(Officer of the day guides recruits to the altar and places them in
proper position.)

Officer of the Day: (Salutes) Comrade Commander, the
recruits are prepared to take the solemn obligation of this
great order.

(Commander calls Post to attention—two raps. Then advances to
altar ready to give obligation. Meanwhile, Chaplain advances to
station two paces to rear and left of Commander. Sentry advances
to station two paces to the rear and right of the Commander, comes
to "Present Arms" and remains in that position until the command
"as you were." All three face recruits who are at altar.)

Commander: You will raise your right hand and touch the flag
of our country with your left hand.

OBLIGATION

When instituting a new Post the instituting officer will say:
"You will raise your right hand and place your left hand upon
the flag of our country." Then continues as below.

Commander: You will pronounce your name when I
pronounce mine, and repeat after me:

In the presence of Almighty God -- and the members of this order here assembled -- I _____ (name) _____, do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare that:

I will bear true allegiance -- to the Constitution of the United States -- and I will always be loyal thereto.

I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will comply with the Congressional Charter -- Bylaws and Ritual of this order -- and I will always be loyal thereto -- that I will never wrong nor defraud this organization -- nor a member thereof -- nor permit any wrong to be done to either -- if in my power to prevent it.

I will never propose for membership -- any person not eligible nor one whom I know to be unworthy.

I will never make known to anyone -- not authorized to receive it -- any of the work of this order.

Should my affiliation -- with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States -- cease in any way -- I will consider this pledge -- as binding outside of the order -- as though I had remained a member of same.

All this I promise and pledge -- upon the honor of a true comrade -- and a member of our great republic.

Commander: As you were. Parade, rest.

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty God, we ask Your blessing upon these our comrades who now become fellow members.

May the tender ties formed amid the privations and dangers of war be drawn closer by our fellowship in this order.

May our union foster among us an enduring comradeship and a spirit of mutual loyalty and support in every walk of life.

May these comrades dedicate and devote their lives to Your service, and as You spared them during the perils of war, grant that hereafter they may be spared for a useful life, to the honor and glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

Commander: Attention!

Commander: (Pointing to the Holy Bible) Comrades, BEHOLD the Great Guide of all good citizens, and especially of comrades of this order, regardless of creed or birth. In it you will find the precepts of true comradeship and citizenship to which we all aspire.

(Pointing to the flag.) BEHOLD the Flag of the United States, the flag of our country, for which you have fought and risked so much, for which many of our comrades have bled and died. It is your duty to uphold it at all times, in all places, in the conflicts of peace as well as of war, that its glorious folds and its traditions may not be sullied by enemies from within or from without.

(In the following, at the word "darkness" all lights are turned on and all comrades stretch forth their right hands toward their new comrades and keep them extended until Commander turns to resume their station.)

Commander: BEHOLD, out of the darkness there are out stretched to you hands of true comradeship, backed by hearts that love you as a true comrade. See that you remain always worthy of their ready and willing service to you and yours by remembering our motto, WE HONOR THE DEAD BY HELPING THE LIVING.

(Commander and Chaplain resume stations. Sentry resumes their post. Commander seats the Post.)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades further along the path of comradeship, assisting them if need be in whatever trials may be encountered.

(At this point, all lights out except insigne.)

(Officer of the day gives commands necessary to march new comrades from altar by way of Junior Vice Commander's station.)

(In the path between the Quartermaster's and Chaplain's stations, a comrade dressed in military uniform, with bandage about the head and with ghastly countenance, is concealed behind a grave. Spotlight

comes on as officer of the day approaches. As officer of the day approaches with new comrades, the departed comrade slowly rises from their position behind the canvas, exhibiting their ghastly form.)

Officer of the Day: (Suddenly met with the apparition when in front of the Commander's station calls in sharp tones) Halt!

(After a pause the Commander gives two raps to bring Post to attention. All officers and members face toward the "departed comrade".)

Officer of the Day: Behold! The spirit of a departed comrade!

Departed Comrade:

(Recites "In Flanders Fields" with great feeling.)

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

Junior Vice Commander: (Responding after a hushing pause.)

Sleep on, brave soldiers, sleep,
sleep where the poppies grow,
Sleep on, brave soldiers,
in your places, row on row.
The lark's still soaring in the sky,
Still bravely singing, soaring high
Away above the cannon's roar,
Scarce heard amid the guns as yore,

Before you slept in Flanders Fields.
The faith with you we've kept and battled with the foe
On crimson fields by you we've slept where poppies blow.
The torch you flung to us we caught;
With blistering hands we've bravely fought to hold it high
To guard you thru the Night,
And at the dawn to guide you to the light,
When you awake from Flanders Fields.

(A pause—Officer of the day then commands: "Present Arms!"
Everybody in room comes to snappy salute as bugler sounds taps.)

Officer of the Day: Comrade in the silent land, in death as in life, we salute you.

(Spotlight off at this point.)

(Departed comrade fades away behind grave. Salute holds a few seconds, then officer of the day commands, "Order Arms!")

(Another pause and then officer of the day in subdued tones orders new comrades: "Forward March".)

(Lights turned on. Commander seats Post with one rap of gavel.)

(In path between the Chaplain and the Senior Vice Commander's station, a comrade with arm in sling and head bandaged will be seeking alms. The officer of the day will not notice the needy comrade until the comrades have passed.)

Officer of the Day: Halt! Comrades, we have already forgotten our obligation. Yonder lies a needy comrade. Let us return and see what assistance we may render.

(Faces recruits so they can see disabled comrade.)

Officer of the Day: My good comrade, what seek you?

Wounded Comrade: Comrade, even as you, I have served well my country and flag, but I have been left alone to die by the wayside, because unsympathetic and untried men and women can make no use of me, I being sick and wounded, and unable to help them in their selfish pursuits.

Officer of the Day: Where and with what organization did you serve?

Wounded Comrade: In (name country) with the (name unit). I am a VFW member.

Officer of the Day: A veteran and in want! This is outrageous!

Officer of the Day: Arise, comrade, come with us and we will serve your needs, for that is our prime duty. Let us proceed.

(Gives necessary commands.)

Officer of the Day: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, I present to you these worthy new comrades, whom I have escorted along the emblematic path of comradeship.

They have a needy comrade for your care.

Senior Vice Commander: (Extends right hand of comradeship to needy comrade.) Be seated at my right and I will see that you are taken care of by our relief committee.

(Senior Vice Commander then addresses candidates.)

Senior Vice Commander: Comrades, you have indeed proved yourselves worthy, and I shall take pleasure in instructing you in the unwritten work of this order.

On approaching the door of the Post meeting room, you will give two knocks to attract the attention of the guard who will challenge, "Who knocks here?" You will answer giving your name and the number of the Post to which you belong.

The guard will then report you to the Senior Vice Commander, who will order to admit you if proper. The guard will then open the door. You will show your membership card. If you have an official dues receipt card for the current calendar year you will be admitted to the Post room, where you will advance to the altar and salute the Commander, thus (military salute). Should the Commander be busy you will face about and salute the Senior Vice Commander.

This will be answered by the Commander or Senior Vice Commander, thus (military salute), after which you will be seated.

Never cross between the altar and the Commander's station during business sessions unless directed by an officer on duty. This space represents the sacred ground where our comrades who have answered the final roll call are at rest.

Wishing to retire while the Post is in session, you will advance to the altar and use the same sign as when entering, to the Commander or Senior Vice Commander and when answered you may retire.

This concludes the unwritten work of the order. With my best wishes for your future welfare, I now commend you to the care of the Junior Vice Commander.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades to the Junior Vice Commander for further instructions.

Officer of the Day: (Salutes.) Comrade Junior Vice Commander, by direction of the Senior Vice Commander, I present these comrades for further instruction.

Junior Vice Commander: (Returns salute.) My comrades: Ours is a great work, lasting through life; for just as long as there is a soldier, sailor, marine, airman or guardian so long must our work continue. As members of this Post we shall expect you to do your share.

To care for comrades in distress, and those who depend upon them, is part of the work of this order; and when death shall lay its cold hand upon any one of our number, it is our duty to see that they are laid in the bosom of Mother Earth with the honors of war, if possible.

We also owe a duty to our order and our comrades at all times. Therefore, we caution you to be careful in your conduct, even when surrounded by those you may believe to be your friends. For the friend of today may prove the enemy of tomorrow.

Therefore, do or say nothing that may be used against you, or our noble order.

When the breath of scandal touches the character of a comrade, many are ready to condemn, and to accept a bare statement as proof of guilt.

Be not too hasty in dealing with the weakness of a comrade. Neither think nor speak ill of any until you have exercised the prudence of a true soldier. The lives of many have been blasted by thoughtless and unkind words.

Therefore, be very cautious in your conversation, prudent in your conduct and charitable in your judgment, remembering always, the obligation you have taken here at our altar.

Remember every obligation of life; be true to yourself, your home and your loved ones, and these comrades will ever be your strong defenders.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades to the altar in order that they may be decorated with the beautiful Cross of Malta.

(Immediately after the officer of the day gives the order "Right- face, Forward-march," then sentry will challenge.)

Sentry: Halt! Who is here?

Officer of the Day: Officer of the day, with comrades.

Sentry: Advance.

(Officer of the day advances comrades to the altar by way of Commander and Chaplain stations.)

(At altar.)

Officer of the Day: Comrade Commander, by direction of the Junior Vice Commander, I present these comrades for presentation of insigne.

(Commander calls up entire Post. Two raps.)

Officer of the Day: Comrades, you will salute the Commander.

(Officer of the day and new comrades only salute. Commander returns salute.)

Commander: Officers, take your stations for presentation of insigne.

(Officers take their stations as shown on chart.)

PRESENTATION OF INSIGNE

Commander: (Takes station slightly in advance of Senior and Junior Vice Commanders, facing the altar.)

My comrade(s), I shall now decorate (each of) you with the Cross of Malta.

It is a real foreign service decoration and the official insigne of our beloved order, recognized and protected by the United States Government as such.

The Cross of Malta is a time honored emblem whose foundation comes down to us from the days of the Crusades a thousand years ago. History tells no more fascinating tale than that of the Knights of the Crusades who were inspired purely by unselfish motives to drive the barbarian from the land they had defiled. The Cross of Malta was one of their emblems. And, while they failed after generations of warfare the feat was finally accomplished by our comrades of the World Wars.

Such is the origin of the beautiful emblem selected by the founders of our organization, symbolic of the justice and rectitude which has sent us as crusaders in modern times to foreign shores.

(Commander pointing to insigne continues.)

Radiating out from this cross are the rays of light symbolizing the spread of democracy among the countries of the earth, led by our own great nation.

Over all is superimposed the eagle shield, signifying that we served under the starry banner of the land of liberty. The bald eagle is an American bird and has been our nation's emblem from the days of the Revolution.

As the circle which contains our name is continuous, so also, is the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(Commander faces recruits.) For so long as there are unjust governments, so long must we maintain our rights. If new wars come, other comrades will carry on where we leave off.

My comrades, the Cross of Malta glorifies the tattered shirt of the poorest working man and beautifies the coat worn by those highest in the land, binding all with that same spirit of comradeship which existed among the veterans of the old crusades.

I trust you will wear it with credit to yourself and honor to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Commander holding small Flag of the United States.) My comrades, you are also admonished to remember that you and we have a mutual tie which binds us together and that the Flag of the United States is that bond. This flag with its alternating stripes of red and white; this flag with its stars on the field of blue, is your flag, our flag. May brave hearts ever defend it! May it continue to fly in the free air of heaven, the emblem of liberty—the flag of all loyal Americans! In the name of this great order and on behalf of this Post, I shall now present each of you with this our flag.

(Commander faces about and gives command, "form the arch of chivalry." The Senior and Junior Vice Commanders bring up their swords, tips touching and forming the arch. Commander again faces the altar standing as nearly under the arch as may be feasible.)

Commander: The Adjutant will call the roll and as each comrade's name is called they will advance, receive their decoration and return to their place in line.

(As each new comrade approaches and takes their place before the Commander they will receive from the Commander the VFW lapel insignie and the Commander will present each new member with a small Flag of the United States.)

(After all have received their decorations, the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders will break the arch and take stations at the right and left of the new comrades. All other officers return to their regular Post stations. Sentry dismissed.)

Commander: (Seats Post with one rap. Speaks from their station to new comrades who remain in line back of altar facing the

Commander.)

My comrades: You have been admitted to this great order because you have served our country in the face of hazard and danger. But our country deserves your highest devotion at all times, in peace as well as in war.

In this organization you are now privileged to mingle with comrades who have gone to the far lands of the earth when duty called.

They, better than anyone else, can understand your language as a veteran.

