

The American Legion Department of Florida



Sergeant-at-Arms Manual

(Revised 2026)

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Sergeant-At-Arms Duties and Responsibilities

(Revised 2026)

"You are the sentinel or tiler, the outer guard of this Post. You will guard especially against the loss of one of The American Legion's greater possessions—our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship. You will learn the identity of and introduce to the Commander all visiting comrades and guests of the Post. You are responsible that no one shall remain a stranger in our midst. Be ready at all times to assist your Commander. Into your hands is given charge of the stand of colors which you will properly display at all Post meetings and on ceremonial occasions."

"Charge from Installation Ceremony"

CHAPTER 1 - SERGEANT-AT-ARMS DUTIES

1. The Sergeant-at-Arms should know how to arrange the meeting hall and should assist the Post Commander and Adjutant in the preliminary arrangements for the meeting, including custodian of the colors and should be in charge of the color detail during the presentation and retirement ceremonies of the colors. The Sergeant-at-Arms is the flag etiquette person and should be well informed on proper flag display and procedures used in operating a meeting and should play a leading part in the post color guard, burial detail, and the other pageantry that is a part of The American Legion. The Sergeant-at-Arms will, from time-to-time, present briefings on proper flag etiquette.
2. There is another duty—one that has a tremendous impact on the post's image, its membership, and its relationship with the members. Every Legionnaire wants to be part of the group. This is particularly important for that new Legionnaire attending his first few meetings. The Sergeant-at-Arms must make certain new members are welcomed, introduced, and made to feel they are important to the post. A welcome committee should be standard for every post. The Sergeant-at-Arms is the logical person to chair such a committee. The members of this committee must welcome new members and guests, make sure they are introduced, and keep the Commander advised as to who should be acknowledged in the proper Protocol order (*as per Chapter#13 of this Handbook*). This committee can also be used to encourage present members to attend meetings.
3. The Sergeant-at-Arms should meet with the Commander hours prior to the meeting and see if any guests are expected, any special requirements he or she has to set the Meeting room up properly. Go over escorting any special guests and how the room should be set up. It may need to be set up different from time to time and as Sergeant-at-Arms you have to Anticipate different things and what the Commander may be thinking of next during the meeting. Always get assistant Sergeant-at-Arms in order to help you set up and break down the room, identify guests and check membership cards. You must always train yourself out of a job by training others, this way the Post is not counting on you in case you are away for an unforeseen matter.
4. Set-up items you may need to be aware of: Microphone being used; set-up and tested a head of time, How the flags will be setup (will be using a color guard or not), POW / MIA Chair and Flag, Alter - Bible, Draping of the Charter, Joint meeting and if so proper set up of organizational flags, Sign-in sheets as well as a VIP sign in sheet, checking for valid membership cards, your Legion Cap and many more things.
5. The Sergeant-at-Arms serves with the commander and parliamentarian in order to ensure an orderly atmosphere during meetings. As Sergeant-at-Arms you should lead by example and always dress appropriately, NO Shorts, Sleeveless Shirts, Dirty or ripped clothing and no lettering on shirts that may offend someone.
6. Minutes prior to the meeting if your Post has a Canteen you may want to go to the Canteen to ensure that all Legion members are making their way to the meeting by announcing "The meeting is about to Start" All Legionnaires make their way to the meeting room then secure the door to the meeting hall and once the opening Ceremony begins admit no one until after the opening Ceremony is completed. Just prior to the meeting getting ready to start announcing please silence all cell-phones and all electronic equipment.
7. During the meeting your job is to escort guests and speakers to the podium. Legion, S.A.L. members and Veterans always get escorted to the Left (American Flag Side) and Auxiliary and non-Veteran members to the right around the organizational Flag. You may ask guests if they are a Veteran ahead of time and properly instruct them how you will be escorting them to the podium. Inform them that you will be approaching the American Flag and either a hand salute for Veterans or hand over the heart for non-Veterans then to the appropriate side of the Hallowed Grounds (Never Breaking them).
8. As Sergeant-at-Arms when escorting you always have the person on your right side with light hold of their left arm when escorting. Why your right side? It's from the old sentinel days when the Sergeant-at-Arms escorted prisoners (not many people were left handed) they always had their side arm out in their right hand in the back of the prisoner or at times if handcuffed it was a way to get at the side arm at a moment's notice.

9. As Sergeant-at-Arms you work for your Commander; so when your Commander is at the Podium you are on duty! If the District, Area or Department Commander is at the Podium then you are now on standby duty as the District, Area or Department Commander (whoever is on the Podium) asks for an escort or something for the Sergeant-at-Arms to do it will be their Sergeant-at-Arms that is tasked. This is for the same if the Auxiliary President is at the Podium she would task her Sergeant-at-Arms only; this is very useful during District meetings and Installations as a lot forget that they don't task someone else's Sergeant-at-Arms to do something. Here are guidelines you should know and share with others. . .

MEETING TIME

The Setup: When setting up any meeting, the American flag should be posted on the speaker's right. All other flags, including Post flags, Auxiliary flags, S.A.L. flags, and any other organizational flags, should be placed on the speaker's left.

The eagle on the American flag should face the rear until the flag is posted. Once posted, the eagle should be turned to face the front. The eagle on all other flags should face the front at all times.

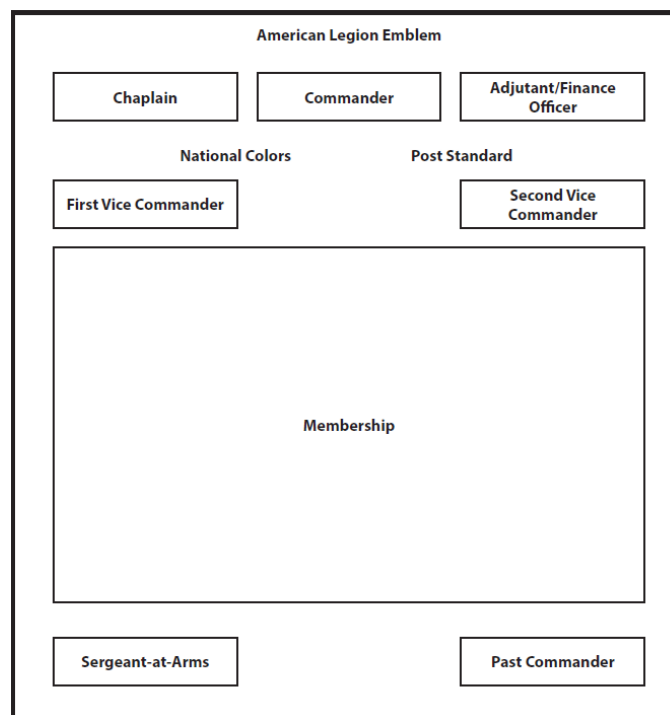
Flag standards, or poles, should be adjusted so the flags do not touch the floor or ground at any time. They should also be adjusted so the eagle does not touch the ceiling and can be easily turned when posting. Flags should be arranged neatly, and any emblems, such as Legion emblems, should be fully visible.

The American flag should never touch the floor or ground for any reason, nor should it become soiled. When storing the American flag on a standard, it should be placed in a location within the Post where it will not become soiled, while still being displayed proudly. When storing or transporting the flag for a parade, special ceremony, or another meeting, a protective plastic covering should be placed over the entire flag to prevent it from becoming soiled.

When the American flag is properly posted during a meeting or ceremony, anyone approaching, passing by, or coming near the flag should render a salute when wearing an authorized Legion cap, such as Legion, Auxiliary, or S.A.L. If a person is not wearing an authorized Legion cap, they should place their hand over their heart instead.

Note: Baseball caps are not authorized Legion covers.

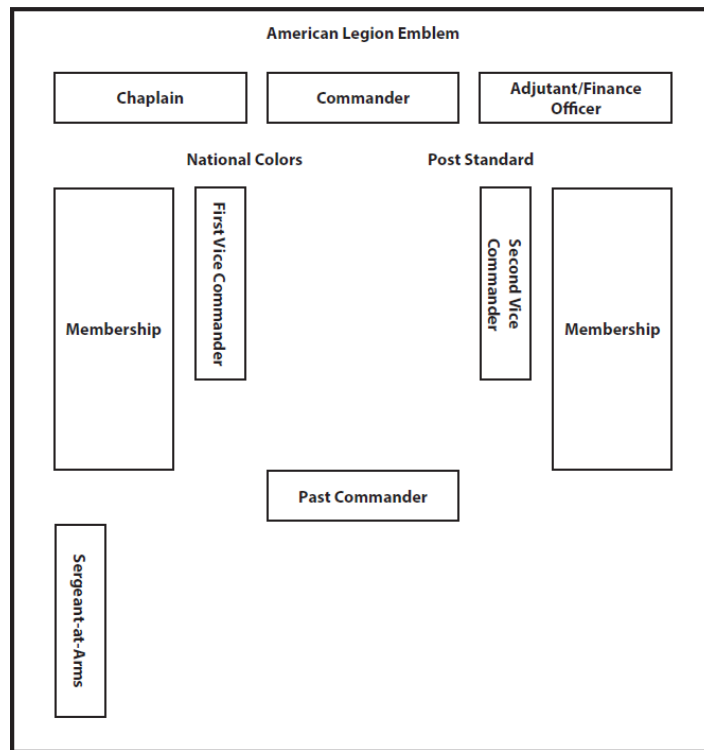
PLANNING OF POST MEETING ROOM



Room

This arrangement of a post meeting room is especially functional for the conduct of regular post meetings. This plan permits the post a great amount of flexibility in arrangement to meet the post's particular needs and/or adapt to any physical limitations.

PLAN OF POST MEETING ROOM_For Special Ceremonies



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

Anything of a light or humorous nature added by the post to this initiation should be kept separate and apart, and the candidates should be informed that it is not a part of the initiation proper. Officers or members other than those designated may be assigned to parts in the initiation ceremony. It is recommended each post have a degree team, trained and uniformed for degree work.

SECTION B. – PROPOSED GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONDUCT BY MEMBERS DURING MEETINGS

(From page 35 of the 2022 American Legion Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies *[as modified]*)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Much of the information provided in the Manual of Ceremonies is the consequence of long-time tradition and usage. The practices adopted by The American Legion may not be the same as used by other groups or organizations. Our methods may be different, but it does not mean we are right and others are wrong.