Henceforth you are privileged to wear the beautiful Cross of Malta which will distinguish you as a member of America's true knighthood, bound together by ties of comradeship formed through a century of campaigning in foreign lands and waters -- the golden age of American chivalry.

Into this great fraternity we now welcome you. Here you will find true comradeship. And so, as you go about your daily duties, I admonish you to cherish the beautiful emblem you are now privileged to wear. Look upon it as an inspiration to noble citizenship. Treasure it as a symbol of all that is best in our national life, resting assured that if you will practice the principles for which it stands comrades will come to you in the hour of need even as you will go to them when duty calls.

We trust that what you have experienced here will not soon pass from your mind, but that its impression will remain with you through a long and prosperous life.

Comrade, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.

May you find pleasure in the comradeship of this great order and help perpetuate the hallowed memories of service so dear to all of us. And now, with my best wishes for your future success, I commend you to your new comrades. Comrades, extend to our new comrade a hearty welcome.

(Commander gives two raps of gavel and officers and members file past the new members, giving each one a hearty handshake. If

feasible there may be music during this greeting. Such songs as "Over There," "Long, Long Trail," and "Hot Time in the Old Town," are appropriate. During this recess period, the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders relinquish their posts at the right and left of the new comrades and are prepared to resume their stations at the close of the period. It will be their duty to see that places are available for the new comrades to be seated when the Post is called to order. After sufficient time has elapsed, the Commander will call the Post to order and regular business will be resumed.)

(Candidates should retire from the room in company of the officer of the day and work their way into the meeting, as a lesson, being prompted by the officer of the day if necessary.)

INSTITUTING NEW POST

Prior to calling the meeting to order the instituting officer will personally inspect each application for membership. All applications not properly completed and investigated shall be rejected. This is assumed to be an open, public meeting. Instituting officer raps gavel once for order.

Instituting Officer: Comrades, I have been authorized by the Commander-in-Chief to institute this Post in accordance with the National Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Comrades and candidates, I am satisfied that all present are eligible for membership as provided by our National Bylaws. The acting Adjutant will call the roll. Each person will answer as their name is called and take their place facing the altar and the Commander's station.

(Following roll call.)

Instituting Officer: Comrades, you have expressed the desire to be enrolled in our ranks, but before being admitted to membership you will be required to take a solemn obligation, one which will not conflict with any duty you owe your country or your family.

Knowing this, are you willing to become members of this order?

(Candidates respond.)

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, or touch the shoulder of the person in front of you, pronounce your name when I pronounce mine, and repeat after me:

MEMBER'S OBLIGATION

In the presence of Almighty God—and the members of this order here assembled—I, _____(name)_____, do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare that:

I will bear true allegiance—to the Constitution of the United States of America—and I will always be loyal thereto.

I do further solemnly promise and declare—that I will comply with the Congressional Charter—Bylaws and Ritual of this order—and I will always be loyal thereto—that I will never wrong nor defraud this organization—nor a member thereof—nor permit any wrong to be done to either—if in my power to prevent it.

I will never propose for membership—any person not eligible nor one whom I know to be unworthy.

I will never make known to anyone—not authorized to receive it—any of the work of this order.

Should my affiliation—with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States—cease in any way—I will consider this pledge—as binding outside of the order—as though I had remained a member of same.

All this I promise and pledge—upon the honor of a true comrade—and a member of our great republic.

Commander: As you were. Parade, rest.

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty God, we ask Your blessing upon these our comrades who now become fellow members. May the tender ties formed amid the privations and dangers of war be drawn closer by our fellowship in this order. May our union foster among us an enduring comradeship and a spirit of mutual loyalty and support in every walk of life. May these

comrades dedicate and devote their lives to Your service, and as You spared them during the perils of wars, grant that hereafter they may be spared for a useful life, to the honor and glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

Instituting Officer: As you were! Comrades, we are now privileged to decorate each of you with the Cross of Malta, which is recognized and protected by our government as the official emblem of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Cross of Malta is an ancient and honored symbol of loyalty and courage among those pledged to high ideals. It was first used nearly a thousand years ago as the emblem of noblemen and yeomen who united in a great military crusade to protect and aid others seeking freedom of life and worship. The Cross of Malta thus became the symbol of the Crusaders who waged battle and cared for the sick, the wounded and the needy.

That is why the Maltese Cross is the emblem of the Veterans of Foreign Wars today. It is the symbol of our pledge to honor the dead by helping the living.

(Each person is presented their insignia, and instructions regarding later ceremonial initiation.)

Instituting Officer: Comrades, I congratulate and welcome you as members of our organization. Have you decided on a name for the Post?

(Name of Post is given to instituting officer by the acting adjutant.)

Instituting Officer: Then, in compliance with your selection, and by authority of the Commander-in-Chief, I now declare this a Post to be known henceforth as _____
Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and entitled to all the rights of our organization, so long as its members comply with our Bylaws.

Comrades, your success or failure will depend entirely upon

the wisdom and energy with which you administer the affairs of your Post. Always remember that you will have in your Post comrades of all ages, persons who have had a great variety of military experiences in many theaters of war.

In conducting the affairs of your Post, give due consideration to the opinions of all comrades who, like yourselves, have served under the Flag of the United States.

Let the highest principles of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States guide all your decisions and actions.

Extend at all times the spirit of true comradeship to the individuals who serve with you, to their families and to the memory of those who have passed to their final resting place.

(Seats new members.)

Comrades, have you elected the officers who shall serve you during the ensuing year?

(Comrades affirm or instituting officer will hold an election.)

Instituting Officer: Comrades, it now becomes my duty to install your officers in accordance with the Bylaws of our organization.

Instituting Officer: Comrade Acting Adjutant, you will call the roll of officers. As each officer's name is called they will take their place at the altar, where I will administer the officers' obligation.

(Officers are assembled as directed. Instituting officer says to them):

Instituting Officer: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand and repeat after me:

OFFICERS' OBLIGATION

I do hereby solemnly promise—that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability—the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed—according to the Bylaws and Ritual—of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States—together with the Bylaws of this Post.

I solemnly promise—that at the close of the term to which I

have been elected or appointed—or sooner if so ordered by proper authority—I will surrender immediately—to only the duly authorized person or persons—all records, money or other properties of this organization—in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise—upon my honor as a true comrade—and a member of our great republic. So help me God.

Instituting Officer: As you were! Parade rest.

PRAYER

Acting Chaplain: Almighty God, our guidance and Divine Protector, give Your blessings upon these, our Comrades, who now become fellow officers. We ask you, O Lord, who is ever present amongst us, grant wisdom unto them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor You, our glorious Country and to better our organization. May Your strength sustain them. May Your power preserve them. May Your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

Instituting Officer: As you were! Comrades, I now declare you properly installed as officers of _____ Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you, so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake. (Instituting officer may instruct briefly, as follows):

Instituting Officer: The Bylaws of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you through your election or appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties.

(Or installing officer may elaborate by calling each newly installed officer individually and instructing them briefly as follows):

Instituting Officer: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander in preserving order, to preside in the absence of the Commander and to perform such other duties as may be required by our laws and Ritual.

Instituting Officer: Comrade Junior Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander and Senior Vice Commander in preserving order; to preside in their absence, and perform such other duties as may be required of you by our laws and Ritual.

Instituting Officer: Comrade Quartermaster, it will be your duty to take charge of and accurately account for the funds of this Post. The duties of your office are prescribed in detail in the VFW Bylaws.

Instituting Officer: Comrade Judge Advocate, you are the legal assistant and adviser to the Commander and Post in all legal matters pertaining to this organization. You shall perform such other duties incident to your office as the laws may require.

Instituting Officer: Comrade Chaplain, the members of this Post look to you for spiritual and inspirational guidance. You shall be chairman of the Post visiting committee. It will be your duty to visit and comfort the sick and disabled members of the Post and to perform such other duties as may be required of you by the laws and Ritual of this organization.

Instituting Officer: Comrade Surgeon, you shall be chairman of the health committee. It will be your duty to promote and direct health programs for benefit of Post members and the community. You shall perform such other duties in the Post as are incident to your office.

Instituting Officer: Comrade Post Trustees, it will be your duty to make correct audits and reports of the Post records as prescribed by the VFW Bylaws.

(Rapping gavel twice and addressing the newly-installed Commander, the instituting officer then says):

Instituting Officer: Comrade Commander, this Post is about to be placed in your charge, and much of its success will depend on you.

Guard well its interests, so that you may fill your high office

acceptably.

It will be necessary that you study carefully and fully understand the principles of this organization, since it is your duty to enforce its laws, rules and Ritual.

I now place in your charge the Charter of this Post. You are personally responsible for its safety.

I present you with this gavel, the emblem of authority. Use it firmly, but with discretion. I now formally place this Post in your charge for the ensuing year. You will occupy this station which I now vacate.

Comrade Commander, officers and members of _____ Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I proclaim the officers duly installed, and this Post in working order for the ensuing year.

(Commander gives one gavel rap and proceeds with the regular business).

DEDICATING POST COLORS

This ceremony is assumed to be in open, public meeting. The altar is dressed with the Flag of the United States and Bible as for a regular Post meeting. Dedicating officer should be Department, District or County Council officer. Post Commander and dedicating officer take stations before altar, flanked by Post officers.

Color bearers and guards should be ready in anteroom with unfurled Flag of the United States and furled Post standard.

Commander: Comrades, we have the honor to dedicate our Post standard and rededicate ourselves to the Flag of the United States. On this occasion Comrade_____, the dedicating officer, who stands beside me, will direct the ceremony. Comrade_____, you will take command.

Dedicating Officer: Comrade Commander and comrades of _____ Post No. _____, I bring you heartiest greetings from the Department of _____, (or from

the council or district they represent.)

This is a very special moment in the history of your Post. We shall place officially the flag of our country and your new Post flag among the ever-growing number of standards in our organization.

Officer of the Day, you will advance the colors.

(With the officer of the day giving the appropriate commands, color bearers and color guards advance colors to the altar, halt and face the Commander's station. Colors should be carried at order colors. The heel of the pike or staff, in line with the toe of the right shoe, is raised two inches from the floor. The right hand clasps pike with the thumb at a convenient place for carrying and holding same in a vertical position.)

Dedicating Officer: Comrades and friends, we will first rededicate ourselves to the Flag of the United States, by saluting the national flag and repeating the pledge of allegiance.

(All present do so in unison, with proper salutes. Bearer of Post colors salutes by carrying their left hand across breast, grasping the pike forward. They hold the salute momentarily and then resumes the order position. The national flag remains at order. Military salute is held during recitation of pledge of allegiance):

All: 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.

Dedicating Officer: As you were! Officer of the Day, you will assist me further.

(Dedicating officer and officer of the day go to Post color bearer, who lowers their pike so dedicating officer may grasp upper corner and officer of the day the lower corner of Post standard. Color bearer then turns their pike while officers unroll Post standard and hold the completely unfurled banner taut so all may see.)

Dedicating Officer: There, comrades, are your Post colors.

(They read slowly the words on the banner. Then they and officer of

the day release their holds. Color bearer returns pike to order position.)

Dedicating Officer: Comrades, that flag is to be your official VFW emblem of authority. It is the emblem around which you shall build the character, strength and progress of your Post. It is the banner which shall fly proudly beside the flag of our country. It is to be the emblem of your own men and women who have fought and sacrificed under the Flag of the United States in many battles on land, on sea and in the air around the globe.

(Dedicating officer then salutes Post colors, holding salute and saying):

Dedicating Officer: Comrade Commander and comrades, by authority vested in me by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I hereby declare this flag to be the official banner of _____ Post No. ____ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Post Commander: Present Arms! (All members respond).

Commander: Order Arms! (Salute ends.)

Commander: Comrade Chaplain, you will ask blessings upon our new flags. Parade rest!

(Extemporaneously, or the following.)

Chaplain: O God, bless our nation's emblem. May it ever symbolize freedom and justice for all men and women. Bless, too, the banner of this Post. Help our comrades to always campaign vigorously for principles that are noble and right—for the high ideals represented by these two flags. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

Commander: Attention! Officers, take your stations.

(Post officers, including Commander, take their regular Post room stations. Stand at attention.)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will place the colors.

(Officer of the day marches color detail to positions in front of Post

room. In accordance with the Federal Flag Code (Public Law 94-344), the flag of the United States should hold the position of superior prominence; in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the Commander's right as they face the audience. The Post standard is placed on the Commander's left and the audience's right.

When the colors are placed officer of the day dismisses the detail and takes their station. Ceremony ends following appropriate remarks by Post Commander.)

INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS

Installation comes under the head of new business. The Commander should call the installing officer to the chair and remain standing while being questioned.

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander, the term for which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed will terminate upon the date of installation of your Department Commander. I have been selected by the Commander-elect, in accordance with the National Bylaws, to install your newly elected and appointed officers. Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected or appointed?

Commander: They have.

Installing Officer: Comrade Adjutant, do you have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

Adjutant: I have.

Installing Officer: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time. The Bylaws prescribe you must, within thirty (30) days of election or appointment, submit to the Adjutant for their file a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Installing Officer: Have you the Charter in your possession?

Commander: I have.

Installing Officer: You will now surrender the gavel to me.
(Commander relinquishes the gavel to the installing officer.)

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander, your duties as presiding officer of this Post will terminate following the Department Convention. It is proper to remind you that, when you assume the chair of past Commander, it will be your duty to assist your successor with all the counsel and experience you have gained during your term of office. I now invite you to assist me in the installation ceremonies by presenting at the altar the elected and appointed officers.

(If the Commander is to succeed themselves the installing officer will appoint a past officer as aide-de-camp to assist.)

(Officers to be installed are placed in a semi-circle behind the altar, facing the Commander's station. Retiring Commander, if not reelected, or the aide-de-camp takes position before altar, facing the officers to be installed. Elected and appointed officers will salute the retiring Commander, the Commander acknowledging same. The retiring Commander will then about-face and salute the installing officer, who will return same. The retiring Commander or aide reports):

Retiring Commander or Aide: Sir, the elected and appointed officers are in proper position to receive the obligation.

(Salutes are exchanged and the retiring Commander takes station to the left and slightly to the rear of the installing officer.)

(Installing officer raps twice, advances to the altar.)

Installing Officer: Elected and appointed officers of _____ Post No. _____

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will now administer to you the officers' obligation.

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand and repeat after me:

OFFICERS' OBLIGATION

I do hereby solemnly promise—that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability—the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed—according to the Bylaws and Ritual—of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States—together with the Bylaws of this Post. I solemnly

promise—that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed—or sooner if so ordered by proper authority—I will surrender immediately—to only the duly authorized person or persons—all records, money or other properties of this organization—in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise—upon my honor as a true comrade—and a member of our great republic. So help me God.

Installing Officer: As you were! Parade rest.

PRAYER

Retiring or Acting Chaplain: Almighty God, our Guide and Divine Protector, give Your blessings upon these, our Comrades, who now become fellow officers. We ask you, O Lord, who is ever present amongst us, grant wisdom unto them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor Your, our glorious Country and to better our organization. May Your strength sustain them. May Your power preserve them. May Your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

Installing Officer: As you were! Comrade Retiring Commander (or aide) you will now conduct the officers to their stations.

(Officers remain standing, one rap of the gavel. Outgoing officers salute incoming officers and surrender stations.)

Installing Officer: Comrade Retiring Commander, you may assume your station. (Left of Commander.) Officers, you now occupy the positions of honor to which your comrades have elected you; the duties of which you will assume.

Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake.

The Bylaws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you, through your election, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties.

(Or installing officers may elaborate by calling each newly installed

officer individually and instructing them briefly, as follows):

Installing Officer: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander in preserving order, to preside in the absence of the Commander and to perform such other duties as may be required by our laws and Ritual.

Installing Officer: Comrade Junior Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander, and Senior Vice Commander in preserving order, to preside in their absence, and perform such other duties as may be required of you by our laws and Ritual.

Installing Officer: Comrade Quartermaster, it will be your duty to take charge of and accurately account for the funds of this Post. The duties of your office are prescribed in detail in the Bylaws.

Installing Officer: Comrade Judge Advocate, you are the legal assistant and adviser to the Commander and Post in all legal matters pertaining to this organization. You shall perform such other duties incident to your office as the laws may require.

Installing Officer: Comrade Chaplain, the members of this Post look to you for spiritual and inspirational guidance. You shall be chairman of the Post visiting committee. It will be your duty to visit and comfort the sick and disabled members of the Post and to perform such other duties as may be required of you by the laws and Ritual of this organization.

Installing Officer: Comrade Surgeon, you shall be chairman of the health committee. It will be your duty to promote and direct health programs for the benefit of Post members and the community. You shall perform such other duties in the Post as are incident to your office.

Installing Officer: Comrade Post Trustees, it will be your duty to make correct audits and reports of the Post records as prescribed by the VFW Bylaws.

(Rapping gavel twice and addressing the newly installed

Commander, installing officer then says):

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander, this Post will be placed in your charge upon the date of installation of your Department Commander, immediately following the Department Convention.

It will be your responsibility to see that the Trustees, in accordance with the National Bylaws, audit the books of the Adjutant, Quartermaster, and canteen or club manager. Comrade Commander, it will further be your obligation to see that the Quartermaster is bonded in accordance with the National Bylaws.

Much of the success of this Post will depend on you. Guard well its interests, so that you may fill your high office acceptably.

It will be necessary that you study carefully the principles of this organization, since it will be your duty to enforce its laws, rules and Ritual.

The Charter of this Post will be placed in your charge at the time you assume office. You will be personally responsible for its safety until such time as your successor is elected and properly installed.

I present you with this gavel, the emblem of authority. Upon assuming office you will use it firmly, but with discretion.

(Presents gavel.)

Comrade Commander, Commander-elect, officers and members of _____ Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I proclaim the officers duly installed for the ensuing year.

(Business resumed.)

INSTALLATION OF DISTRICT OFFICERS

Installation comes under the head of new business. The Commander should call the installing officer to the chair and remain standing while being questioned.

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander, the term for which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed will terminate upon the date of installation of your Department Commander. I have been selected by the Commander-elect, in accordance with the National Bylaws, to install your newly elected and appointed officers. Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected or appointed?

Commander: They have.

Installing Officer: Comrade Adjutant, do you have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

Adjutant: I have.

Installing Officer: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time that the Bylaws prescribe you must, within thirty (30) days of election or appointment, submit to the Adjutant for their file a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Installing Officer: Have you the charter in your possession?

Commander: I have.

Installing Officer: You will now surrender the gavel to me.

(Commander relinquishes the gavel to the installing officer.)

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander, your duties as presiding officer of this District will terminate following the Department Convention. It is proper to remind you that, when you assume the chair of past Commander, it will be your duty to assist your successor with all the counsel and experience you have gained during your term of office. I now invite you to assist me in the installation ceremonies by presenting at the altar the elected and appointed officers.

(If the Commander is to succeed themselves the installing officer will appoint a past officer as aide-de-camp to assist them.)

(Officers to be installed are placed in a semi-circle behind the altar,

facing the Commander's station. Retiring Commander, if not re-elected, or the aide-de-camp takes position before the altar, facing the officers to be installed. Elected and appointed officers will salute the retiring Commander (or aide-de-camp) and be acknowledged with the same in return. The retiring Commander (or aide-de-camp) will then about-face and salute the installing officer who will return the salute. The retiring Commander or aide-de-camp reports):

Retiring Commander or Aide: Comrade, the elected and appointed officers are in proper position to receive the obligation.

(Salutes are exchanged and the retiring Commander or aide-de-camp takes station to the left and slightly to the rear of the installing officer.)

(Installing officer raps twice, advances to the altar.)

Installing Officer: Elected and appointed officers of District _____ of the Department of ____ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will now administer to you the officers' obligation.

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left and repeat after me:

OFFICERS' OBLIGATION

I do hereby solemnly promise--that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability--the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed--according to the Bylaws and Ritual--of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States--together with the Bylaws of this district. I solemnly promise--that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed--or sooner if so ordered by proper authority--I will surrender immediately--to only the duly authorized persons--all records, money or other properties of this organization--in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise--upon my honor as a true comrade--and a member of our great republic. So help me God.

Installing Officer: As you were! Parade rest.

PRAYER

Retiring or Acting Chaplain: Almighty God, our Guide and Divine Protector, give Your blessing upon these, our Comrades, who now become fellow officers. We ask You, O Lord, who is ever present amongst us, grant wisdom unto them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor You, our glorious Country and to better our organization. May Your strength sustain them. May Your power preserve them. May Your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

Installing Officer: As you were! Comrade Retiring Commander (or aide-de-camp) you will now conduct the officers to their stations.

(Officers remain standing, one rap of the gavel. Outgoing officers salute incoming officers and surrender stations.)

Installing Officer: Comrade Retiring Commander, you may assume your station. (Left of Commander.) Officers, you now occupy the positions of honor to which your comrades have elected you; the duties of which you will assume. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake.

The Bylaws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you, through your election, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties.

(Or installing officers may elaborate by calling each newly installed officer individually and instructing them briefly, as follows):

Installing Officer: Comrade Senior-Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander in preserving order, to preside in the absence of the Commander and to perform such other duties as may be required by our laws and Ritual.

Installing Officer: Comrade Junior-Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander and Senior-Vice Commander in preserving order, to preside in their absence, and perform such other duties as may be required of you by our Bylaws and Ritual.

Installing Officer: Comrade Quartermaster, it will be your

duty to take charge of and accurately account for the funds of this District. The duties of your officer are prescribed in detail in the Bylaws.

Installing Officer: Comrade Adjutant, it shall be your duty to serve as the official corresponding officer of the District. The duties of your office are prescribed in detail in the Bylaws.

Installing Officer: Comrade Judge Advocate, you are the legal assistant and adviser to the Commander and District in all legal matters pertaining to this organization and to assist Post Judge Advocates. You shall perform such other duties incident to your office as the Bylaws may require.

Installing Officer: Comrade Chaplain, the members of this District look to you for spiritual and inspirational guidance. It will be your duty to visit and comfort the sick and disabled members of the District and to perform such other duties as may be required of you by the Bylaws and Ritual of this organization.

Installing Officer: Comrade Surgeon, it will be your duty to promote and direct health programs for the benefit of the District and to assist Post Surgeons. You shall perform such other duties in the District as are incident to our office.

Installing Officer: Comrade Inspector, it will be your responsibility to ensure that each Post in the District is inspected in accordance with the Department Bylaws or as directed. You shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or as required by the Bylaws of this organization.

Installing Officer: Comrade Chief of Staff, it shall be your duty to assist the District Commander in the performance of their duties as to perform such actions as may be incident to the office or as required by the Bylaws of this organization.

Installing Officer: Comrade District Trustees, it will be your duty to make correct audits and reports of the District records as prescribed by the VFW Bylaws.

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander, this District will be placed in your charge upon the date of installation of your Department Commander, immediately following the Department Convention.

It will be your responsibility to see that the Trustees, in accordance with the National Bylaws, audit the books of the Adjutant and Quartermaster. Comrade Commander, it will further be your obligation to see that the Quartermaster is bonded in accordance with the National Bylaws.

Much of the success of this District will depend on you. Guard well its interests, so that you may fill your high office acceptably.

It will be necessary that you study carefully the principles of this organization, since it will be your duty to enforce its Bylaws and Ritual.

I present you with this gavel, the emblem of authority. Upon assuming office you will use it firmly, but with discretion (Presents gavel).

Comrade Commander, Commander-elect, officers and members of District_____, Department of_____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I proclaim the officers duly installed for the ensuing year.

(Business resumed.)

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

(National or Department)

Care should be taken to substitute the words "department" for "national," "Commander" for "Commander-in-Chief" and eliminate "General" in officers' titles at department installations.

The installing officer at national installations shall be a National Council Officer or Past Commander-in-Chief. At department installations, the installing officer shall be a national officer, a Past Department Commander, a

Department Council Officer or Department Commander named by the Commander-elect.

An aide-de-camp shall be appointed by the installing officer, and shall hold office only during the installation.

Commander: We will now proceed with the installation of officers.

Commander: Department Chief of Staff, you will escort the installing officer to a position on my right. (Two raps.)

Department Chief of Staff: (Salutes.) Comrade Commander, I have the honor to present Comrade (title_____and name_____), who has been officially appointed the installing officer.

(Installing officer and Commander exchange salutes.)

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander, the term for which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed has now expired. It is my duty to ascertain the following. Have officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

Commander: They have.

Installing Officer: Have the books of the Adjutant and the Quartermaster been examined and approved by the Department Council of Administration?

Commander: They have.

Installing Officer: Does the Adjutant have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

Commander: The Adjutant has.

Installing Officer: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time that the Bylaws prescribe you must, within thirty (30) days of election or appointment, submit to the Adjutant for their file a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Installing Officer: Are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster and ready to be turned over to their successor

when duly installed?

Commander: They are.

Installing Officer: Have you the Charter in your possession?

Commander: I have.

Installing Officer: You will now surrender the gavel to me.
(Commander hands gavel to the installing officer.)

Installing Officer: Past Commander (name_____), you have now been relieved of your duties as Commander of this organization. It is proper to remind you that in assuming the chair of Past Commander it will be your duty and privilege to counsel and otherwise assist your successor through the experiences you have gained during your term of office. You will now station yourself at my right.