1. The ceremonial services of The American Legion must be conducted with the solemnity befitting the dignity of this organization.
2. No one shall be admitted during opening, initiation, or closing ceremonies of an American Legion meeting.
3. Comrades shall be careful never to pass between the flags "Hallowed Ground" and the station of the commander.
4. A member entering the hall after the meeting has begun shall advance to the center of the room, salute the colors and be seated.
5. Any member desiring to be excused from the hall while the meeting is in progress, except during a prayer, or the obligation, or during the period of silence, shall advance to the center of the room, salute the colors, and then leave.
6. All officers are instructed to memorize their parts between the dates of their election and installation. It shall be the duty of each officer to memorize that portion of the ritual assigned to that particular office and the printed ritual should not be read during any ceremony.

7. The national colors and post flag, when in position, should be in position at either side and just in advance of the commander's station; the national colors on the right of the commander, the post colors on the left when facing the audience, even though the commander is on a platform and the flags are posted on the ground level.

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

9. Legionnaires standing in silent tribute in memory of departed comrades during meetings or ceremonies will face the flag of our country. Legionnaires are advised of the following action by the National Executive Committee (Resolution No. 33): "RESOLVED" by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 5-6, 1971, "That The American Legion shall, at functions within Legion buildings and at all levels, cease all activities whatsoever for a period of sixty seconds as a tribute to our comrades who have passed on and in honor of those now serving in the Armed Forces and that this minute of silence shall be preceded by an appropriate announcement and message, if desired."

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

11. This Manual of Ceremonies is designed with the idea of flexibility and may be adapted to conform to requirements covering all divisions of The American Legion.

Therefore, whenever necessary, the words "Post," "County," "District," "Division,"

"Department," or "National" may be inserted to fit a specific occasion.

12. *Whenever a Bible is displayed and opened either during a meeting, Ceremony or Dignitary event no Alcohol Beverages will be consumed or served.*

SECTION C. – BASIC COLOR GUARD PROCEDURE FOR ADVANCING AND RETRIEVING COLORS

ADVANCING COLORS

Color guard consisting of minimum number of four is formed at the rear of the meeting room in a rank or file, whichever may suit the situation best, formation facing commander's station.

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

To properly form the guard, the following sequence of commands may be used: "Fall In" — "Dress Right Dress" — "Ready Front" — "Right or Left Shoulder Arms" — (Color bearers should assume the position of carry or any other suitable position at this command) "Forward March." The above-mentioned commands put the guard in a forward motion.

Upon arriving at a position from 2 to 12 feet (depending on available space) in front of the commander's station, the following commands should be used: "Guard Halt—Post Colors" (The national color bearer steps off in the direction of the flag receptacle to the right of the commander's station, halting and facing front upon arriving in front of same). The post color bearer follows the same procedure to the flag receptacle to the left of the commander's station. During this procedure it is suggested the rifle guards assume the position of port arms, which is a position of readiness. The next command should be "Place Colors or Post Colors."

Colors are placed by stepping forward with one foot placing colors in receptacles, making sure the top ornament on each respective flag is facing the assemblage. The color bearers then return to the position of attention. The next command should then be "Present Arms." Rifle guards should render the prescribed salute with their pieces and color bearers should render a right-hand salute. (Post color bearer should either face the national colors or turn head toward the American Flag while executing the salute.)

The next command sequence should be "Right Shoulder Arms" (color bearers recovering from hand salute on same), "Assemble March" (Color bearers may face the center and step off respectively in the direction from which they came and assume their positions in the formation facing the rear of the meeting room.) Rifle guards may execute an about-face on command and be prepared to move out on next command with guard intact.

The next command should be "Forward March" and upon arriving at starting point, guard should be halted with command of "Guard Halt" and then the guard may be given "Fall Out."

RETIRING COLORS

Retrieving the colors may be executed in nearly the same manner except substituting the command of "Retrieve Colors" for "Post Colors," and giving the command "Present Arms" upon the color bearers' arrival in front of their respective colors (color bearers will salute at this time).

The next sequence of commands are "Right Shoulder Arms" (Color bearers will assume position of attention); "Take Colors" (color bearers putting one foot forward to take Colors and assuming position of attention, after securing same). The next command should be "Assemble, March" (color bearers executing same marching as in returning from posting). Rifle guards will execute about-face after colors have arrived in respective positions. The guard may be retired in the same manner as it was in posting, with the exception of the last command, which should be "Dismissed." The above commands may be used in either rank or file formation.

If the POW/MIA flag is displayed during the meeting and is to be retrieved as part of the closing ceremony, the POW/MIA flag should be retrieved before the retirement of the Colors. Members should be instructed to cover before the retrieval so they may render the slow salute while the Sergeant-at-Arms retrieves the POW/MIA flag and renders the slow salute.

A lot of color and ceremony may be added to the posting and retiring of the colors if a bugler is used in the following places: In posting, "To The Colors" may be sounded immediately after the command of "Present Arms" by the color guard commander. In retrieving, "Retreat" may be sounded immediately after command of "Present Arms."

SECTION D. – SUGGESTED MEETING AGENDA SHELL:

AMERICAN LEGION – XXXXXXXX POST # XXX SOME WHERE, FL **AGENDA – General Meeting Agenda**

1. **COMMANDER:** The meeting is about to open. All Officers shall take their stations.
2. **COMMANDER:** One rap of the gavel and the Sergeant-at-Arms shall close the doors of the meeting hall.
3. **COMMANDER:** Three raps of the gavel and all who are present shall stand at attention.
4. **COMMANDER:** "With the Colors of our County in Place" (Or Post the Colors) "Hand salute." "Two."
5. **COMMANDER:** "The Chaplain will offer prayer."
6. **CHAPLAIN:** "ALMIGHTY GOD.....AMEN"
7. **COMMANDER:** Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA "Empty Chair" at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all the wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. Accordingly, at this time the Vice Commander will place the POW/MIA flag on the "Empty Chair" as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American Prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us dedicate ourselves for this vital endeavor.

(Place the POW/MIA flag on the Empty Chair). *Please observe a moment of Silence for those who are serving and who served in defending our country from all wars and conflicts (60 seconds should be observed).*
8. **COMMANDER:** Please follow me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance."
9. **COMMANDER:** "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."
10. **COMMANDER:** "Everyone will recover."
11. **COMMANDER:** The Vice Commander will lead us with the Preamble.
12. **VICE COMMANDER:** "For God and Country....."
13. **COMMANDER:** One rap of the gavel, "I now declare this General Meeting of XXXXXXXX American Legion Post #XXX of the Department of Florida, regularly convened."
14. ****Ceremony for Draping American Legion Charter****
15. **COMMANDER:** Sergeant-at-Arms, do we have any Guests?
16. **SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Commander we have Guests. (Always introduce Past Officers, then lowest Office to Highest Office last. The Highest Office should always receive the respect as prior to announcing his or her name/office 3 Raps of the Gavel and then announce that person.)

17. **COMMANDER:** Adjutant Roll Call of Officers, Reading of the Minutes and Correspondence Review.

18. **ADJUTANT:**

a. **Roll Call** to determine if quorum is present (XX Members for E-Board or XX members for General Meeting).

b. **Reading of minutes:**

1. Regular Meeting: Motion by _____ to approve the General Meeting Minutes as Read; 2nd by _____ Motion Passed.

2. Executive Board Meeting: Motion by _____ to approve the Executive Board Meeting Minutes as Read; 2nd by _____ Motion Passed.

19. Correspondence Review:

Officer Reports - Remember ANY Report that you do an Audit on the Proper Motion should be "I Move to File the Finance (*Finance, Kitchen, Lounge or any other Report*) Report for Audit; 2nd by _____ Motion Passed. This applies to any report that requires an audit under your Constitution and By-Laws.

20. Committee Reports:

Are there any other Committee Reports?

Unfinished Business

New Business

For the Good of The American Legion

COMMANDER: Is there any further business to come before this meeting?

COMMANDER: Three raps of the gavel, UNCOVER, The Chaplain will lead us with a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN: Our Heavenly Father.....AMEN.

COMMANDER: COVER

COMMANDER: At this time, the POW/MIA flag will be retrieved from the Empty Chair. Members shall remain covered and may render a slow salute while the Sergeant-at-Arms retrieves the POW/MIA flag and renders the slow salute.

(Sergeant-at-Arms retrieves the POW/MIA flag from the Empty Chair. Members may render a slow salute.)

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

COMMANDER: "“With Colors in place (Or Retrieve the Colors), “Hand salute.” “Two.”

COMMANDER: I now declare this General Meeting of XXXXXX Post # XXX, The American Legion, Department of Florida adjourned! (One rap of Gavel).

SECTION E. CEREMONY FOR DRAPING AMERICAN LEGION CHARTER

Commander: "It is my sad duty to report that Comrade (or Comrades) has (have) been called from our midst. He/She (they/have) gone to the Commander of us all in Post everlasting.

Commander: "Before proceeding with other business of this meeting, we will drape the Charter in memory of Comrade (Comrades) Sergeant-at-Arms, obtain Drape in preparation for Draping Charter."

Commander: "Chaplain; Place the Holy Bible and our Departed Comrades Hat".

Commander: (Rap gavel three (3) times) "Members please rise and face Charter; attention." **Commander:** "Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now Drape our Charter in memory of our beloved Comrade (Comrades) who has (have) passed on.

Commander: (While Sergeant-at-Arms is Draping the Charter) "By this act we, as members of # of the Department of Florida, proclaim solemn tribute to our departed Comrade (Comrades) Hand salute! Two!" (After "Two," Sergeant-at-Arms returns to his/her station).

Commander: ****"Honor Guard will play Taps".***

Commander: "Chaplain will offer Prayer".

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

Commander: (Rap gavel once) “We will continue with the regular meeting”

CHAPTER 2.