(Both salute.)

Installing Officer: Department Aide-de-Camp, you will now present the elected and appointed officers at the altar, as the Adjutant reads the list of officers to be installed.

(Aide-de-camp escorts each elected and appointed officer, except the Commander-elect, to the altar, according to rank.)

Aide-de-Camp: Comrade Installing Officer of the Department Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the elected and appointed officers are in proper position for installation.

(Upon approach of the installing officer, elected and appointed officers salute. Installing officer takes position at the altar, faces elected and appointed officers, returns salute.)

Installing Officer: Department elected and appointed officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will administer to you the officers obligation. You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand and repeat after me:

OFFICERS' OBLIGATION

I do hereby solemnly promise -- that I will faithfully discharge

to the best of my ability -- the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed -- according to the Bylaws and Ritual -- of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise -- that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed -- or sooner if

so ordered by proper authority -- I will surrender immediately -- to only the duly authorized person or persons -- all records, money or other properties of this organization -- in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise -- upon my honor as a true comrade -- and a member of our great republic. So help me God.

Installing Officer: As you were! Parade rest.

PRAYER

Retiring or Acting Chaplain: Almighty God, our Guide and Divine Protector, give Your blessings upon these, our Comrades, who now become fellow officers. We ask you, O Lord, who is ever present amongst us, grant wisdom unto them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor You, our glorious Country and to better our organization. May Your strength sustain them. May Your power preserve them. May Your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

Installing Officer: As you were! Department Aide-de-Camp, you will now escort the officers to their respective stations.

(Outgoing officers will salute the incoming officers and surrender their stations. Officers will remain standing. One rap of the gavel.)

Installing Officer: Department Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy the position of honor to which your comrades have elected you. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake.

The Bylaws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your respective offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you, through your election or appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves

thoroughly with your duties.

(Or installing officer may elaborate by calling each newly- installed officer individually and instructing him briefly, as follows):

Installing Officer: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander, by your counsel and otherwise. In their absence or disability you should be prepared to assume the duties of their office.

Installing Officer: Comrade Junior Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander and the Senior Vice Commander by your counsel and otherwise.

Installing Officer: Department Council Officers, it will be your duty to attend all regularly called meetings of the Department Council of Administration.

Actions by Council of Administration members on questions of vital importance to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States require careful deliberation, wisdom and good judgment. You should learn thoroughly all provisions of the Bylaws and Ritual, so that you may render proper decisions.

You should keep informed on all policies and activities of our organization and serve the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to the best of your ability.

Installing Officer: Comrade Quartermaster, it is your duty to take charge of the funds of this organization. Guard them well. You will also be in charge of the supply department. See that all authorized supplies are on hand and that a profit is made on them.

Installing Officer: Comrade Judge Advocate, you are our legal adviser. As such you must familiarize yourself with all provisions of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Ritual so that you shall be competent to render advice and opinions to the Commander.

Installing Officer: Comrade Surgeon, your duties are those of your profession, for benefit of our organization, as prescribed by the Bylaws.

Installing Officer: Comrade Department Chaplain, we look to you for spiritual and inspirational guidance. You will assist the Post Chaplains and you will have charge of our memorial services. Make your service an inspiring example for all our comrades.

Installing Officer: Department Aide-de-Camp, you will present members of the National Council of Administration at the altar.

(After council members are at the altar, installing officer raps gavel twice.)

Installing Officer: Department Aide-de-Camp, you will now escort the Commander-elect to the altar.

(Commander-elect is placed directly in front of the council members, facing the installing officer.)

Aide-de-Camp: (Salutes.) Comrade Installing Officer of the Department Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I present Comrade Commander-elect (name). (Commander-elect and installing officer exchange salutes.)

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander-elect (name), before administering your obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties.

You will be held personally responsible for the Charter of this organization, and at the end of your term of office you will deliver it to the officer appointed to install your successor.

It is your duty to see that all Department officers perform their duties to the best of their ability. You shall keep yourself informed on all proposed legislation which may affect the welfare of potential and actual comrades of this organization. Strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all of your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the Bylaws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important

questions referred to you.

As Commander you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

May all your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade _____ are you willing and ready to assume your solemn obligation?

Commander-elect: (Answers.)

Installing Officer: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, give your name as I touch your hand and repeat after me:

COMMANDER'S OBLIGATION

In the presence of Almighty God -- and the officers and delegates of this order here assembled -- I, _____ do hereby solemnly promise -- that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability -- the duties of the office of Department Commander -- of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to which I have been elected -- in accordance with the Bylaws and Ritual -- of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise -- that at the close of the term to which I have been elected -- or sooner if so ordered by proper authority -- I will surrender immediately -- to only the duly authorized person or persons -- the National Charter -- all records, money and other properties of this organization -- in my possession or under my control. I do further solemnly promise -- that I will be fair and impartial in my actions toward all comrades -- and I will always strive to promote the best interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. So help me God.

Installing Officer: As you were! Council Officers, you will resume your stations. Department Aide-de-Camp, you will escort the Commander to their station.

(Immediate Past Commander and Commander exchange salutes,

Past Commander then takes station to the left of newly installed Commander.)

Installing Officer: Comrade Commander, I now place in your possession our Charter. Also I present you with this gavel, which is the emblem of your authority, use it firmly, but with discretion.

(Presents gavel.)

Installing Officer: All Department Officers, you will stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me:

Comrade Commander (name _____), to you I pledge my sincere allegiance.

Installing Officer: (Salutes.) Comrade Commander, officers and delegates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I now proclaim the Department officers duly installed and this organization in working order for the ensuing year.

(Installing officer salutes and retires. Newly installed Commander raps gavel once. Business is resumed.)

HONORING GOLD STAR PARENTS

Note: The presiding officer shall announce the following to the audience:

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Ritual provides that when honoring Gold Star parents we shall refrain from applauding.

There are times when mere words seem far from being adequate. This is such an occasion because we are gathered to recall persons who have made the supreme sacrifice -- and to honor their parents. Thus our deeds speak better than words.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is founded upon the true comradeship of persons bound by experiences, interests and everlasting patriotism. It is the sort of comradeship that lives through succeeding generations and far back into memory because we know that neither time nor events can separate those who have joined in the common defense of our flag and country.

That is the way we feel about the persons who are absent. We do not consider them gone. In reality they are very close to us. They are definitely a part of our thinking and actions. We feel that they have molded the future of our nation. They give us strong incentive to carry on our crusade for lasting peace and better purposes in life.

The highest tribute this organization can render those persons -- the most profound respect all of us can demonstrate -- is to apply to our own lives the strong faith and undaunted courage which were theirs.

To the parents of those comrades we pledge the sincere friendship of this Post and its Auxiliary.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

For National and Department Conventions and for Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Their Auxiliaries

The place of assembly should be arranged as for regular session of the order, altar draped in black -- open Bible thereon and small staffed Flag of the United States placed upon the altar. A small table draped in black between the altar and the commander's station is used as a shrine.

A floral Maltese Cross adds much to the appearance of the memorial altar. This cross may be made in one piece or in sections.

Titles used in the following are for National memorial services. In applying to Departments or Posts "Commander-in-Chief" refers to "Commander" and "Chief of Staff" refers to "Officer of the Day," etc.

Representatives of the Auxiliary left of Commander.

Commander takes their station and calls the session to order with one rap of the gavel.

Commander-in-Chief: Comrades, Members of the Auxiliary and friends, we meet at this time to commemorate our comrades of the United States Armed Forces who have answered the last call.

The VFW Ritual provides that the audience shall refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see that there is no disturbance during the ceremonies.

Chief of Staff: Commander-in-Chief, your order will be obeyed.

Commander-in-Chief: I request that the National Chaplain preside.

National Chaplain: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am at your service and shall endeavor to perform this solemn duty in the spirit of faith, hope and charity.

(National Chaplain takes station of the Commander-in-Chief.)

(A Post may, if feasible, conduct a MEMORIAL ROLL CALL at this point. The Commander steps in front of their station, the officer of the day on their right, the Post historian on their left. The Commander calls the roll of all deceased Post members. After each name the Commander pauses while the Officer of the Day announces the member's service organization, with Post historian giving place and date of death.)

National Chaplain: Will all please be seated. We will now have the lighting of the POW/MIA candle and the Armed Forces Vigil candle by the Commander-in-Chief and National President of the Auxiliary.

(The Commander-in-Chief and National President of the Auxiliary will light the two appropriate candles on the altar escorted by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and return to their seats.) (National Chaplain delivers a prayer for the POW/MIA'S and a "Prayer of Gratitude" for those serving in harm's way.)

PRAYER

National Chaplain: O God Almighty, Creator and Ruler of the Universe, some of our comrades and companions are prisoners of war and missing in action. Comfort them, we pray, in their isolation from their homes and loves ones; supply their needs and protect them from want and deprivation; strengthen and sustain them that they may face discouragement with courage and hardship with resolution. Grant that they may find patience to endure, and peace in the knowledge of Your continuing presence.

O God, we ask that You will strengthen and protect all our members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. In the day of battle may they be courageous and strong, resourceful and capable, resolute and victorious. In the time of peace may they serve with dignity and honor, as effective emissaries of good will for this Nation. May their devotion and loyalty to You and to their homeland inspire them in moments of challenge, and comfort them in tribulation and long separations from loved ones.

And finally, we ask they may return safely to serve You and our Country in the days and years to come. Amen.

National Chaplain: Comrades and friends, we will join in singing "Nearer, My God, To Thee."

Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!
Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams, I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!

National Chaplain: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, to whom should the true soldier look for help in the battles of life?

Commander-in-Chief: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

National Chaplain: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, what assurance have we of a prolonged stay among the scenes and activities of earth?

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief: "For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

National Chaplain: Comrade Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, have you a message of condolence for those bereaved?

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief: I have. The Book of Life tells us that "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."

National Chaplain: What message has the Chaplain of the Auxiliary?

Chaplain of Auxiliary: I have a message of hope that should inspire our comrades at this solemn moment and all through life. The message is from the Captain of our Salvation. He says: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

National Chaplain: Comrades, we are thankful for these inspiring thoughts. Let us learn the lesson of the hour which is that we, too, are nearing the end of life's pilgrimage and sooner or later these services may be held in our memory.

Let us so live that when our summons comes we may depart with a good conscience, in the comfort of a sincere religion, belief in God, and perfect charity toward all mankind. Let us pray.

(Chaplain delivers extemporaneous prayer following which a soloist may sing "Sleep Soldier Boy," or any other appropriate song.)

National Chaplain: Comrades, in commemorating the virtues of our departed heroes who served their country in time of need we now offer our symbolic tributes.

I place upon our sacred shrine these red flowers, which symbolize the zeal of our departed comrades in upholding brotherhood, truth and justice.

(Places flowers.)

National Chaplain: Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief, what tribute have you to offer?

Past Commander-in-Chief: These white flowers I place as a token of the purity of affection we have for our departed comrades.

(Places flowers.)

National Chaplain: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, have you a tribute to offer upon this sacred shrine?

Commander-in-Chief: The blue of our national standard symbolizes truth and fidelity. Therefore, I place these blue flowers from nature's bosom in token of our sincere respect for all departed comrades.

(Places flowers.)

National Chaplain: Members of the Auxiliary, will you offer a tribute to the memory of our departed comrades?

National President of Auxiliary: I place upon our sacred shrine this wreath as a symbol of eternity. Its color bespeaks life everlasting. Thus do we say that the deeds of military service members on land, on sea and in the air, are immortalized in the hearts of a grateful people.

(Places evergreen wreath.)

National Chaplain: Let us rise and sing "America".

AMERICA

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrim's pride,

From every mountain side,
Let freedom ring.

Our father's God, to Thee,
Author of Liberty,
To Thee we sing;

Long may our land be bright,
With freedom's holy light,
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

(If there is a speaker, they will now be introduced and deliver a brief inspirational message.)

The Chaplain will offer the benediction, either extemporaneous or from the Prayers for Various Occasions, followed by a period of silence and the playing of taps.)

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

For Post holding Memorial Day ceremonial at veteran's grave or monument. The ceremony may follow a brief address by Commander or other speaker, commemorating veteran dead of all wars and emphasizing VFW pledge to honor the dead by helping the living. The talk should be extemporaneous or based on latest materials made available by National Headquarters. The reading of General Logan's "General Order No. 11" would be appropriate.

HEADQUARTERS GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC Washington, D.C., May 5, 1868

GENERAL ORDER NO. 11

1. The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet church yard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such

fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.

We are organized, comrades, as our regulations tell us, for the purpose, among other things, "of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the military service members who united to suppress the late rebellion." What can aid more to assure this result than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead, who made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foes? Their soldier lives were the reveille of freedom to a race in chains, and their deaths the tattoo of rebellious tyranny in arms. We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the consecrated wealth and taste of the nation can add to their adornment and security, is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let no wanton foot tread rudely on such hallowed grounds. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no vandalism of avarice or neglect, no ravages of time testify to the present or to the coming generations, that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided Republic.

If other eyes grow dull, and other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remains to us.

Let us, then, at the time appointed gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with the choicest flowers of springtime; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us, a sacred charge upon a nation's gratitude—the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan.

- 2 It is the purpose of the Commander-in-Chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope that it will be kept up from year to year, while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of their departed comrades. He/she earnestly desires the public press to call attention to this order, and

lend its friendly aid in bringing it to the notice of comrades in all parts of the country in time for simultaneous compliance therewith.

3. Department Commanders will use every effort to make this order effective.

By Order of
JOHN A. LOGAN,
Commander-in-Chief

Attest:

N. P. Chipman, Adjutant General

After these preliminaries the following action is in order:

Commander stands at head of grave or appropriate spot before monument. At their right are Senior Vice Commander, national flag bearer and guard. To their left are Junior Vice Commander, Post standard bearer and guard. Members of the color detail stand facing either side of the grave or monument. Post Chaplain stands at foot of the grave or appropriate spot before the monument, with officer of the day to their right and Auxiliary President or Post Adjutant at their left. The bugler stands behind the Commander.

Other Post officers and members assemble around the grave, or monument, if feasible, while Commander declares slowly and impressively:

Commander: As long as two comrades survive—so long will the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States render tribute to our heroic dead.

Commander: Comrades, attention! On this day, forever consecrated to our heroic dead, we are assembled once again to express sincere reverence. This grave (monument) represents the resting places of many departed comrades who served in all wars. Wherever the body of a comrade lies there the ground is hallowed. Our presence here is in solemn commemoration of all these men and women -- an expression of our tribute to their devotion to duty, to their courage and patriotism. By their services on land, on sea and in the air they have made us their debtors -- for the flag of our nation still flies

over a land of free people.

(Pause. Then orders):

Commander: Parade, rest! Comrade Chaplain, you will ask the divine blessing.

Chaplain: Almighty God. In the depth of our silent reverence we realize the truth of the inspired words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."

As comrade after comrade departs we march on with our ranks grown thinner. Help us to be faithful to you and to one another. Look in mercy on the surviving spouses and children of our departed comrades, and with Your own tenderness console and comfort those who are bereaved.

Heavenly Father, bless our country with freedom, peace and righteousness. Through Your favor may we meet at last before Your throne in Heaven. We praise Your Great Name forever and forever. Amen.

(All respond Amen.)

Commander: Attention! officers and members of _____ Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we will now pay our respects to our departed comrade (these comrades). In so doing we offer solemn tribute to all comrades wherever they may rest. Comrade Senior Vice Commander!

(Senior Vice Commander steps to right side of grave, holding small wreath.)

Senior Vice Commander: On behalf of Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I place this symbol of our remembrance.

(Places wreath. Returns to former position.)

Commander: Comrade Junior Vice Commander!

(Junior Vice Commander steps to left side of grave, holding white flowers.)

Junior Vice Commander: I place this symbol of purity on this comrade's grave. May each future generation emulate the unselfish courage of all men and women who fought for freedom.

(Places flowers. Returns to former position.)

Commander: Comrade Officer of the Day!

(Officer of the Day steps to right side of grave, holding red flowers.)

Officer of the Day: In memory of the heroic dead who have fallen in defense of the United States of America I place this tribute of our devotion and everlasting remembrance.

(Places flowers. Returns to position.)

(If the Auxiliary takes part the Commander says):

Commander: President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary!

(President steps to foot of grave, holding blue flowers.)

Auxiliary President: On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, I place this emblem of eternity. Its color bespeaks life everlasting. Thus do we immortalize the brave deeds of our military service members who have given their lives on land, on sea and in the air.

(Places flowers on grave. Returns to position. If Auxiliary does not participate Post Adjutant should substitute.)

(Commander then places small Flag of the United States in marker or at head of grave, or appropriate place on monument.)

Commander: On behalf of our glorious republic for whose integrity our comrades enlisted and served, I place this emblem of the nation. The flag of our country was theirs to defend. Its glorious colors shall wave over them in death as in life—for everyone to behold.

(Commander resumes station. Then addressing grave, or monument, declares):

Commander: To you comrades who have departed we render a silent salute.

(Then orders):

Commander: Comrades, Present Arms!

(All hold salute to grave or monument while Commander counts ten silently. Then Commander says aloud, slowly, impressively and directing their words to the grave or monument):

Commander: Comrades in the Silent Land beyond, wherever your mortal remains may rest, these solemn services we hold in tribute to you.

(Bugler sounds Taps. This may be followed by gradually softening tattoo on drums or echo Taps from muted bugle or second bugler stationed at a distance. Commander ends salute with command, Order Arms! This ends the ceremony. VFW members march away in military order to be dismissed.)

DEDICATING A MEMORIAL

The following ceremony may be used by VFW unit dedicating honor roll or plaque or tablet bearing the names of men and women who have served in the United States armed forces.

Following preliminary addresses, music, etc., and at time for dedication, the Post Commander marches their participating members to the honor roll, which should be veiled. The Flag of the United States and Post standard, flanked by color guard, should lead. Officers and comrades follow in order of rank. The formation should be in column of twos.

Commander halts the column when it reaches the roll of honor. Comrades are distributed half on each side of center aisle leading to the roll of honor. Each group faces the other, with Post officers in front ranks. Post Commander—and/or speaker—stand before the memorial, facing the audience.

Color bearers, flanked by color guards, stand at attention to the right and left of the roll of honor. Other comrades at parade rest.

The Flag of the United States is placed to the audience's left, and the Post colors to the audience's right.

When all is quiet the Commander, or speaker, facing the audience, says:

Commander: This is a solemn, important occasion—one we shall long remember with pride for the small part we are contributing.

(Suggested speech.)

We are assembled here to pay tribute to the men and women of our community who have served in the United States armed forces—our neighbors who have fought in defense of this country—and for preservation of our way of life.

Those men and women are worthy of far greater recognition than mere words or markers. The sacrifices they made and the deeds they performed shall be written in history, and shall remain alive in our memories for generations to come. We express sincerely our pride and gratitude for the tasks they fulfilled.

Before you is the flag of our nation (speaker indicates the flag). That flag is the symbol of all that is sacred to us. Look at it closely for a moment. The Flag of the United States reflects what we are—and what we hope to be. The white stripes symbolize purity of purpose in our freedom of thought, expression and worship.

These are the privileges we guarantee to all who live in our land. They are the rights we defend against all enemies who seek to crush the way of life that you and I cherish.

Also in that flag we see the red stripes of courage—our willingness to die, if necessary, for preservation of American ideals.

Then there is the blue of tranquility upon which the stars of our states are united to hold intact all that is truly ours—the desire for peace, prosperity and happiness throughout our nation.

We emphasize that interpretation of the Flag of the United States which you see carried proudly and guarded so carefully. We emphasize our tribute to the flag because we are assembled here to honor those who have fought under that sacred symbol of our land.

We have come here to dedicate a roll of honor naming the men and women of this community who went forth as the living strength of our flag. They were the United States armed forces on land, sea and in the air. Some of them did not return. They are the honored dead whose resting places are found in many foreign lands and waters around the globe.

These American defenders left our schools, our shops and our farms to take up weapons against the foes. They left their peacetime pursuits with confidence in their hearts and assurances upon their lips. They were aware of the dangers before them, yet they responded without hesitancy to the call of duty.

These are the men and women in whom we entrusted all our faith. They are the ones for whom we toiled and prayed here at home—to help make their effort victorious, so they might return and live with us in lasting peace and security.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars looks upon all these honored ones as comrades. Within our organization are men and women who have served under the Flag of the United States overseas in many wars to preserve American freedoms. The honors we symbolize here express the appreciation of VFW members for all comrades-in-arms.

Fighting under the flag of this nation is the privileged duty of every able-bodied American, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will always honor those who go forth in defense of our nation. They are the true guardians of freedom, justice and equality among all. (Pause)

Commander: Comrades, Attention!

(All comrades respond, facing the roll of honor.)

(Commander about-faces. Senior and Junior Vice Commanders step to the roll of honor, unveil it and return to their places. Or, if the roll of honor is not veiled the Commander stands facing it. In loud voice so all the audience hears, Commander says):

Commander: Before us are the names of (number) men and women from our community who have served in the United States armed forces. We honor them. We extend to them and to their memory our deepest respect.

Comrade Chaplain, you will ask the divine blessing.

(Chaplain steps one pace forward from their front rank position and offers this prayer, slowly and clearly):

Chaplain: Almighty God, guide these men and women we honor through every day and night. Give them unbounded strength and courage to continue their efforts for lasting peace. Make their victory a true service to all humanity. Give them growing faith in Your teachings.

Make them Your chosen servants, to carry on forever a victorious crusade against all evil forces seeking to destroy that which is just and good in the hearts of men and women. Help them to bring brotherly love to all lands. Bless and comfort those whom they have left bereaved. And, finally, O God, help us to increase our spiritual unity, and our love for all. In reverent humility we ask these blessings. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

(Chaplain resumes place in ranks. Officer of the Day brings color bearers and guards to present arms.)

Commander: Comrades, Present Arms!

(As all salute, the Commander says slowly, in loud voice):

Commander: And now, in the name of _____
Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the
United States, Department of _____, we dedicate this roll of
honor which records, so all may see, the names of these
brave men (and women) who have served in the fighting
forces of our great nation. May their noble deeds live forever.

(Salute ends, or if music is available, all present salute flag and roll of honor during rendition of national anthem. This concludes ceremony. Commander about-faces, closes ranks and marches Post members away led by colors.)

FLAG PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Commander: (Organization leaders, members), Comrades, of (Post Name and Number) Veterans of Foreign Wars: We have the honor today of presenting the National Standard, the Flag of the United States, to this worthy organization, on this occasion. Comrade _____, our presentation chairman, will formally present the Colors, Comrade _____.

Presentation Chairman: (Organization, leaders, members) I bring the heartiest greetings from the officers and members of (Post Name), Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. As one of the highlights of our Community Service and Youth Activities programs, it is a great pleasure to us to be able to present to you this symbol of our great republic. To you (name of organization) we ask only that you always respect and if necessary defend this great and beautiful flag; even at the risk of giving your own lives to our nation's cause.

Officer of the Day, you will with the assistance of (one of receiving organization members), raise the colors and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Officer of the Day: We will now rededicate ourselves and this flag to our Country. Present Arms! (Raises Flag). You will join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. Order Arms!

Commander: Comrade Chaplain, you will ask blessing on this, our National Colors.

Chaplain: O God, Bless our Nation's Emblem; may it ever symbolize freedom and justice for all our people. Help these citizens to always respect those high principles that are noble and right, that they might better understand the high ideals

represented by this flag; and, if need be, that they have to trod on foreign soil to defend it, may you abide with them always. Amen.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES

A Post may function as a unit at the funeral of a deceased comrade, soldier, sailor, marine, airman or guardian having an honorable record. VFW participation in the services will be on request of the family of the deceased and upon order of the Post Commander or vote of the Post. Otherwise Post members will attend services as individuals, taking no active part in the ceremonies.

The Post Commander and staff must use own best judgment to make VFW services conform to local circumstances. Changes may have to be made in the following instructions. Most important is to have everything run smoothly. Each comrade participating in the funeral ritual should understand clearly what they are to do at a particular moment. Everyone should be rehearsed so as to avoid delay, confusion or reference to the printed Ritual during ceremonies.

The Post Commander should make complete preliminary arrangements with the family or its representatives regarding the part the VFW is to take in the ceremonies.

When the VFW is asked to use its Ritual at funerals the action is expected to follow closely the military ceremony prescribed by military regulations. That means we use a uniformed color detail with guards and color bearers, the flag-covered casket, uniformed pallbearers or escort, Chaplain, bugler sounding Taps and a firing squad.

The burial flag (5 x 9 1/2 feet, wool bunting, with hemmed heading) will be provided by the government for burial ceremonies for all veterans who served honorably. The flag will be provided by the government agency returning remains to home town, or by local postmaster.

There are three types of military funeral services: (1) with chapel service followed by escort to grave or place of local

disposition of remains; (2) without chapel service, but with the funeral procession forming at or near the cemetery entrance; (3) graveside service only "Chapel" means the home, church, funeral parlor and places other than the grave.

Honorary pallbearers may be VFW members or others selected by the family.