WEARING THE AMERICAN LEGION CAP, UNIFORM AND REGALIA

1. A Legionnaire is considered to be in uniform if wearing an official American Legion cap. Therefore, it is not proper to wear an American Legion cap while eating a meal at an official Legion or civic luncheon or dinner.
2. The cap should be worn in a place of worship only by the Guard of Honor, Color Guard and Commander of same while in marching order or standing guard. When returned to and seated in pews, the cap should be removed.
3. Legion posts marching in formation into a place of worship should uncover, at the door, hold the cap with the right hand over the heart, until the arrival in the pews and commanded to take seats, remaining uncovered during the entire service. At the close of the service, upon command, the post shall arise, the members holding the cap with the right hand over the heart, will march out of the place of worship and recover after marching through the door.
4. Legionnaires not in formation will uncover upon entering the place of worship and remain uncovered during the entire service and will re-cover after leaving the place of worship.
5. At the graveside the cap should be held in the right hand over the heart, during the entire service. In cold and inclement weather, the cap should not be doffed.
6. In Legion meetings the cap should be worn except during moments of the “Pledge of Allegiance,” prayer, and when standing in silent reverence in memory of departed comrades. During the POW/MIA Ceremony, members should remove their cap and hold it with the right hand over the heart. Prior to retrieving the POW/MIA flag, members should cover so they may render a slow salute while the Sergeant-at-Arms retrieves the POW/MIA flag and renders the slow salute.
7. A Legionnaire wearing the cap should behave in proper accordance as to salutes, etc., the same as if the member was wearing the military uniform. If not wearing the Legion cap, the ordinary rules of etiquette for civilian dress should be observed.
8. Female members of The American Legion should wear their caps in the manner prescribed for female personnel of the armed services.
9. Legionnaires wishing to attach decorations and/or other official insignia to their caps:
 - (a) Consecutive membership insignia, membership stars, and/or decorations (authorized American Legion or military services) must be attached to the right side of cap. Fraternal or civil organization insignia cannot be used on American Legion caps.
 - (b) Names or nicknames of individual members cannot be used on caps.
10. Regulations have been promulgated by National Emblem Sales to standardize the use of lettering, insignia, etc., on the official American Legion cap, as based on Resolution No. 58, adopted by the National Executive Committee, April 30-May 1, 1964.
11. Identification badges on caps (metal pendants or fabric).... Commander and other Post Officers: The American Legion Emblem suspended by The American Legion ribbon from a bar on which there shall be the word “Commander.”
12. (a) The left side (emblem side) of any American Legion cap cannot contain other than the official American Legion emblem, and lettering as set forth previously in this resolution for post, county, district, department or national caps. When Placing your Legion cap down on a flat surface like a table, it shall be placed with the Legion emblem facing up as a sign of respect as the left side (emblem side) is considered "Hallowed Grounds" and should be given proper respect.
 - (b) No member of any organization, such as drum and bugle corps, bands, and so forth, sponsored by any post or intermediate organizations between the department and post levels, or by any department, shall wear the overseas caps having the color, or combination of colors, authorized for the sole use of county, district, department or national officers, when the members of uniformed groups are not appearing in the full uniform of their group.”

CHAPTER 3. HALLOWED GROUND

When the flags are in place and posted, no person is to reach between the flags "Hallowed Ground" to hand or receive items from the speaker or table. The person needs to approach the American flag, stop and render a salute if properly covered, or hand over heart if not properly covered, then proceed around the left side of the flag and behind the speaker. When business is complete, the person will walk around to the left of the speaker and once clearing the Post flag, stop and render a salute if properly covered or place hand over heart if not. And then return to their seat. It is the function of the Sergeant-at-Arms to watch over flag etiquette. If someone is not rendering honors, the Sergeant-at-Arms should politely instruct the member or guest in the proper procedure.



This Is Hallowed Ground

Why You Don't Walk Between The Colors

Between the flags that proudly fly
Let no one dare to stand
For here our fallen comrades lie,
We call it Hallowed Ground.
A symbol, yes, but mark it well;
Here let us ever humbly pause
In Memory of the ones who fell
In fighting for our sacred cause.

On sea or land these buddies died.
Some lie beneath a foreign sod
In graves caressed by winds and tide,
In spots unknown to all but God.
And so this place is Hallowed Ground.
And it shall be forever blessed,
As though it were a grassy mound
Beneath which gallant heroes rest

Be ever watchful, Legionnaire.
Of those two flags which signify
That we should guard this spot with care
Where our departed comrades lie.
And, if a man should dare to tread
This spot where lie our gallant brave,
He desecrates those noble dead
As tho he walked upon their grave.

— Nolle Deas
Past Florida Department Commander 1973-74



CHAPTER 4. PREAMBLE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION CONSTITUTION:

For God and Country,
We associate ourselves together for the following purposes:
To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
To maintain law and order;
To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;
To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;
To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;
To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
To make right the master of might;
To promote peace and goodwill on earth;
To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;
To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

CHAPTER 5. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

"I pledge allegiance"
(I promise to be true)
"to the flag"
(to the symbol of our country)
"of the United States of America"
(each state that has joined to make our country)
"and to the Republic"
(A republic is a country where the people choose others to make laws for them ~ the government is for the people)
"for which it stands,"
(the flag means the country)
"one Nation"
(a single country)
"under God,"
(the people believe in a supreme being)
"indivisible,"
(the country cannot be split into parts
"with liberty and justice"
(with freedom and fairness)
"for all."
(for each person in the country...you and me!)

The pledge says you are promising to be true to the United States of America!

SECTION A. – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG; MANNER OF DELIVERY:

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.", should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute.

1. Remember when you wore the uniform, when you rendered a salute you "*NEVER*" Spoke! It's no difference with the 2008 change to the Flag Code. Some Military Organizations jumped the gun and changed their Ceremonial Manuals before the actual change came out in Title 4 of The US Flag Code.

2. Below is the only change for Veterans in the Flag Code (Section 9 of Title 4). *In fact, Section 9 of Title 4, United States Code, "Pledge of Allegiance" wasn't changed at all and the only one that has an option to salute or not is Active-Duty members who are in uniform and NOT Veterans*). So, when we say the Pledge of Allegiance, we always uncover and place our Legion Cap (or if no Cap) hand over your heart and say the Pledge.

SECTION B. – MILITARY SALUTE OF THE FLAG:

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 amended the United States Flag Code to permit veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel to salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the United States flag. Language included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 added approval for saluting during the playing of the National Anthem. The change made in the 2008 Act is as follows ...

CONDUCT BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS OUT OF UNIFORM DURING HOISTING, LOWERING, OR PASSING OF FLAG.

Section 9 of Title 4, United States Code, is amended by striking all persons present and all that follows through the end and inserting those present in uniform should render the military salute. It reads as follows:

"During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, those present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries should stand at attention.

all such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes."

SECTION C. – THE STORY OF TAPS.

We have all heard the haunting song, "Taps." It's the song that gives us that lump in our throats and usually creates tears in our eyes. But, do you know the story behind the song? Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment. When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier.

It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the south when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army. The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted. The haunting melody, we now know as "Taps" used at military funerals, was born.

Here are the words:

"Day is done, Gone the sun, From the Lakes,
From the hills, From the sky.
All is well, safely rest. God is nigh."
"Fading light, Dims the sight,
And a star, Gems the sky,
Gleaming bright. From afar,
Drawing nigh, Falls the night."
"Thanks and praise, For our days,
Neath the sun, Neath the stars,
Neath the sky. As we go,
This we know, God is nigh."

CHAPTER 6. – POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE SERVICE:

The following is a suggested service for American Legion meetings, with the POW/MIA flag draped over an empty chair. This service can be adopted or modified for your own use. Members should remove their cap during the POW/MIA Remembrance Service. When the POW/MIA flag is retrieved, members should cover before the retrieval so they may render a slow salute while the Sergeant-at-Arms retrieves the POW/MIA flag and renders the slow salute.

For Regular meetings as per the suggested meeting agenda shell the following should be stated by the Commander "Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA "Empty Chair" at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all the wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. Accordingly, at this time the Vice Commander (or another Officer) will place the POW/MIA flag on the "Empty Chair" as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American Prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us dedicate ourselves for this vital endeavor. (Place the POW/MIA flag on the Empty Chair)."

When closing the meeting and retrieving the POW/MIA flag, the Commander should instruct members to cover before the flag is retrieved. As the Sergeant-at-Arms retrieves the POW/MIA flag and renders the slow salute, members may also render a slow salute.

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

SECTION B – POW/MIA Table services for special occasions and the meaning of it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The **chair** is empty – they are not here."

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 7. HISTORY OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1. Before we became a nation, our land knew many flags. Long ago, the Norsemen probed our coastal waters sailing under the banner of the black raven. Columbus carried a Spanish flag across the seas. The Pilgrims carried the flag of Great Britain. The Dutch colonists brought their striped flag to New Amsterdam. The French explored the continent under the royal fleur-de-lis. Each native

Indian tribe had its own totem and insignia. Immigrants of every race and nationality, in seeking a new allegiance, have brought their symbols of loyalty to our shores.

During the American Revolution, various banners were used by the not-yet-united colonies. A green pine tree with the motto: *An Appeal To Heaven* was popular with our young Navy. The rattlesnake's warning, *Don't Tread on Me*, was displayed by aroused colonists along the Atlantic seaboard. The Moultrie Liberty flag, a large blue banner with a white crescent in the upper corner, rallied the defenders of Charleston, South Carolina, in 1776. The Bunker Hill flag was a blue banner with a white canton filled with a red cross and a small green pine. The flag of the maritime colony of Rhode Island bore a blue anchor under the word *Hope*. Strikingly similar to the Stars and Stripes was the flag carried by the Green Mountain Boys of Vermont at the battle of Bennington in August 1777.

2. The first flag of the colonies to have any resemblance to the present Stars and Stripes was the Grand Union Flag, sometimes referred to as the Congress Colors, the First Navy Ensign, and the Cambridge Flag. When General George Washington took command of the Continental Army in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1776, he stood under the Grand Union Flag. The flag consisted of thirteen stripes, representing the thirteen colonies, alternately red and white, with a blue field in the upper left-hand corner bearing the crosses of Saint George of England and Saint Andrew of Scotland.

As the flag of the revolution, it was used on many occasions. It was first flown by the ships of the Colonial Fleet on the Delaware River. It was raised aboard Captain Esek Hopkin's flag-ship *Alfred* by John Paul Jones, then a Navy lieutenant, on December 3, 1775. Later the flag was raised on the Liberty Pole at Prospect Hill, which was near George Washington's headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was our unofficial national flag on July 4, 1776, and it remained the unofficial national flag and ensign.

3. The Stars and Stripes originated as a result of a resolution adopted by the Marine Committee of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia on June 14, 1777. The resolution read ... *Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation*. General George Washington said, "We take the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty."