Following are some funeral service details to remember:

- Military funeral regulations do not take firing squad into chapel.
- All military or VFW details shall, in church, have heads bared except while actually functioning. Members of color detail and firing squad, functioning, do not remove caps. Uniformed pallbearers remain covered while carrying casket. Uniformed members not in formation, but attending services as individuals, stand at attention with cap held to left breast whenever casket is moved by pallbearers and during salutes and Taps.
- The Flag of the United States should never be dipped or lowered. Only Post colors should be dipped while casket is passing and during sounding of Taps. When Post colors are dipped the firing squad and color guard come to present arms.
- Military regulations provide that the Flag of the United States shall cover the casket during military funeral services held in a church or chapel. Comrades making arrangements should determine that this is acceptable to the minister.

Following are individual instructions for personnel taking part in complete military funeral ceremonies, as prescribed by latest Army regulations.

Chaplain. Arrives at the chapel before the arrival of the casket and stands in front of the entrance to the chapel to one side of the body bearers. The Chaplain remains uncovered throughout the entire ceremony except in inclement weather, or if religious rites prescribe head covering.

When the body bearers have removed the casket from the hearse, the Chaplain leads the body bearers and casket into the chapel. Then conducts the chapel service. When the chapel service is completed, the Chaplain precedes the casket out of the chapel. While the casket is being fastened to the caisson, the Chaplain may retire to the vestryroom of the chapel to remove vestments, if so desired. The Chaplain takes their position preceding the casket and following the colors in funeral procession.

Upon arrival of the procession at the burial lot, the Chaplain waits until the band, escort, and colors have taken their positions at the grave site; when the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson the Chaplain removes their headdress and holds it over their left breast; then precedes the casket to the grave site, marching between the two facing ranks of honorary pallbearers at the entrance to the burial lot.

The Chaplain then takes their position at the head of the grave; when everyone is in position the Chaplain conducts the committal service. At the end of the service, the Chaplain steps two steps backward or to the side to make room for the bugler to sound Taps.

After the funeral service is finished, the Chaplain remains behind to render any assistance required by the family.

Band. The band assembles in front of the chapel prior to the arrival of the casket and stands at ease until the hearse appears. It forms facing the chapel to the right of the entrance on line with colors, escort, and firing party.

When the hearse appears, the band is brought to attention. When the body bearers lift the casket from the hearse and the escort is brought to the position of present arms, the drum major assumes the position of present baton, and the band plays an appropriate air. The band continues playing until the casket is carried into the chapel.

During the chapel service, the band remains in position and stands at ease.

When the body is carried out again at the close of the chapel service, the band is brought to attention, the drum major

assumes the position of present arms, and the band plays an appropriate air at the moment that the casket appears at the entrance to the chapel. It continues to play during the time that the casket is carried to the caisson; it stops when the casket is secured.

When the procession moves off, the band leads the line of march, although the civilian funeral director may precede the band and lead the way to the cemetery.

When the general vicinity of the grave has been reached, the procession again is marched slowly to the grave and the band may resume playing.

The band takes its place facing the grave in line with the escort.

The band plays an appropriate, solemn air from the time that the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson until it is placed over the grave. The drum major assumes the position of present baton. When the casket is placed over the grave, the band then ceases playing, comes to parade rest, and the members bow their heads.

When the escort is brought to attention prior to the firing of volleys and the sounding of Taps, the band assumes the position of attention at the same command. The leader of the band executes the hand salute and the drum major comes to the position of present baton while volleys are fired and Taps is sounded.

When the services are over, the Commander of the escort commands the band and escort to move off in quick time. At a suitable distance from the grave site, the band plays a lively tune as the ceremonial detachment returns to the dispersal point.

Escort and Firing Party. The escort assembles in front of the chapel prior to the arrival of the casket and stands at ease until the hearse appears. It forms facing the chapel on line with the colors and band.

When the hearse appears, the escort is brought to attention. When all is in readiness for the body bearers to remove the casket from the hearse, the escort is brought to the position of

present arms.

When the casket is carried into the chapel the escort is brought to the order and permitted to stand at ease.

When the casket is brought out from the chapel at the end of the chapel service, the escort is called to attention and then brought to the position of present arms. The escort remains in this position while the casket is being secured to the caisson.

When the casket is secured to the caisson, the escort is brought to the order. The escort then takes its place in the procession behind the band and marches to the cemetery. At the graveside, the escort takes its position in line with the band, behind and facing the head of the grave.

The firing party element of the escort is formed in one rank, apart from the escort so that it will not fire over the heads of the family when they take their place beside the grave. The firing party will execute all commands with escort except when specifically indicated otherwise.

At the moment that the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson, the escort is brought to the position of present arms. They remain in this position until the casket is placed over the grave.

When the casket is placed over the grave, the escort is called to order and brought to the position of parade rest; all members of the escort stand in this position with bowed heads until the Chaplain completes the committal service.

When the Chaplain has finished the service, the escort is then called to attention.

Members of the escort are then given the command, 1. Escort less firing party, 2. Present, 3. Arms. At the command Arms, the escort, honorary pallbearers, leader of the band, bugler and privates of the color guard come to the position of present arms. The drum major comes to the position of present baton.

The escort Commander then commands: 1. Firing Party, 2. With Blank Cartridges, 3. Load. At the command Load, each member of the firing party faces half right and carries their right foot 12 inches to the right and to such position as will secure the greatest firmness and steadiness of the body. Each member

of the firing party raises their rifle, and drops it into the left hand at the balance, right hand at the small of the stock, muzzle in the air, at an angle of 45 degrees. Then loads their rifle in the manner prescribed in the manual for that weapon.

The escort Commander then gives the command, 1. Ready, Aim, 3. Squad, 4. Fire. At the command Ready, each member of the firing party remains in the position of load. At the command Aim, each member of the firing party raises their rifle with both hands to a position of 45 degrees from the horizontal, the rifle resting in the palm of their left hand, the butt placed and held firmly against their shoulder. The left hand is well under the rifle, grasping it at or in front of the balance, the right hand grasping the small of the stock. The right elbow is at the height of the shoulder. The right cheek is pressed firmly against the stock as far forward as it can be without straining. The left eye is closed, the right eye looking over the rear sight. The rifle is then unlocked.

At the command Fire, each member of the firing party squeezes the trigger of their rifle quickly. The rifle is then lowered to the position of load and reload. The escort Commander then commands: 1. Aim, 2. Squad, 3. Fire. After the second volley is fired, the escort Commander again gives the command, 1. Aim, 2. Squad, 3. Fire, and the third volley is fired.

After the third volley is fired the firing party shall be brought to present arms and shall so remain in this position until the conclusion of the sounding of Taps. The escort Commander executes the hand salute while Taps is sounded.

After the last note of Taps has been played the escort is brought to the order. At the same command the firing party comes to the order from the position of ready. The firing party then rejoins the escort and the escort moves off behind the band.

At the first halt, the rifles of the firing party are unloaded and inspected.

Color Guard. The color guard arrives at the chapel and takes its position prior to the arrival of the hearse.

When the hearse appears, the color guard is brought to attention and the privates of the color guard come to the position of present arms with the escort.

When the casket is carried into the chapel, the privates of the color guard come to the order and the color guard is permitted to stand at ease.

When the casket is brought out from the chapel at the end of the chapel service, the color guard comes to the position of attention with the escort.

The privates of the color guard then come to the position of present arms with the escort and remain in this position until the casket is secured to the caisson.

When the casket is secured to the caisson, the privates of the color guard come to the order with the escort. The color guard takes its position behind the escort and marches to the cemetery.

At the graveside, the color guard takes its position in line with the band behind and facing the head of the grave.

At the moment that the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson, the privates of the color guard come to the position of present arms with the escort. They remain in this position until the casket is placed over the grave.

When the casket is placed over the grave the privates of the color guard come to the order with the escort. The color guard then comes to the position of parade rest with the escort and stands with bowed heads until the Chaplain completes the committal service.

When the committal service is completed, the color guard comes to the position of attention with the escort. The privates of the color guard then execute present arms with the escort and hold that position until the escort is brought to the order, when they also come to the order.

The color guard then moves off following the band, as the procession leaves the cemetery in quick time.

Body Bearers. The body bearers assemble directly in front of the entrance to the chapel before the hearse arrives.

When the escort is brought to the position of attention they lift the casket from the hearse and, following the Chaplain, carry the casket feet first into the chapel, passing through the aisle formed by the two facing ranks of honorary pallbearers.

If after entering the chapel, a church truck is available, the casket may be placed on the truck and only two body bearers will be required to guide the casket to the front of the chancel. Otherwise, all body bearers carry the casket feet first to the front of the chancel and then take their places in the pews behind those occupied by the honorary pallbearers at the left front of the chapel. When the chapel service is over, the body bearers lift the casket and carry it out of the chapel feet first. The body bearers then secure the casket to the caisson.

In the funeral procession, the body bearers march in two files immediately behind the caisson.

When the procession reaches the entrance of the burial lot, and the band, colors, and escort have taken their positions at the grave site, the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson and carry it to the grave site.

At the grave site, the body bearers rest the casket on the lowering device and remove the interment flag from the casket, holding it over the grave waist high. The flag is held tightly so that it does not sag over the casket during the service.

At the conclusion of Taps, the body bearers fold the flag. The Officer in charge presents the flag to the next of kin with these words: "On behalf of the government of the United States of America, through the Veterans of Foreign Wars__Post____, I am honored to present you with this flag of our country, under which your_____ (relationship) has so honorably and faithfully served."

The Officer in charge gives hand salute and retires with escort.

Honorary Pallbearers. The honorary pallbearers arrive at the chapel before the hearse arrives. They take positions in front of the entrance to the chapel in two facing ranks.

Upon arrival of the hearse and when the body bearers remove the casket from the hearse, honorary pallbearers execute the hand salute.

When the casket is carried between the two ranks that they have formed, they come to the order, execute the appropriate facing movement, fall in behind the casket, and enter the chapel, the senior preceding the junior and marching to the right.

In the chapel, they take places in the front pews to the left of the chapel.

When the chapel service is over, honorary pallbearers assemble at door of chapel and then take positions outside of the chapel in two facing ranks, forming an aisle through which the casket is carried by the body bearers preceded by the Chaplain. As the casket is carried past them, they execute the hand salute. They remain in this position until the casket is loaded on the caisson, when they come to the order.

If the funeral procession rides in cars to the cemetery, the honorary pallbearers ride in cars immediately behind the caisson. If they march, they march in two files on either side of the caisson, the senior preceding and marching to the right.

The leading member of each file marches opposite the front wheels of the caisson.

When the entrance to the burial lot is reached, the honorary pallbearers take positions on either side of the entrance. As the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson, the honorary pallbearers execute the hand salute.

When the casket has been carried past them, they come to the order and fall in behind the casket, marching to the grave site in correct precedence of rank, senior to the right and to the front.

At the grave site they stand in line behind the Chaplain at the head of the grave. They execute the hand salute during the firing of volleys, the sounding of Taps, and the lowering of the casket into the grave.

After the ceremony is over they march off in two files behind the colors.

Family. The family arrives at the chapel before the casket is received and is seated in pews in right front of the chapel.

When the chapel service is over, the family members follow the casket down the aisle until they reach the vestibule of the chapel, where they wait until the casket is carried outside and secured to the caisson.

When the procession is ready to form, members of the family take their places in the procession immediately behind the body bearers.

When the procession arrives at the graveside, the members of the family wait until the band, escort, and colors have taken their positions at the grave, and the casket is carried between the double row of honorary pallbearers.

The members of the family take their positions at the side of the grave opposite earth mound side for the funeral service.

When the graveside ceremony is finished, a member of the family receives interment flag from the cemetery representative, the officer in charge of the funeral, or the individual military escort.

The family then leaves the cemetery.

(For further details see latest Army Manual (FM3-21.5), Drills and Ceremonies, or, Bureau of Navy Personnel, Navy Military Funerals, NAVPERS 15555D.)

CHAPEL SERVICE

The following VFW funeral chapel action at the casket of a departed comrade may be used if the family of the deceased requests that such final rites be performed. Arrangements should be made beforehand with the funeral director and officiating minister.

Before the services begin place a staffed Flag of the United States to the left of the chapel rostrum (left as those assembled face the casket) and the VFW colors to the right of the rostrum.

The casket is covered by a Flag of the United States laid in reverse position—with the blue field over the heart of the deceased.

When the services start, the Junior Vice-Commander, Senior Vice-Commander, Officer of the Day, Commander and Chaplain are seated on the front row.

These five members should be dressed in full uniform.

They wear the VFW cap except during prayer.

They have the symbols of the stations they occupy.

The Junior Vice-Commander, sprig of evergreen; Senior Vice-Commander, a white flower or flowers; Officer of the Day, a laurel wreath; Commander, a small flag of the United States.

At the moment arranged for the VFW ceremony, preferably following the religious service by the minister, priest or rabbi, the VFW officers rise and march in single file to the rostrum. All movements should be executed in precise, military, orderly manner.

The officers stand facing the assembly, before or near the casket. Those assembled see, left to right, Junior Vice-Commander, Senior Vice-Commander, Officer of the Day, Commander, Chaplain.

Commander: We, the members of _____ Post No. ____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, are here assembled to pay a lasting tribute of respect to our departed comrade. When the call of our country was heard Comrade (deceased) answered; self was forgotten in the cause of the greater good. Bravely they marched away with the abiding faith in their God, their country and their flag.

The red of our country's flag was made redder by their heroism; the white more stainlessly pure by the motives which impelled them; and, in the starry field of our nation's glorious banner, the blue has been glorified by the service they have given for American ideals.

Parade rest. (Detail responds.) The Chaplain will invoke the divine blessing. (Detail hold caps over heart with right hand.)

Chaplain: (May extemporize or repeat): "O God, Creator of all, we here extend these final earthly tributes to our beloved comrade. Accept our prayers in behalf of the soul of Your departed servant. Welcome them to Your house to rest in

peace. Look with mercy upon the loved ones bereaved by their passing. Comfort and console them through Your own tenderness. These things we ask humbly in Your name. Amen.

(All repeat Amen. Replace caps.)

(A choir, quartet or soloist may sing "Sleep, Soldier Boy" or other appropriate song.)

Commander: One by one, as the years roll on, we are called upon to fulfill these sad duties of respect to our departed comrades.

Attention! Officers of _____ Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

Junior Vice-Commander: (Faces the casket, approaches it, stands before blue field of the casket flag in such position that their back is not toward the assembly. They fold back the blue corner of the flag to leave bare a portion of the casket. Then places the evergreen upon the casket and declares so all will hear):

"On behalf of _____ Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I present this evergreen tribute as a symbol of our undying love for our comrade."

(Junior Vice-Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in the line.)

Senior Vice-Commander: (Takes same position at the casket. Laying white flowers upon casket and says): "I place these white flowers as a symbol of purity upon this casket, and may each future generation emulate the unselfish devotion to duty even to the last of our comrades."

(Senior Vice-Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Officer of the Day: (Takes same position at the casket. Laying wreath upon casket and says):

"We place this wreath as a last token of affection from their comrades-in-arms upon the casket of our departed comrade and crown their mortal dust with this symbol of victory."

(Officer of the Day salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Commander: (Takes same position at the casket. Placing small Flag of the United States upon casket and says): "On behalf of our glorious republic, for whose integrity our comrades of the Veterans of Foreign Wars enlisted and served, we place upon their casket this emblem of our country, a country whose arms are always open to shelter the oppressed."

(Commander then replaces folded corner of the casket flag, laying it over the evergreen, flower, wreath and flag symbols. Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Chaplain: (Delivers brief address extemporaneously or repeats the following):

We come today to honor the memory of one who offered their life as a service to our Nation's cause and to our God. Proudly we remember their service. Because of men and women like our comrade, we live in a land of freedom, peace and justice. May our ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our honored comrade and friend.

We believe that our comrade is now in the hands of our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Commander and Judge of all. We lay our comrade's body (ashes) to rest. Let us cherish their virtues and learn to imitate them. Let each of us be loyal and faithful to our remaining missions in life that we too will be able to join in that grand fraternity which is on earth and in heaven, and remains unbroken.

We realize how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy in our loss. May we be comforted by the assurance that our comrade, friend and loved one is at rest in God's eternal peace, and abides in a place where all burdens are lifted and there is no more sickness and pain.

Comrades, let us now pledge ourselves anew to provide support and protection for those left behind; to pick up the

banner laid down by our comrade, and continue their march to face the challenges that confronts us in this life, and may our God always be our companion and guide.

Commander: This concludes our service.

(They remove the casket flag and fold it in the regulation manner illustrated in the VFW Ritual.)

(If the body is to be cremated immediately following the services, the Commander at conclusion of Chaplain's closing remarks—goes to the head of the casket and the Officer of the Day goes to its foot. They remove the casket flag and fold it. Commander and Officer of the Day return to their places in line with Commander carrying folded flag.)

Commander: This concludes our service.

(Commander gives orders necessary to return members of the detail to their seats.)

(Commander presents casket flag to the nearest of kin.)

(If the above symbolic ceremony is held in a chapel it should not be repeated in the burial service. In that case, the VFW action at place of interment is described under the headings Committal and Benediction.)

VFW BURIAL RITUAL

Unless the deceased veteran was an active member of the VFW the symbolic flower part of the service, paragraphs numbered 1 to 4, inclusive, page 95, will not be used.

Commander: Attention!

We are here assembled to pay a lasting tribute of respect to our departed comrade.

When the call of our country was heard, Comrade (name of deceased) answered; self was forgotten in the cause of the greater good. Bravely they marched away with an abiding faith in their God, their country and their flag.

The red of our country's flag was made redder still by their heroism; the white, more stainlessly pure by the motives which impelled him; and, in the starry field of our nation's glorious

banner, the blue has been glorified by the service they have given for American ideals.

Parade, rest.

The Chaplain will invoke the divine blessing.

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty and Merciful God and Father of all, in the midst these monuments of the dead we see Your hand of mercy.

In the depth of our sorrow, we realize the truth (**) that though we die, we shall live again in the shelter of Your love. As comrade after comrade departs this life, we march on with our ranks growing thinner. Help us to be faithful to You and to one another.

We ask that You would look in mercy upon all of us here assembled and with Your compassion and tenderness, console and comfort those bereaved by the hand of death. Give them the "oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Heavenly Father, bless our Nation with freedom, peace and righteousness, and through Your Sovereign and Holy Spirit's favor, may we all meet at last before Your throne of Grace in Heaven. And to Your Great Name shall be praise forever and ever. Amen.

(** At a Christian burial: "of the inspired words: 'I am the resurrection and life; he that believes in me, though he were dead yet shall be live.'")

(All comrades repeat Amen and assume position of "at ease".) (If a choir, quartet or soloist is present an appropriate hymn will be sung, preferably "Sleep, Soldier Boy," as indicated in paragraph 9, general rules, page 2.)

(Commander will read the following or they may extemporize):

Commander: One by one, as the years roll on, we are called upon to fulfill these sad duties of respect to our departed comrades. The present, full of the cares that beset all nations whether engaged in war or peace, fades away as we look

back on the day this comrade left their home to defend their country.

Imbued by a spirit of devotion and inspired by an undying love of their native land, they gladly went forth and joined with comrades both young and old to preserve our heritage of freedom.

We trust that the example set by our comrade will prove a glorious beacon to the youth of our country, who may be called to uphold the honor of our flag.

As the years roll on, we, too, shall have finished our fight, shall be laid to rest, and our souls follow the long column to the realms above, as all-enfolding death, hour by hour, shall mark HIS recruits.

Comrades, let us so live that when the Keeper of the Eternal Records shall have called our names for the last time, those we leave behind may say of us, as we say now of this comrade. "Here lies all that is mortal of a true-hearted comrade, and a fearless defender of their country and flag."

Commander: Officers, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

1. Junior Vice Commander places a sprig of evergreen upon the casket and repeats: "On behalf of _____ Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I present this tribute as a symbol of our undying love for our comrade."
2. Senior Vice Commander, placing white flowers upon the casket, repeats: "I place this symbol of purity upon this casket, and may each future generation emulate the unselfish devotion to duty of the lowliest of our comrades."
3. Officer of the day, placing a laurel wreath upon the casket, repeats: "We place this last token of affection from their comrades in arms upon the casket of our departed comrade and crown their mortal dust with this symbol of victory."

4. Commander, gently holding up one corner of the regulation flag covering the casket, or placing a small Flag of the United States on the casket if there is none on it already, repeats: "On behalf of our glorious republic, for whose integrity our comrade of the Veterans of Foreign Wars enlisted and served, we place upon their casket this emblem of our country, a country whose arms are always open to shelter the oppressed."

(If the casket is to be interred the small flag if used, will be placed at the head of the grave—never to be covered with earth.)

(Address by Chaplain. The Chaplain shall here repeat the following, or may make an address of the same length):

We come today to honor the memory of one who offered their life as a service to our Nation's cause and to our God. Proudly we remember their service. Because of men and women like our comrade, we live in a land of freedom, peace and justice. May our ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our honored comrade and friend. We believe that our comrade is now in the hands of our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Commander and Judge of all. We lay our comrade's body (ashes) to rest. Let us cherish their virtues and learn to imitate them. Let each of us be loyal and faithful to our remaining missions in life that we too will be able to join in that grand fraternity which is on earth and in heaven, and remains unbroken.

We realize how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy in our loss. May we be comforted by the assurance that our comrade, friend and loved one is at rest in God's eternal peace, and abides in a place where all burdens are lifted and there is no more sickness and pain.

Comrades, let us now pledge ourselves anew to provide support and protection for those left behind; to pick up the banner laid down by our comrade, and continue their march to face the challenges that confronts us in this life, and may our God always be our companion and guide.

COMMITTAL

The Chaplain or minister in charge will then recite the following committal service:

The Master saith: " I am the Resurrection and the Life. Anyone who believes in Me will live, even after dying."

(This paragraph to be used at discretion of Post.)

Dust shall be returned to dust and the spirit to God who gave it.

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust and the spirit to Spirit, that watches over the lives and souls of men and women. Amen.

All Comrades: Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless and keep us. The Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. And may the Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us His peace. And may the blessings of Heaven be on all our comrades wherever they are dispersed in our world. Amen.

At the grave, the Commander gives the signal to the firing squad, which fires three volleys. See detailed instructions. Commander then commands right hand salute.

The bugles sound Taps; the Post colors only, drooping full, fly over the grave. At last note Commander calls "attention."

Military regulations governing the conduct of a military funeral provide that at conclusion of Taps body bearers shall fold the interment flag and present it to the cemetery representatives or funeral director for transmittal to the next of kin. See last paragraph of instructions to body bearers for proper instructions for presenting the flag.

When the graveside services are concluded the Chaplain remains to render any assistance required by the family. The band, escort and firing party, color guard, body bearers, honorary pallbearers and other VFW comrades leave the scene.

SPECIAL NOTICE

When services are held elsewhere than at the grave (without burial) formations will be maintained as nearly as possible to those of the foregoing burial ritual, and the Commander shall omit the committal service beginning with the words "The Master saith."

A short, appropriate address should be given by the Chaplain followed by the benediction, or an assisting minister may give this address and benediction.

Note: The Commander and their staff must exercise judgment to fit the services in this Ritual to the occasion in all instances, varying only as exceptional circumstances demand. If the prescribed formation cannot be used owing to setting of the casket the Commander will inform their members where to take station before the exercises begin. No man should take a part unless they can render it creditably. Rather appoint a substitute who can do it well. If volley firing is objected to omit that part of the ceremonial. Always conform to the wishes of the relatives in charge. Let no mistake mar the solemnity of this beautiful service.

Every Post should have on hand at all times copies of the VFW memorial song, "Sleep, Soldier Boy," for use at all funerals and on all commemorative occasions. Get copies from National Headquarters, high or low key or for mixed quartet.

CREMATED REMAINS

When remains are cremated and the ashes interred with military honors, the foregoing instructions will govern, with necessary modifications.

Military regulations provide that where the cremated remains are carried by hand one person will be detailed to carry the receptacle containing the ashes. Four other persons will function as bearers of the Flag of the United States.

When the receptacle containing the ashes is carried from the conveyance into the chapel, from the chapel to the conveyance, or from the conveyance to the grave, the flag bearers follow with the flag folded in proper manner and carried by the leading flag bearer on the right.

When the receptacle has been placed on the stand before the chancel of the chapel, or in the conveyance, the folded flag is placed beside the receptacle. If the caisson is equipped with casket container for the receptacle, the open flag is laid upon the container as prescribed for a casket.

When remains of the deceased are conducted to a crematory and the ashes are to be interred with military honors later, the ceremony consists only of the escort to the crematory. Arms are presented as the remains are borne into the crematory. The firing of volleys and the sounding of Taps are omitted. However, if the funeral ceremony is held at the crematory and no further military honors are anticipated, the volleys may be fired and Taps sounded at discretion of the commanding officer.

CEREMONY FOR DRAPING CHARTER

After motion from floor, or Commander requests ceremony:

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will obtain drape in preparation for draping charter.

(Officer of the Day obtains drape, proceeds to the altar and salutes Commander.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice) Members rise and face charter at attention.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will now drape our charter in memory of our beloved Comrade _____ who has passed on.

(Officer of the Day proceeds to charter and drapes charter.)