The resolution gave no instruction as to how many points the stars should have, nor how the stars should be arranged on the blue union. Consequently, some flags had stars scattered on the blue field without any specific design, some arranged the stars in rows, and some in a circle. The first Continental Navy Stars and Stripes had the stars arranged in staggered formation in alternate rows of threes and twos on a blue field. Other Stars and Stripes flags had stars arranged in alternate rows of four, five and four. Some stars had six points while others had eight.

Strong evidence indicates that Francis Hopkinson of New Jersey, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was responsible for the stars in the U.S. flag. At the time that the flag resolution was adopted, Hopkinson was the Chairman of the Continental Navy Board's Middle Department. Hopkinson also helped design other devices for the government, including the Great Seal of the United States. The most popular flag, with the stars in a circle so that no state could claim precedence over another, is known as the Betsy Ross flag, in honor of the seamstress who is supposed to have sewn the first one, although there is no proof that she made the first Stars and Stripes. It is known that on May 29, 1777, the State Navy Board of Pennsylvania commissioned Betsy Ross to sew flags for Navy vessels.

Legend credits Ross with having sewn the first flag to meet the specifications outlined by Congress, while changing the stars from six points to five to speed her work. The flag was first carried in battle at Brandywine, Pennsylvania in September 1777. It first flew over foreign territory in early 1778, at Nassau in the Bahama Islands, where Americans captured a fort from the British. The flag popularly known as the Betsy Ross Flag, which arranged the stars in a circle, did not appear until the early 1790s. After Vermont and Kentucky became states in the 1790s, Congress approved adding two more stars and two more stripes to the group that represented the original 13 colonies.

4. This flag was the official flag of our country from 1795 to 1818, and was prominent in many historic events. It was the first flag to be flown over a fortress of the Old World when American Marine and Naval forces raised it above the pirate stronghold in Tripoli on April 27, 1805. It was the ensign of American forces in the battle of Lake Erie in September of 1813, the flag that withstood enemy bombardment at Fort McHenry, Maryland on September 13 and 14, 1814, inspiring Francis Scott Key to write *The Star-Spangled Banner*, and it was flown by General Andrew Jackson at the battle for New Orleans in January, 1815.

Realizing the flag would become unwieldy with a stripe for each new state, Continental Navy Captain Samuel Reid suggested to Congress that the stripes remain thirteen in number to represent the thirteen colonies, and that a star be added to the blue field for each new state coming into the Union. On April 4, 1818, President James Monroe signed a bill requiring that the flag of the United States have a union of 20 stars, white on a blue field; that 13 stripes should be horizontal, alternately red and white; and that upon admission of each new State into the Union one star be added to the union of the flag on the fourth of July following its date of

admission. The law did not specify color shades or arrangement of the stars, and wide variation persisted. During the Civil War, gold stars were more common than white and the stars sometimes appeared in a circle.

5. Since 1818, each new state has brought a new star for the flag. The first time the Stars and Stripes flew in a Flag Day celebration was in Hartford, Connecticut in 1861, the first summer of the Civil War. In the late 1800s, schools held Flag Day programs to contribute to the Americanization of immigrant children, and the observance caught on with individual communities. As a patriotic custom, the Stars and Stripes still flies in front of schools when classes are in session. In 1916, the president proclaimed a nationwide observance of Flag Day, but it was not until 1949 that Congress voted for Flag Day to be a permanent holiday. On June 22, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt approved House Joint Resolution 303, codifying the existing customs and rules governing the display and use of the flag of the United States by civilians. The law included provisions of the code adopted by the National Flag Conference in 1923, with certain amendments and additions. When the 49th and 50th stars were added in 1959 and 1960 for Alaska and Hawaii, the standards of design became even more precise.

President Eisenhower issued Executive Order No. 10834 on August 21, 1959. A national banner with 50 stars became the official flag of the United States. The flag was raised for the first time at 12:01 a.m. on July 4, 1960, at the Fort McHenry National Monument in Baltimore, Maryland. The regulated design calls for seven red and six white stripes, with the red stripes at top and bottom. The union of navy blue fills the upper left quarter from the top to the lower edge of the fourth red stripe. The stars have one point up and are in nine horizontal rows. The odd-numbered rows have six stars. The even-numbered rows have five stars, centered diagonally between the stars in the longer rows.

6. The Flag Code was re-enacted, with minor amendments, as part of the Bicentennial celebration in 1976. In the 105th Congress, the Flag Code was removed from Title 36 of the United States Code and recodified as part of Title 4. The size of the flag is determined by the exposed height of the flagpole from which it is flying. Flags flown from angled poles on homes and those displayed indoors are usually either 3' x 5' or 4' x 6'. Other recommended sizes are shown in the following table ...

FLAGPOLE HEIGHT (feet)		FLAG SIZE (feet)	
20	3x5 or 4x8	70	12x18
25	4x6 or 5x8	90	15x25
40	6x10	125	20x30
50	8x12	200	30x40
60	10x15	250	40x50

SECTION A. – THE PROPER DISPLAY OF FLAGS; POSITION AND DISPLAY

The flag should never be displayed with union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property. The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise. The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free. No person shall display the flag of any other nation above or in a position of superior prominence or honor to the flag of the United States, provided that nothing shall make unlawful the continuance of the practice of displaying the flag of the United Nations in a position of superior prominence or honor, and other national flags in positions of equal prominence or honor, with that of the flag of the United States at the headquarters of the United Nations.

When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they are to be flown from separate staffs of the same height. The flags should be of approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace. No other flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the flag except during church services conducted by United States Navy chaplains at sea, when the church pennant may be flown above the flag during church services for the personnel of the United States Navy.

When flags of states, cities, or localities, or pennants of societies are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States, the flag of the United States should always be at the peak. The flag should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of states or localities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs. When flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the flag of the United States should be hoisted first and lowered last.

When the flag is displayed over the middle of the street, it should be suspended vertically with the union to the north in an east and west street or to the east in a north and south street.

When the flag is suspended over a sidewalk from a rope extending from a house to a pole at the edge of the sidewalk, the flag should be hoisted out, union first, from the building. When displayed in a window, the flag should be displayed with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street. When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill, balcony, or front of a building, the union of the flag should be placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff.

When the flag is suspended across a corridor or lobby in a building with one main entrance, it should be suspended vertically with the union of the flag to the observer's left upon entering. If the building has more than one main entrance, the flag should be suspended vertically near the center of the corridor or lobby with the union to the north, when entrances are to the east and west or to the east when entrances are to the north and south. If there are entrances in more than two directions, the union should be to the east. When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left.

When the flag is displayed with another flag against a wall using crossed staffs, the United States flag should be on its own right, and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag. The flag, when carried in a procession with another flag or flags, should be either on the marching right, that is, the flag's own right, or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line. The flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. State flags, regimental colors, and organization or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor. If an honor guard carries the flag for a ceremony in the area of a flag pole, the honor guard should be positioned between the flag pole and the audience.

When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor to the speaker's right as he faces the audience. When used on a speaker's platform, the flag, if displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the speaker or to the right of the audience.

Bunting of blue, white, and red, always arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle, and the red below, should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping in front of the platform, and for a decoration in general. To prevent the official party from having to put their back-sides to the audience when the flag is on the stage behind them, pre-post the Colors on the stage, or, have the honor guard post the Colors on the stage and position the official party in the front row of the audience during the National Anthem.

It is not mandatory to retire the Colors just because the Colors have been posted. It is not customary to retire the Colors if they were not formally posted. Positioning of flags is often arbitrary and based primarily on the best location for the event. This could be directly behind the speaker, to the observer's left of the speaker, or centered together on the stage. When positioning flags, consider the traffic flow of those participating in the ceremony, obstruction of audiovisual equipment, getting flags into the background for photographs, and practicality. The flag should form a distinctive feature of the ceremony of unveiling a statute or monument, but it should never be used as the covering for the statute or monument. There are no laws or regulations restricting the use of a finial on a flag staff. The eagle finial is used by the President, the Vice-President, many federal agencies, and also by many civilian organizations and private citizens. The type of finial used, if any, is a matter of preference of the individual or organization. The placing of a fringe on the flag is optional. Fringe should be used on indoor flags only. Fringe is considered to be an "honorable enrichment only" and is not regarded as an integral part of the flag.

No part of the flag should ever be used as wearing apparel, a costume, or athletic uniform, however, a flag patch, (*Only Proper Disposal of the American Flag is authorized; never cutting Stars out of the Flag or defacing it in other means*) may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, policemen, firemen, and members of patriotic organizations. The flag patch on the left sleeve of a military uniform should have the blue field to the viewer's left. A flag patch on the right sleeve should be displayed with the blue field to the viewer's right so that the flag is facing forward and streams to the back as the person moves forward. A flag pin should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.

When the flag is displayed on a motorcar, the staff should be fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender. Window-mount flags should be positioned on the right side (passenger side) of the vehicle. The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle or of a railroad train or a boat. A flag decal or a flag magnet displayed on either side of a vehicle should have the blue field towards the front of the vehicle so that the flag appears to be moving forward as the vehicle moves forward. The flag should not be displayed on a float in a parade except from a staff. The flag should never be used as a covering for a ceiling. The flag should never be used as bedding or drapery. It should never be festooned, drawn back or drawn up, bunched in folds, but always allowed to fall free.

The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything. The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. There is a federal criminal prohibition on the use of the flag for advertising purposes in the District of Columbia. Advertising signs should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown.

The flag should never have placed upon it, nor on any part of it, nor attached to it, any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture, or drawing of any nature. The flag should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard.

The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used, or stored in such a manner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged in any way. A torn flag may be mended, but a worn or tattered flag should be destroyed when it is no longer fit for display. It should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning (Proper Disposal as Ceremony states below).