Commander: (While Officer of the Day is draping charter) By so doing, we as members of _____ Post _____ offer solemn tribute to our departed comrade.

(Officer of the Day returns to the altar. Salutes Commander. Retires to station.)

Commander: Comrades, Salute—Two.

Commander: Comrade Chaplain (Comrades parade rest.)

Chaplain: (Proceeds to altar. Gives following prayer): Eternal God, let Your mercy rest upon us as we, with grateful affection, remember Comrade____(name)_____, who has departed this life. We thank You for their days upon earth and the joy that they brought. May our remembrance of them live long among us and be to us a source of guidance and strength. Give to those who miss them most deeply, wells of consolation from which to draw comfort, and enable us to be Your ministers of mercy to them in their time of need. Amen.

(Commander raps gavel once to seat members.)

(VFW 62nd National Convention, Resolution 183, mandate provides that—"charters should be draped for 30 days for all deceased comrades.") After the 30 days an Undraping of the Charter ceremony may be performed:

After motion from floor, or Commander requests ceremony:

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will prepare to undrape the charter.

(Officer of the Day proceeds to the altar and salutes Commander.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice) Members rise and face charter at attention.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will now undrape our charter which was draped last month for Comrade _____.

Officer of the Day proceeds to undrape charter)

Commander: Comrades, Salute—Two.

PARADE REGULATIONS

At National Conventions, Department right of line will be in alphabetical order. Post standards and Posts in numerical order in each Department.

At Department Conventions, officers and colors take same stations as for National officers, followed by band, Post Standards and Posts in numerical order, as above.

Armed guards should always flank flags.

The Flag of the United States should always fly to marching right of all other flags or standards; or the Flag of the United States should be centered and several paces in front of all other flags or standards.

If units of the United States Armed Forces participate in a parade they usually precede veterans' organizations and other units, in the order of precedence prescribed by current directives of the Secretary of Defense.

Uniformed marchers precede those in civilian dress.

Post officers command companies and platoons, according to seniority.

Comrades should keep their places in line from beginning of parade to finish, unless physically unable to do so.

HONORING VISITING OFFICERS

Honors prescribed here may be extended by Posts to visiting National or Department officers. If the visitor is present before the meeting opens, they should be detained in an adjacent room by a host comrade or reception committee until the Post is ready to receive them. Then they are brought to the anteroom. If a visiting officer should arrive unannounced while Post is in session, they remain in the anteroom. From this point the procedure is identical in both cases.

The sentinel advises the guard that Comrade _____ is present. The guard goes to altar, salutes the Commander and announces the visitor.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire to the anteroom and remain with Comrade _____ until notified to enter.

(Officer of the Day retires.)

Commander: Comrades, you will take your stations for giving the honors of comradeship.

(Bugler may sound officers' call. All comrades take stations as in "colors," except color bearers who stand at attention on either side of the colors and, next to them, color guards with rifles at order arms.)

Commander: Guard, you will admit the officer of the day and visitor.

(Guard opens door.)

Commander: Attention!

(Officer of the day and visitor advance to altar. Officer of the Day takes station as if colors were at altar.)

Officer of the Day: Comrade Commander, I have the honor to present to this Post, Comrade_____ (Gives name and title).

Commander: Comrades, you will give the honors of comradeship—Salute! One!

(All except color bearers come to salute, color guards present arms. Led by the Commander, all repeat in unison):

All: Comrade_____ (title), we greet you in the name of comradeship.

Commander: Ready, Two! Officer of the Day, you will escort Comrade_____ to my right.

(Officer of the Day does so and resumes their station.)

Commander: Comrades, resume stations!

(Commander introduces the visitor who then or later delivers their message. If the visitor retires before meeting closes, the Commander commands attention and directs officer of the day to accompany the visitor to the anteroom.)

TRIBUTE TO COMRADES -- P.O.W. OR M.I.A.

The Post room will be set theater fashion with the altar or small table at front center to receive the symbolic tributes.

The POW/MIA flag should be properly displayed.

Post officers in order of rank, or comrades representing them, will be seated in front row, right of center aisle.

If the Auxiliary is to participate the officers or representatives will be seated in front row, left of center aisle.

The Officer of the Day or other proficient comrade will give the preliminary address and act as Master of Ceremonies during this ritual.

(Suggested opening address)

Officer of the Day: "Honored guest, comrades, members of the Auxiliary and friends, the members of __Post # _____ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, are assembled here to remember comrades who are being held as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. We must not forget the sacrifices these comrades are still making and the suffering they are still enduring for us and our way of life.

They must remain alive in our minds and hearts until we know they have returned home to their loved ones or have been called to the bosom of Our Heavenly Father. We must continue to give moral support to their families who continue to suffer along with them."

"Color Guard! Prepare to post Colors! All rise! Present Arms!"

The Colors will enter by way of the center isle and be posted on each side of the altar. The bearers and guards will remain with the Colors during the ceremony.

Officer of the Day: "Order Arms! Parade, rest! Uncover!"

Chaplain: "Almighty God and Everlasting Father, we praise and glorify You. Thank you for the many blessings You have bestowed upon our great Nation.

Father, we ask You to guide our missing comrades through every day and night. Give them unbound strength and courage to continue their efforts to survive and return home to their loved ones. If they perish, Lord, we ask You to welcome them to the place You have prepared for them where they will rest in eternal peace. Amen."

Officer of the Day: "Let us all rededicate ourselves to the Flag of our Country by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance."

"Attention! Cover! Present Arms! (Officer of the Day will lead in the recitation of the pledge.) Order Arms! You may be seated."

"Before you is the Flag of the United States, the Flag of our Country for which our imprisoned and missing comrades are still suffering and dying. Look closely upon this beautiful symbol and listen to the words of our officers as they present their symbolic tributes."

(The Officer of the Day will introduce Post officers in turn. They will come forward and hold the symbol in view of the audience while speaking.)

The symbols are: Commander - laurel wreath; Chaplain - evergreen sprig; Officer of the Day - blue flowers; Senior Vice Commander - white flowers; Junior Vice Commander - red flowers

(When finished speaking, the officer will turn, place the symbol on the altar, salute and return to their seat.

If the Auxiliary is to participate, they will be introduced along with their counterpart of the Post. Each Auxiliary member, instead of the Post officer, will hold a symbol in view of the audience while the Post officer is speaking. Then both will turn, place the symbol, salute and return to their seats.)

Junior Vice Commander: "The Flag of the United States reflects our imprisoned and missing comrades. The red stripes reflect their courage and willingness to sacrifice, even their lives if necessary. The red of our country's flag has been made redder by their heroism. Therefore, we place these red flowers to symbolize their courage and gallantry."

Senior Vice Commander: "The white stripes symbolize the purity of purpose that our comrades have in serving under this beautiful flag. The white becomes more stainlessly pure by the motives which impel them. We place these white flowers as a reminder of their unselfish devotion to duty."

Officer of the Day: "The blue of our flag symbolizes truth and fidelity and represents the desire of our missing comrades for peace and happiness throughout the world. Therefore, we place these blue flowers to symbolize the great love that our comrades have for our flag and our country."

Chaplain: "As our Flag symbolizes undying love for our country, this evergreen tribute whose color is a symbol of life everlasting and signifies our undying love for our imprisoned and missing comrades."

Commander: "As the Flag of the United States symbolizes victory over oppression for the living, so this laurel wreath symbolizes victory over death for those who have made the supreme sacrifice. Therefore, we place this last token of affection in honor of our missing comrades who have gone to their final reward."

(If the Auxiliary is participating, the Officer of the Day will call for the Auxiliary Chaplain to offer the closing benediction. If not, they will call on the Post Chaplain.)

Officer of the Day: "All rise! Uncover! Parade, rest!"

Chaplain: "Almighty God, we praise You, we glorify You and we thank You for sparing us from the grasp of our enemies. Grant us full understandings of the suffering being endured by our comrades who are being held as prisoners of war or are still missing."

"We ask Your blessings upon them, that whatever comforts they are denied, whatever evil they must endure may result in their everlasting happiness."

"Especially we ask Your support for their loved ones. May Your grace be with them always giving them the strength to do their daily tasks and the courage to meet the problems of life."

"We pray for those missing comrades who have been called to Your arms that whatever justice they have been denied in this life has been granted them a hundredfold. Amen."

Officer of the Day: "Color Guard! Prepare to retire the Colors! Comrades attention! Cover! Present Arms!"

The National Anthem will be sung, then the Colors will be retired.

Officer of the Day: "Order Arms! This concludes our ceremony."

UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS CEREMONY

(During the ceremony, only one flag should be utilized to symbolize all the flags intended for disposal.)

Officer of the Day: “Today we have gathered here to pay our last respects to this symbol of our great nation and retire this flag.

The Stars and Stripes was adopted on June 14, 1777, by the Continental Congress to be our nation’s flag. Since then, there have been 27 iterations of this flag but what it stands for has not changed. The US flag has 13 alternating red and white stripes representing the 13 original colonies. Its 50 white stars on a blue field represent the 50 states of our country. The colors of the flag also have meaning – The Red representing valor and bravery, White for purity and innocence, and Blue for vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

Our Nation’s flag has flown in peace and war. It has been present at more than 100 military conflicts and countless expeditions and deployments around the world to include the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, The Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq. The flag remains a symbol of freedom, liberty, hope strength and pride to which Americans pledge their allegiance.

Comrade Commander, I wish to present this flag of our Country for examination and retirement.”

Commander: “Comrade Officer of the Day, proceed to the Junior Vice Commander and present the Flag for examination.”

(Officer of the Day will pick up ceremonial flag and will carry it with both arms crossed, held to their chest and will move in a uniform manner to the Junior Vice Commander)

(When Officer of the Day arrives with the ceremonial flag, Junior Vice Commander renders a slow salute to the flag)

(Officer of the Day will lower the flag from their chest and present the flag to the Junior Vice Commander)

(Following presentation of the flag to the Junior Vice Commander, the Officer of the Day shall, in turn, render a slow salute)

Officer of the Day: “Comrade Junior Vice Commander, I present this flag for your examination. Is this flag no longer a fitting emblem for display?”

(Junior Vice Commander looks down upon the flag)

Junior Vice Commander: “It is not, proceed to the Senior Vice Commander.”

(Officer of the Day will bring the flag back to their chest and move in a uniform manner to the Senior Vice Commander)

(When Officer of the Day arrives with the ceremonial flag, Senior Vice Commander renders a slow salute to the flag)

(Officer of the Day will lower the flag from their chest and present the flag to the Senior Vice Commander)

(Following presentation of the flag to the Senior Vice Commander, the Officer of the Day shall, in turn, render a slow salute)

Officer of the Day: “Comrade Senior Vice Commander, I present this flag for your examination. Should this flag be destroyed in a dignified manner?”

(Senior Vice Commander looks down upon the flag)

Senior Vice Commander: “Yes, it should. Present this flag to the Commander for final examination and fitting disposal.”

(Officer of the Day will bring the flag back to their chest and move in a uniform manner to the Commander)

(When Officer of the Day arrives with the ceremonial flag, Commander renders a slow salute to the flag)

(Officer of the Day will lower the flag from their chest and present the flag to the Commander)

(Following presentation of the flag to the Commander, the Officer of the Day shall, in turn, render a slow salute)

Officer of the Day: *“Comrade Commander, in accordance with United States Code Title 4, Section 8 (k), when the flag is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.”*

Commander: *“Very well.”*

Commander: *“Attention! This flag has served its nation long and well. It has been worn to a condition in which it should no longer be used to represent the nation. This flag represents all the flags collected and being retired from service today. The honor we show here for this one flag, we are showing for all the flags, even those not physically here.”*

(Prayer portion of this ceremony is optional)

Commander: *Parade Rest! Uncover! Comrade Chaplain, please offer the prayer*

Chaplain: *“Lord, we thank Thee for our Country and its Flag, and for the liberty for which it stands. We humbly ask you to watch over our service members now serving under our flag. We commit these flags, worn-out in worthy service, to a clean and purging flame. As they yield their substance to the fire, may Thy holy light spread over us, bring warmth to our Prisoners-of-war, provide a beacon for our missing in action to be returned home, and bring renewed devotion to God and Country. Amen.”*

Commander: *“Cover! Attention! We will now commit these flags to the flame and pledge our allegiance to the Flag. Present Arms.”*

(Color Guards present arms. Post colors are dipped. All officers and members' salute. All in attendance recite the Pledge of Allegiance.)

Commander: *(At conclusion of the Pledge) “Order arms! Parade Rest!”*

Officer of the Day: *“Let us have a moment of silence while the flag burns, reflecting on its significance and the freedoms it represents”*

(The Color Guard shall resume its station)

(The Color Guard retires and posts colors)

Officer of the Day: *“This concludes our ceremony.”*