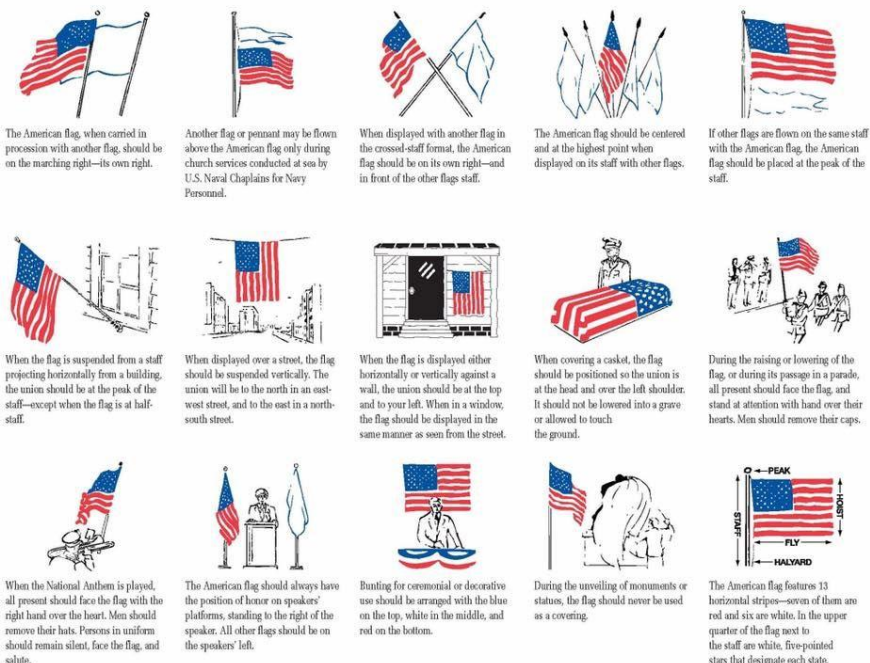
When the flag is used to cover a casket, it should be placed so that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground. Any rule or custom pertaining to the display of the flag of the United States of America may be altered, modified, repealed, or additional rules may be prescribed, by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States. Any such alteration or additional rule shall be set forth in a proclamation.

ORGANIZATIONAL FLAG PRECEDENCE

Flags representing Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) chartered by the U.S. Congress and that have been approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to represent Veterans in front of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), are positioned in the following order ...

1 - American Ex-Prisoners of War, 2 - *The American Legion*, 3 - AMVETS, 4 - Blinded Veterans Association, 5 - Catholic War Veterans, 6 - Congressional Medal of Honor Society, 7 - Disabled American Veterans, 8 - Jewish War Veterans, 9 - Legion of Valor, 10 - Military Order of the Purple Heart, 11 - Military Order of the World Wars, 12 - National Association for Black Veterans, 13 - Paralyzed Veterans of America, 14 - The Retired Enlisted Association, 15 - Veterans of Foreign Wars, 16 - Veterans of the Vietnam War, 17 - Vietnam Veterans of America.

Flags representing all other organizations chartered by the U.S. Congress are positioned next, followed by civic groups and patriotic organizations in alphabetical order and then alphabetically or numerically within equal groups.



CHAPTER 8. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (1939)

1. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States was first given national publicity through the official program of the National Public School Celebration for Columbus Day in October, 1892. The Pledge had been published in the *Youth's Companion* in September, 1892 and was also sent out in leaflet form throughout the country. Francis Bellamy and James Upham were members of the staff of the *Youth's Companion* when the Pledge was published. The family of each man contended that his was the authorship and both held evidence to substantiate their claims. To determine the actual authorship, the United States Flag Association appointed a committee to weigh the evidence of the two contending families. The committee decided in favor of Francis Bellamy and the decision was accepted by the American Flag Committee on May 18, 1939.

Bellamy had been chairman of the executive committee which formulated the program for the National Public School Celebration. He wrote, "Let the flag float over every school-house in the land and the exercise be such as shall impress upon our youth the patriotic duty of citizenship." He also included the original 23 words of the Pledge which he had developed ...

***I pledge allegiance to my Flag,
and to the Republic for which it stands,
one Nation indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all.***

2. The wording of the Pledge has been modified several times. On June 14, 1923 at the First National Flag Conference, the words "the flag of the United States" were substituted for "my flag". In 1924, "of America" was added. The last change occurred on June 14, 1954 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved adding the words "under God". He said, "In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future. In this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war."

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
***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.***

3. The Pledge of Allegiance continued to be recited daily by children in schools across America, and gained heightened popularity among adults during the patriotic fervor created by World War II. Congress included the Pledge to the Flag in the United States Flag Code on June 22, 1942. The Pledge to the Flag received its official title as The Pledge of Allegiance in 1945.

When the Pledge is being given, all should stand facing the flag, with the right hand over the heart, fingers together and horizontal with the arm at as near a right angle as possible. When not in uniform, men should remove any non-religious head-dress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute.

The Bellamy Salute!



A group of schoolchildren performing the Bellamy salute, May 1942

4. The Bellamy salute is the salute described by Francis Bellamy (1855–1931) to accompany the American Pledge of Allegiance, which he had authored. During the period when it was used with the Pledge of Allegiance, it was sometimes known as the "flag salute". During the 1920s and 1930s, Italian fascists and Nazis adopted salutes which were similar in form, resulting in controversy over the use of the Bellamy salute in the United States. It was officially replaced by the hand-over-heart salute when Congress amended the *Flag Code* on 22 December 1942.

CHAPTER 9. ORIGIN OF FLAG DAY

1. There are many claims to the first official observance of Flag Day following the flag's adoption in 1777. An event that included a celebration of the United States flag was held in Hartford, Connecticut in the summer of 1861. In the late 1800s, schools all over

the United States held Flag Day programs to contribute to the Americanization of immigrant children. The observance gradually spread into communities across the country.

In 1885, Bernard Cigrand, a 19-year-old teacher in Waubeka, Wisconsin asked his students to write essays about the flag. Cigrand devoted the rest of his life attempting to gain national recognition and observance of Flag Day. William T. Kerr, a schoolboy in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is credited with founding the American Flag Day Association in 1888. He is often referred to as the “Father of Flag Day”.

On June 14, 1889, George Bolch, the principal of a free kindergarten for the poor in New York City, had his school hold patriotic ceremonies to observe the anniversary of the Flag Day resolution. This initiative attracted attention from the State Department of Education, which arranged to have the day observed in all public schools thereafter. The state legislature passed a law making it the responsibility of the state superintendent of public schools to ensure that schools hold observances for Lincoln’s birthday, Washington’s Birthday, Memorial Day and Flag Day.

2. The Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia held a Flag Day celebration on June 14, 1891. The New York Society of the Sons of the Revolution celebrated Flag Day in 1892. In 1893, the Society of Colonial Dames succeeded in getting a resolution passed to have the flag displayed on all public buildings in Philadelphia. More than 300,000 public school children celebrated Flag Day in Chicago on June 14, 1894. In 1897, the governor of New York ordered the displaying of the flag over all public buildings in the state, an observance considered by some to be the first official recognition of the anniversary of the adoption of the flag outside of schools.

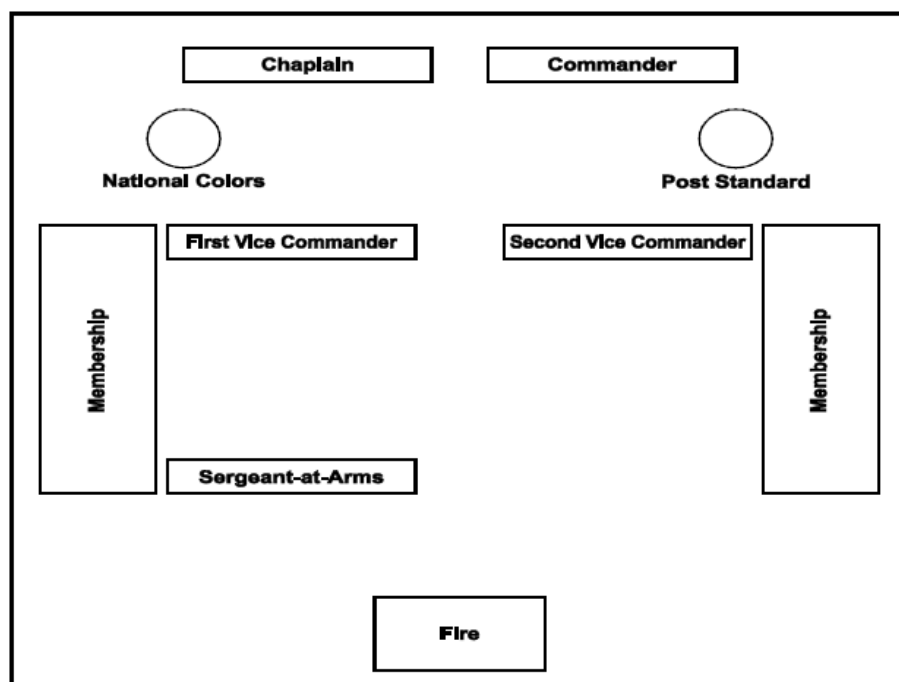
In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation declaring June 14 be observed as National Flag Day. President Calvin Coolidge did the same in 1927. Pennsylvania became the first state to establish June 14 as Flag Day and a legal holiday in May 1937. Flag Day is a nationwide observance today, but Pennsylvania is the only state that recognizes it as a legal holiday. The United States Congress approved the national observance on August 3, 1949, and President Harry Truman signed it into law.

CHAPTER 10. PROPER FLAG DISPOSAL CEREMONY

1. We have highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain!
2. Disposal of unserviceable Flags. This is a very desirable ceremony to present as part of Flag Day observance. The Post assembles in meeting, out-of-doors, preferably at night. About Twenty feet apart, facing each other. Officers at their stations as shown. A small fire is burning opposite the Commander and beyond the rows of members; as per the diagram above.

FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY

3. Suggested Arrangement of officers and membership for ceremony.



4. Suggested flag disposal ceremony:

Sergeant-at-Arms: Commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable Flags of our Country for inspection and proper disposal."

Commander: "Sergeant-at-Arms, advance with your detail and present the Flags for disposal and inspection."

The Sergeant-at-Arms calls the Detail to attention. They form at the Post of the Sergeant-at-Arms, taking the Flags which are to be inspected and marches abreast until opposite the 2nd Vice Commander and halts two paces in front of the 2nd Vice Commander. The Sergeant-at-Arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

Sergeant-at-Arms: "2nd Vice Commander, we present these unserviceable Flags for your inspection."

2nd Vice Commander: "Is the present condition of these Flags the result of their usual service as the Emblem of our Country."

Sergeant-at-Arms: "These Flags have become faded and worn and deserve honorable retirement and proper disposal."

2nd Vice Commander: "Present these Flags to the 1st Vice Commander for further inspection."

The Sergeant-at-Arms Salutes, about faces, commands the detail "About Face;" crosses behind the detail and takes a Post at the left, Commands "Forward March." The detail marches to within two paces of the 1st Vice Commander, Halts and proceeds as before.

Sergeant-at-Arms: "1st Vice Commander, we present these Flags which have been inspected by the 2nd Vice Commander, for further inspection."

1st Vice Commander: "Have any of these Flags served any other purpose?"

Sergeant-at-Arms: "These Flags have flown in various places with great Honor and Respect to our Country and for those who have died and fought for it."

1st Vice Commander: "Present these Flags to the Commander for final inspection and fitting disposal."

The Sergeant-at-Arms Salutes, About Faces, Commands the Detail "About Face," crosses behind the detail and takes position on its left, commands "Forward March." The detail marches to the center, turns left, halts within two paces of the Commander. Sergeant-at-Arms steps on pace Forward and Salutes the Commander.

Sergeant-at-Arms: "Commander, we have the honor to present for final inspection and proper disposal these Flags of our Country."

Commander: "Have these Flags been inspected by the 1st and 2nd Vice Commanders."

Sergeant-at-Arms: "Commander, yes they have."

Commander: "2nd Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

2nd Vice Commander: "Commander, since these Flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend that they be honorably retired from further service."

Commander: "Very well, thank you 2nd Vice Commander"

Commander: "1st Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

1st Vice Commander: "Commander, since these Flags have become faded and worn in a tribute of service and love, I also recommend that they be fittingly destroyed."

Commander: "Very well, thank you 1st Vice Commander"

Commander: "We have presented here these Flags of our Country which have been inspected and condemned as unserviceable. They have reached their present state in proper service of tribute, memory and love."

"A Flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze, or a beautiful banner of the finest silk. It's intrinsic value may be trifling or great; but its real value is beyond price, for it is a precious symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked for and lived for, died for - a free nation of free men, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of Justice, Freedom and Democracy."

"Let these faded Flags of our Country be retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites and their places be taken by new Flags of the same size and kind, and let no grave of our soldier or sailor dead be un-honored and unmarked. Sergeant-at-Arms, assemble the Color Guard, escort the detail bearing the Flags and destroy these Flags by burning. All members shall stand at attention."

Color Guard Forms. The detail about faces, preceded by the Color Guard the detail marches down center to the Fire, facing the Commander, Post Standard takes position on left of fire. The detail lines up behind the fire, which is burning low.

Commander: The Chaplain will offer Prayer."

Chaplain: "Almighty God, Captain of all hosts and Commander over all, bless and consecrate this present hour."

"We thank Thee for our Country and its Flag, and for the Liberty for which it stands."

"To clean and purging flame we commit these Flags, worn-out in worthy service. As they yield their substance to the fire, may Thy Holy Light spread over us and bring to our hearts renewed devotion to God and Country. Amen..."

Commander: "Hand Salute."

Color Guard presents Arms. Post Standard is dipped. All officers and members, except those on the flag detail, salute. Members of the Flag detail one by one at the Command of the Sergeant-at-Arms presents the Flags to the Retirement and Disposal detail.

Commander: At Conclusion "Two."

The Color Guard shall resume its station and detail is dismissed. Color Guard advances down the center and places colors. Members of the detail resume their places among the Members.

CHAPTER 11. **FLAGS DISPLAYED ON VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES**

The following pictures illustrate a variety of situations ...

	One window-mounted U.S. Flag positioned on its own right (the passenger side of the vehicle) as the vehicle moves forward		U.S. Flag positioned in the center of the rear of the motorcycle; U.S. Flag is larger and higher than the other flags
	One fender-mounted U.S. Flag positioned on its own right (the passenger side of the vehicle) as the vehicle moves forward		U.S. Flag positioned in the center of a row of flags on the rear of the motorcycle; U.S. Flag is mounted higher than the other flags
	One roof-mounted U.S. Flag positioned in the center of the vehicle		U.S. Flag positioned on its own right as the vehicle moves forward; size of the U.S. Flag is equal to, or greater than, the other flag
	One U.S. Flag positioned in the center of the rear of the motorcycle; flag is positioned straight-up		U.S. Flag positioned on its own right as the vehicle moves forward; size of the U.S. Flag is equal to, or greater than, the other flag
	One U.S. Flag positioned in the center of the rear of the motorcycle; flag is angled to the rear		U.S. Flag positioned on its own right as the motorcycle moves forward; size of the U.S. Flag is equal to, or greater than, the other flag
	Two roof-mounted U.S. Flags of the same size and height positioned on both sides of the vehicle		U.S. Flag positioned on its own right as the motorcycle moves forward; size of the U.S. Flag is equal to, or greater than, the other flag; both flags are positioned straight-up
	Two U.S. Flags of the same size and height positioned in the center of the rear of the motorcycle; flags are leaning outwards at the same angle		U.S. Flag positioned on its own right as the motorcycle moves forward; size of the U.S. Flag is equal to, or greater than, the other flag; both flags are leaning outwards at the same angle

CHAPTER 12. MILITARY FUNERAL FLAG PRESENTATION **PROTOCOL**

A United States flag drapes the casket of deceased Service members and Veterans to honor their service to America. The flag is placed so that the blue field with stars is at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased. After *Taps* has been played, the flag is carefully folded into the symbolic tri-cornered shape. A properly proportioned flag will fold 13 times on the triangles, representing the 13 original colonies. The folded flag is emblematic of the tri-cornered hat worn by the Patriots of the American Revolution. When folded, no red or white stripe is to be evident, leaving only the blue field with stars. The folded flag is then presented as a keepsake to the next of kin or an appropriate family member. Each branch of the Armed Forces uses its own wording for the presentation ...

U.S. Army ... This flag is presented on behalf of a grateful nation and the United States Army as a token of appreciation for your loved one's honorable and faithful service.

U.S. Marine Corps ... On behalf of the President of the United States, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one's service to Country and Corps

U.S. Navy ... On behalf of the President of the United States and the Chief of Naval Operations, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one's service to this Country and a grateful Navy.

U.S. Air Force ... On behalf of the President of the United States, the Department of the Air Force, and a grateful nation, we offer this flag for the faithful and dedicated service of *rank and name of deceased*.

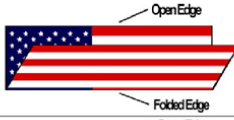
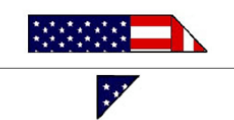
U.S. Coast Guard ... On behalf of the President of the United States, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one's service to Country and the Coast Guard.

Safe Bet... On behalf of the President of the United States and a Grateful Nation, we offer this flag for the faithful and dedicated service of *service of rank and name of deceased*.

If the next of kin has expressed a religious preference or belief, add ... God bless you and this family, and God bless the United States of America.

How to fold the United States Flag

United States flags are manufactured with a proportion of 1.0 (the Hoist, or Width) to 1.9 (the Fly or Length, therefore the following instructions are the same regardless of size of the flag.

Start		↑ HOIST ↓ ← FLY →
Step 1		Fold the lower striped section of the flag over the blue field.
Step 2		Folded edge is then folded over to meet the open edge.
Step 3		A triangular fold is then started by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to the open edge.
Step 4		Outer point is then turned inward and parallel with the open edge to form a second triangle.
Step 5		Triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in the triangular shape with only the blue field visible.
Completed		The edge of the final triangular fold is tucked tightly inside the remaining open fold.

THE 13 FOLDS MEANINGS:

The 1st fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The 2nd fold is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.

The 3rd fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country.

The 4th fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God we seek him in time of peace and war.

The 5th fold is a tribute to our country, may she always be right.

The 6th fold is for this where our hearts lie..

The 7th fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces.

The 8th fold is a tribute to honor Mother.

The 9th fold is a tribute to womanhood, for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the men of this country have been molded.

The 10th fold is a tribute to the father, for he too has given of his children for defense of our country.

The 11th fold represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The 12th fold represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christians eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

The 13th fold or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust."

ORDER OF SUCCESSION FOR RECEIVING THE BURIAL FLAG

For a Service member who died while serving on active duty, the line of succession is ... Spouse Sons or daughters in the order of age, oldest first Oldest parent, unless legal custody was granted to another person Blood or adoptive relative granted legal custody Brothers or sisters in the order of age, oldest first Oldest grandparent Other relative in accordance with laws of deceased's domicile. If the deceased was serving on active duty, he/she would have appointed a Primary Next-of-Kin in writing. That is the person whom the Military would notify if something happens to the Service member. It is not necessarily the surviving spouse. In addition, the Service member may have listed one or more alternates. That is the order the Military uses for notification and may also use for presenting the burial flag at a Military funeral.

CHAPTER 13. PROTOCOL

Purpose:

This Protocol Guide is intended to assist those responsible for planning and conducting American Legion meetings, ceremonies and functions to achieve successful outcomes for these events. Following established protocols enables functions to proceed smoothly and predictably and serves to enhance the image of both the host organization and The American Legion, The Department of Florida. This is critical, especially when American Legion visitors from outside The Department of Florida and when non-Legionnaire visitors are present.

Scope:

This Protocol Guide covers planning and conduct of American Legion meetings, ceremonies and functions, including visitations by American Legion dignitaries. It does not cover public events such as Memorial Day and Veterans' Day ceremonies; future editions of this publication may cover these topics.

1. Although "Protocol" is a term used primarily in setting the rules of *etiquette*, which govern diplomatic functions, there is a certain amount of protocol, which applies to American Legion meetings and social functions, especially those to which dignitaries have been invited. Protocol for those events is the responsibility of the post commander who should be aware of certain guidelines that begin with the planning of the event.

If the Department Commander is to be invited, this matter should be cleared promptly with department headquarters. In preliminary planning, it is advisable to have an alternate date in the event the Department commander is already committed for the original date. Accompany the invitation with some basic facts about the engagement: time, place, whether or not it is a dinner occasion, significance of the event, etc. Will it be a joint Legion-Auxiliary function? Will there be non-Legionnaire dignitaries present? Remember, this is your "home" and those you've invited deserve all the courtesies and considerations to be accorded such distinguished guests.

If the event is a dinner, those who will be seated at the head table should have been notified of this fact before they arrive. They should be escorted to their places to avoid confusion. The presiding or host officer is seated just to the right of the podium.

The master of ceremonies is seated just to the left of the podium. Place-cards identifying those at the head table should be used. Introductions begin after the meal. The presiding officer stands at the center of the head table and makes the introductions, beginning

at the extreme left, continuing to the center of the table, and then starting at the extreme right and continuing to the center. The main speaker, or the guest of honor, is the last person introduced.

2. American Legion officers are introduced in the order by which they were installed into office: Sergeant-at-Arms, service officer, historian, judge advocate, chaplain, treasurer or finance officer, adjutant, vice commanders, and commander. As with all rules, there are some exceptions. If it is a function of both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, the Auxiliary officers, dignitaries, etc., are introduced first. A national executive committeeman (NEC) or alternate NEC (NECA) should be introduced immediately before the department commander.

At a Post, District or ANY meeting the same Protocol for introductions is to be used in the same order, from lowest to highest and in the order of elected. NEVER place a dignitary on the spot to speak, always ask them if they would like to say a few words prior to the meeting and give them the choose or suggest when they will speak. When you call upon the dignitary to speak never state "We have Department Commander Joe Smith with us today and it would be great to hear from him". The proper way is to state:

3. Department Officers present should be given special recognition and the opportunity to extend greeting.

The highest office that is present during the meeting should be given the proper respect by first: 3 Raps of the Gavel to get everyone to standing at attention and then stating the words:

"We are delighted to have our "Department Commander", Joe Smith, with us today, and we would be happy to hear from him."
The M/C or Commander introducing should start the Dignitary Clap so others will join in; (the Sergeant-at-Arms escorts him to the podium)

4. Tasking the "Sergeant-at-Arms".

As Commander your Sergeant-at-Arms works for you and no other. So when you are at the Podium your Sergeant-at-Arms is on duty! If the District, Area or Department Commander is at the Podium then their Sergeant-at-Arms becomes the Primary Sergeant-at-Arms. Just remember that whoever is on the Podium then their Sergeant-at-Arms is on Duty; if that Commander's Sergeant-at-Arms is not in attendance then a member of his or her Staff should assume those duties or the next lowest lever (like the Area Sergeant-at-Arms will act as Department Sergeant-at-Arms if no other Department Officers are in attendance. This is for the same if the Auxiliary President is at the Podium she would task her Sergeant-at-Arms only; this is very useful during District meetings and Installations as a lot forget that they don't task someone else's Sergeant-at-Arms to do something.

GENERAL PLANNING GUIDELINES

1. SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES.

Successful outcomes are usually determined by detailed planning and effective execution. The individual responsible for an American Legion function must establish an appropriate team to handle the various details of the planning and execution phases.

Team members should be familiar with American Legion protocol. Following are issues which should be addressed in the selection of team members and the planning and conduct of American Legion functions.

SUGGESTIONS

- Confirmation of Date this is a critical issue, often overlooked. In the case of a National Commander's Visitation, for instance, his/her visit is part of a country-wide itinerary established well in advance, and it determines the schedules for many other Department of Florida representatives.

- Schedules sometimes change, so we must be alert to any changes and their implications.

- Site Selection The function site selection depends upon its purpose. Generally, it should be in a central location; readily accessible to those attending. The facility should be able to support the size of the audience. Considerations: room layout requirements, proper public address equipment, adequate parking, etc. This is preferably an American Legion Post, but site selection should be based upon the suitability of the facility.

- Event Chairman this is a key individual. The event chairman should have prior experience with planning and conducting the type of function in question and should have a proven track record of managing a functional team, motivating other team members to perform their assigned tasks correctly and advising them appropriately.

- Dinner Chairman must be able to manage all details of dinner planning with either the host Post or the event facility management. Responsibilities can include tickets, ensuring proper room layout, head table arrangement, reserved tables, seating, menu planning, flowers and decorations, program, etc.

- Communications Chairman This responsibility should include both internal American Legion communications (including The American Legion Auxiliary and The Sons of The American Legion) and public relations activities. This position should be filled by someone

with excellent communications skills and past history of working with the media.

- Itinerary Chairman This responsibility should include transportation, coordination of any tours to be conducted, rooming, special parking, etc.

- Master of Ceremonies Must be an effective public speaker and familiar with American Legion protocol.

- Color Guard posting of colors enhances any American Legion function and should be included wherever possible.

2. ITINERARY PLANNING GUIDELINES

These are the essential support activities that will enable the overall function to run smoothly and problem-free. Visitors from outside will experience the results of proper itinerary planning. Paying attention to the details pays off with satisfactory results.

SUGGESTIONS

- General * Finalize list of visitors (from R.S.V.P.'s) with arrival times, rooming requirements, transportation requirements, if any?

- Agenda * Develop detailed activities plan to include arrivals of visitors, luncheon, tour, press conference, dinner, other related activities, breakfast next day, departures, etc.

- Coordinate plans with Communications Chair and other event committee chairs

- Coordinate agenda with Department Commander/Adjutant and other Department-level organizations (Auxiliary, S.A.L.) as applicable.

- Rooming * National Commander should be located in a small suite

- National Commander's Aide located near the Commander

- Department Commander located near National Commander

- Consider spouses accompanying guests

- Non-smoking rooms preferred by guests?

- Advise guests of financial arrangements for room charges and other miscellaneous charges to room charges for National Commander and Aide should be paid by host organization. Other guest room charges are absorbed at the discretion of the host organization.

- Transportation

- Establish Welcoming Committee Department Vice Commander for the Area, Department Sergeant-at-Arms, District Commander and County Commander should greet Distinguished Guests upon arrival. National Commander should be greeted by Department Commander, Department Adjutant, Department Vice Commander for the Area and District Commander plus other(s) at the discretion of the host organization.

- Coordinate airport pick-up, if applicable

- Use private autos/vans (arrange for drivers) or public transportation as applicable for all phases of the visitation. Van transportation is often a convenience for tours, etc.

- Arrange for reserved parking for visiting dignitaries usually reserved parking spots are provided for National Commander, Department Commander, Department Auxiliary President, S.A.L. Detachment Commander, as applicable.

3. DINNER PLANNING GUIDELINES

Proper planning will ensure a smooth-running function and support the necessary protocol. Following are guidelines which may help in planning the dinner and associated activities.

SUGGESTIONS

- Facility Selection * Establish Preliminary estimate of attendance, usually based upon past experience

- Adequate parking available? Reserved parking spots?

- Will it support room layout? (See illustrations below)
- Will non-smoking area(s) be available?
- Public Address System to do the job
- Kitchen facilities, serving capability to handle anticipated attendance expeditiously
- Note that Department dinners and events involving special guests should have dinner served on china with metal utensils
- Menu & Refreshments * Time – cocktail hour, dinner service, ceremonies
- Dinner selection
- Hors D'oeuvres
- Open bar vs. cash bar
- Cost calculation; per person and total (consider cost of complimentary tickets and other non-food costs)
- Tickets * Develop list of distinguished guests (free tickets) Note that if funds are available, suggested recipients of complimentary tickets would be: Department Commander and his Aides Department Vice Commander from host organization District Commander NEC and/or Alternate NEC, if invited Spouses of Guest receiving complimentary tickets Others as host organization desires * Develop cost per ticket (note costs like decorations, etc.)
- Develop advertising strategy, invitation letter?
- Design/print tickets.
- Establish ticket sales team, distribute tickets, record numbered blocks if applicable, develop sales record system.
- Distribute complimentary tickets (indicate “complimentary” on ticket itself)
- Room Layout * Coordinate with banquet facility (or Host Post) for head table location, distinguished guests table(s), etc.
- Table tent cards, head table place cards
- Head Table arrangement.
- Programs * Usually printed just prior to function to accommodate last minute changes
- Should list guests and agenda
- Decorations, etc. * Room decorations
- Flowers (at Head Table, other tables?)
- Corsages/boutonnieres for Head Table guests
- Banner(s)

SPEAKING PROTOCOL

Protocol helps to make American Legion functions proceed smoothly and expeditiously. Generally, all speeches should be brief with a simple and clear message. This will help to keep the interest of the audience.

Speaking Order - The main speaker/guest of honor speaks as he/she will receive the longest speech of introduction and their address will conclude the speaking portion of the program.

Speeches of Introduction

- Should be brief, to-the-point
- Refrain from reciting biographical data, use anecdotes when appropriate
- Length of speech of introduction varies with respect to the rank of the individual being introduced; the highest-ranking guest receives the longest speech of introduction

Introduction of Head Table

- Generally done by the Master of Ceremonies

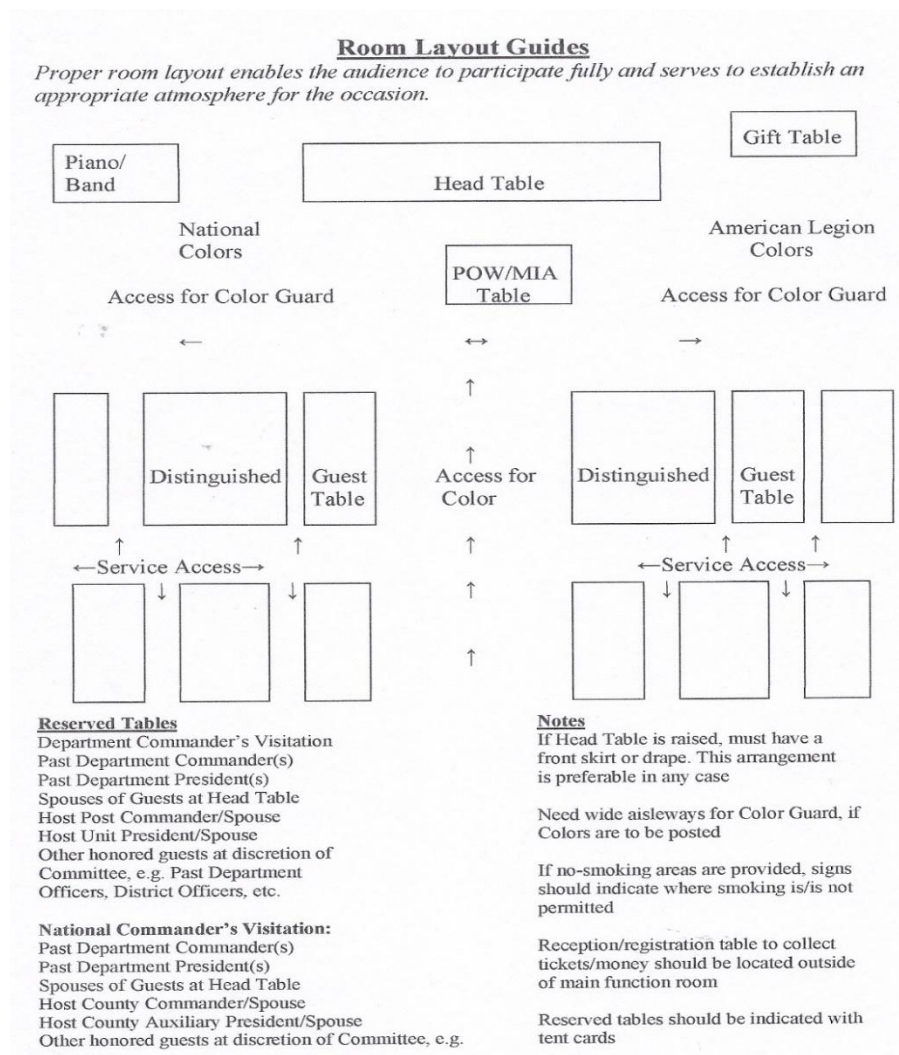
- Order of introduction starts with speaker's extreme left, working toward the center, then with speaker's extreme right, working toward the center
- Introductions should be brief – names and titles/functions. Refrain from lengthy introductions of any particular individual.

Order of Introduction

- Are generally done in order of rank within the organization, from low to high:
- Local dignitaries, non-American Legion guests S.A.L. Officers – Local, District, Department, National
- Auxiliary Officers – Local District, Department, National
- American Legion Officers – Local, District, Department, National American Legion Officers are usually introduced in the order by which they're installed into office:

Sergeant-at-Arms; Service Officer; Historian; Judge Advocate; Chaplain; Treasurer; Adjutant; Vice Commander; Commander (After the Commander the Honored Guest if applicable):

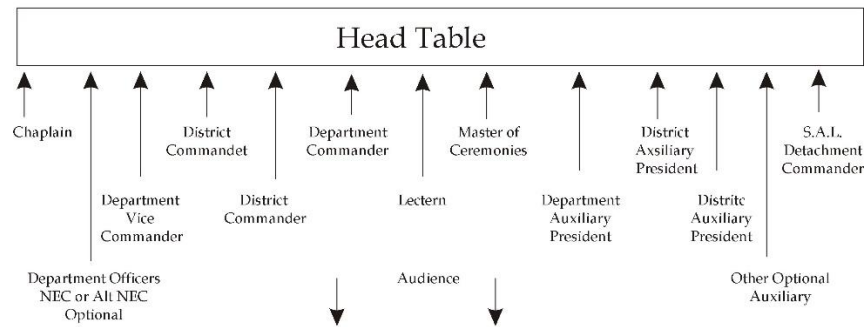
NOTE: If NEC or NECA are present, these officers should be introduced just prior to the Department Commander



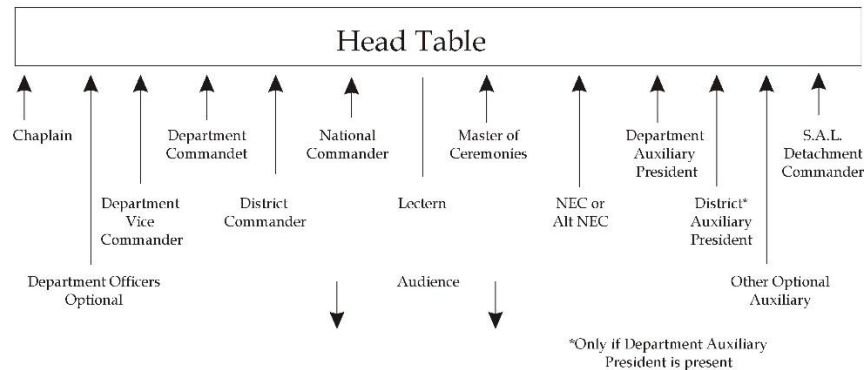
HEAD TABLE CONFIGURAION GUIDLINE

The Head Table is a place of distrinction. Placement of guests at the Head Table is indicative of their rank within The American Legion and protocol should be followed explicitly.

For Department Commander's Visitation:



For National Commander's Visitation:



Note: If other distinguished guests should be located at the Head Table, or if another configuration is to be considered, check with the Department Protocol Committee if there are any questions regarding layout or proper position of guests. Place cards indicating guest's name should be at each place on the Head Table. Other Distinguished Guests may be located at reserved tables at the discretion of the Committee.

GUIDE FOR MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Program Activity Comment(s) / Suggested Wording

Call to Order - May I have your attention, please (...pause)

Entrance of Distinguished Guests - Distinguished Guests may be escorted into the function room. As a minimum, the single Honored Guest should be escorted into the hall at the beginning of the event. Please rise for the entrance of (name, title), escorted by (name, title). Announce each escorted guest this way, and/or then introduce the guest of honorLet us welcome our Honored Guest for this evening, (name, title), escorted by (name, title). title). Announce each escorted guest this way, and/or then introduce the guest of honor Let us welcome our Honored Guest for this evening, (name, title), escorted by (name, title).

Salute Colors - (if colors are in place, not to be posted) Please rise to salute the Colors of our Nation. (...pause...) Hand salute! (...pause...) Ready, two!

Posting Colors (if used) -Please rise for the posting of our Nation's Colors. (...pause...) As Colors approach. Hand salute! Color Guard Commander will ask for permission to post colors – response Sergeant, post the colors! Hold salute until Colors are posted, then Ready, two! Allow Color Guard time to leave.

Invocation - We will have the Invocation delivered by (_____), Chaplain of (_____) . Please uncover. After Invocation is delivered ... Thank you, (_____).

Pledge of Allegiance - With your hat over your heart, please recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag. Recite Pledge slowly

National Anthem (if used) - Please join () in the singing of our National Anthem, the Star Spangled Banner. If you sing along, please place your hat over your heart. If you do not sing, please render a hand salute at this time. National Anthem

POW/MIA Service (if used) - MC may conduct POW/MIA Memorial Service or it may be conducted by another by a SERGEANT-AT-ARMS it is customary to ask the Department SERGEANT-AT-ARMS if he or she is in attendance. Please be seated while we conduct a service of remembrance for our POW's and MIA's in this plight of their loved ones. Optional, if service is led by someone other than the MC ... This Service will be conducted by (name/title). If the POW/MIA flag is retrieved at the conclusion of the event, announce that members should cover before the retrieval. Members may render a slow salute while the Sergeant-at-Arms retrieves the POW/MIA flag and renders the slow salute.

Welcome - Appropriate brief welcoming remarks by MC

Introduction of Head Table - Brief introduction of Head Table, names and titles/positions only. We are pleased to have with us tonight several distinguished guests seated at our Head Table. Begin at far left of speaker...At my far left we have (1,2,3,4, etc.). Then introduce head table from speaker's right...Starting at my far right, we are pleased to have with us (1,2,3,4, etc.).

Dinner - Thank you. Please enjoy your dinner.

Introduction of Distinguished Guests - Brief introductions of those seated at distinguished Guests Table(s), such as spouses not seated at Head Table, Guests not participating in the program, etc. May I have your attention, please? We have several Distinguished Guests with us tonight. I ask that you please stand when I announce your name. Optional, depending upon the number of Distinguished Guests to be introduced...Please hold any applause until all of our Distinguished Guests have been introduced. Introduce Distinguished Guests.

S.A.L. Detachment Commander - MC will introduce S.A.L. Detachment Commander if remarks are to be delivered. After S.A.L. Commander's remarks, thank you, (name).

District President - MC will introduce the District President. We are pleased to recognize (____), President of the American Legion Auxiliary __ District.

Department Auxiliary President - MC will introduce the Department President (if applicable)

District Commander - MC will introduce the District Commander (if applicable)

Department Vice Commander - MC will introduce the Department Vice Commander (if applicable)

Department Commander - MC will introduce the Department Commander (if applicable)

If this is a Department Commander's visitation, Department Commander will make address here. If this is a National Commander's visitation, Department Commander will make a speech of introduction for National Commander.

National Commander's Address (if applicable) Address by National Commander. Then, MC assumes the podium. Thank you, (National Commander, name)

Presentation of Gifts (if applicable) - If gifts are presented during the function, the order of presentation is: S.A.L. Detachment Commander, Department Auxiliary President, Department Commander, and/or National Commander.

Benediction - Please stand and uncover for the Benediction to be delivered by (name). Benediction. Thank you, (name).

Salute Colors - Please cover and remain standing as we salute the colors of our Nation. (...pause...) Hand salute! (...pause...) Ready, two!

(If Colors have not been posted)

Retiring of Colors - Please cover and remain standing as we retire our Nation's Colors. Color Guard Commander will ask for permission to retire the colors. Sergeant, retire the Colors of our Nation! Hand Salute! Remain at hand salute until Colors leave the room. Ready, two!

(If Colors have been posted)

"God Bless America" Traditional singing of "God Bless America" Please remain standing and join hands for the singing of "God Bless America".

Closing Remarks by M/C - This concludes our program for this evening. Thank you for joining us tonight. May add remarks about post-event activities, thank-you for participants, a reminder to drive home safely and soberly, etc.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS CHECKLIST

- _____ You and your assistant (s) get with the Commander on any special requirements for the meeting hall and or possible guests.
- _____ Ask the Chaplain if he will be doing Post Everlasting Ceremony, you will need to Drape the Charter.
- _____ Ask Membership Chair if there are any new members that me be there for initiation.
- _____ Confirm with the Color Guard on Posting and Retrieval of Colors and if the Bugler will be needed for Post Everlasting.
- _____ Set-up meeting Hall accordingly; have sign-in Log and VIP Sign-in Log ready.
- _____ Set-up Microphone and test to ensure it works, this goes for anything that will be used during the meeting.
- _____ Set-up POW/MIA Table or Flag Chair.
- _____ Place Meeting Agenda's and any other Hand-outs the Commander or Adjutant has at the Check-in table.
- _____ As Guests come in that you know will be speaking, confirm with them where they will be seated and go over on how you will escort them and if they are non-military on what side they will be going up to the Podium and what they need to do.
- _____ Remember, if this is a joint meeting, then whoever is at the Podium (Auxiliary President, SAL Commander, etc.) it is their SGT-at-ARMS who is on duty. Confirm with them the understand this.
- _____ As you check-in people, verify their Cards are not expired. If expired, get them with the Membership Chairperson right away. Also, make your list of guests you have, and as they come in, notify the Commander of the VIP guests in the meeting hall prior to the start of the meeting.
- _____ Double check everything to ensure you haven't forgotten anything.
- _____ Double check everything again.