

AMVETS Department of Ohio

Post Officers Manual

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[Officers and Their Duties](#_TOC_250036)

[Commander 1](#_TOC_250035)

[1st Vice Commander 1](#_TOC_250034)

[2nd Vice Commander 2](#_TOC_250034)

[3rd Vice Commander](#_TOC_250034) 2

[Adjutant](#_TOC_250033) 2

[Finance Officer 3](#_TOC_250032)

[Judge Advocate 7](#_TOC_250031)

[Provost Marshal 7](#_TOC_250029)

[Chaplain 7](#_TOC_250026)

[Meetings](#_TOC_250023)

[Conducting a Meeting 8](#_TOC_250026)

Meeting Procedures  [15](#_TOC_250026)

Business [Procedures](#_TOC_250040)

[Discipline 29](#_TOC_250039)

[Membership 29](#_TOC_250039)

Post Constitution & By-Laws 29

Programs  [29](#_TOC_250026)

Revalidation 30

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# Officers and Their Duties

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## Commander

The commander, as the senior executive officer of the post, shall preside at all meetings of the post and executive committee but may delegate a vice commander to serve as a temporary substitute when needed. The commander is an ex officio member of all committees. The commander directs and supervises the activities of all elected and appointed officers and committees. Together with the adjutant and finance officer, the commander is responsible for all monies received by the post. He also has automatic access to the online data base. He/She may view a roster 24/7 and update the contact/address information for any post member. The Commander may add new members online and renew members online.

The commander will ensure that the post meets regularly on the appointed dates unless otherwise dictated by the post membership. It is the commander’s responsibility to disseminate, to the membership, all pertinent information that is sent from the department and National Headquarters.

In addition to announcements at post meetings, all information should be displayed on post bulletin boards and published in the post newsletter. The commander, or a member appointed by him/her, shall represent the post at memorial services and community functions, where it is customary that AMVETS or a veteran’s organization be represented.

The commander shall be the official post spokesperson on all matters of public interest concerning post activities. The public relations officer (PRO) may be called on to assist with press releases, position statements and speech preparation. The position of commander is filled in regular elections as prescribed by the post’s constitution and bylaws.

## 1st Vice Commander

The first vice commander serves as the membership chairperson, the membership chairman's duties include but are not limited to retention, recruitment, membership incentive programs, and the first vice commander shall chair the membership committee.

## 2nd Vice Commander

The second vice commander shall be responsible for the VAVS/Veterans Welfare programs conducted by this Post. The second vice commander shall chair the VAVS/Veterans Welfare committee, which is required to have a minimum of two programs per fiscal year. The second vice commander shall also be the liaison between the AMVETS Department of Ohio V.A.V.S. and this Post.

## 3rd Vice Commander

The third vice commander is responsible for programs and their promotion. In the absence of the commander, the vice commanders-in order of their rank-shall preside at meetings and represent the commander.

## Adjutant

The adjutant provides the administrative support for the post and is charged with taking minutes and maintaining all records (in conjunction with the finance officer). He is also responsible for correspondence and manages the routine business of the post. The adjutant is the official contact person for the post and serves as the liaison officer between the post and its community, the department, and National Headquarters. Among the adjutant responsibilities:

* Maintain the Post's electronic Roster. Ensure service dates, birthdates and e-mails are current for all members and leaders. Each member’s file should provide all the information given on the original application: name, address, branch of service, home and work phone numbers and date of acceptance into AMVETS.
* Maintain records of current and past officers. Forward a new list of officers to the department and national headquarters within 30 days of the election. Any changes made on the post level must be documented and forwarded to the headquarters no later than July 15.
* Update a member's record when addresses or e-mails change. E-mail membership when a member passes.
* Keep the membership informed of all post functions and activities. Ensure that all members are notified in advance of the time, place, and date of post meetings. Take particular care to ensure that all members are properly notified at least 30 days in advance of all elections of officers, change in CBL, etc.
* Be present at all meetings (or have an assistant in attendance) to record all business transacted and report on the minutes of the previous post meeting or executive committee meetings.
* Present all communications and correspondence at regular post and executive committee meetings.
* Keep a complete record of the post’s property, including a description of the item, it is estimated value, its location and any other pertinent information deemed necessary. Trustees of post homes and clubs are sometimes held responsible for the safety and maintenance of post properties. This, however, should not be interpreted as being against procedures already established by the post for custody of the property.
* Apply to the IRS for an employer identification number (EIN), by completing SS-4 Form and filing IRS 990 Form as required.
* File all correspondence according to the subject matter. Keep copies of all letters sent to the department and National Headquarters; and
* Maintain separate files for members, correspondence, D&R Forms as well as for post publicity and fund-raising programs and any other topics relating to post activities.
* Like the Commander, he too can access post member information online. He has the same privileges as the commander.

## Finance Officer

The post finance officer is the treasurer. Responsibilities include receiving membership dues, banking, disbursement of monies and accounting for all post funds. The finance officer and one other post officer, usually the commander, sign and countersign all post checks only after payment is authorized. Credit card management and use rules are essential to conducting digital business.

The post finance officer should collect all monies due the post and keep an account of receipts for each member. All members in arrears should be notified personally. He/She should see that all post funds are secured in a bank account.

Before a new post finance officer assumes his duties, his/her predecessor must have been given a” clean opinion” by the auditors, the audit committee, or the finance committee. (The new finance officer does not want to become involved in any problems that existed prior to his appointment.)

The finance officer should make a financial report at all regular meetings (to be included in the meeting minutes) and prepare a complete financial statement and budget to report at the annual post meeting. He/She should also report to the post on all receipts collected and, on all bills, outstanding and paid. Major expenditures, and those not within the current budget, should first be reported to the executive committee and at a post meeting.

The finance officer may be assisted and guided by a finance committee of three or four members appointed by the commander with the approval of the post executive committee. The primary duty of a finance committee is to provide an annual audit of the books and assist in the preparation of the annual budget. The commander, being a member of all committees by virtue of his/her office, may assist the finance committee.

An important function of the finance officer is to coordinate his duties relating to membership with the adjutant or membership contact. The finance officer receives and dispenses all money and should work with whoever is responsible for issuing membership cards. At least once each month, he/she shall transmit to the department (or in the case of a non-department state, to the national headquarters) any monies collected from annual dues during the preceding month. Transmittal or remittance forms provided by the AMVETS National Headquarters shall accompany such payment.

The finance officer should oversee all dues revenues and membership cards. Although the actual issuance of the membership cards may be done by or in conjunction with the membership contact, the finance officer should oversee the funds and account for the cards. The cards are an important investment and should be inventoried upon delivery and then locked up in a fireproof container. The finance officer may be given permission from the Post Commander (via email or telephone call to the National Membership Director) to obtain access all the online capabilities.

AMVETS Accounting System for Posts and Departments: Because an elected finance officer may have little or no bookkeeping/accounting experience, an easy and efficient accounting system must be adopted. The “double entry bookkeeping” system requires little experience, time, and effort.

For this system to work, every financial transaction must be recorded. The finance officer uses an income voucher or disbursement voucher to authorize every transaction. When an income voucher is written and posted to the general ledger, the money that is deposited in the bank should agree with the voucher and general ledger. Likewise, when a disbursement voucher is written, the voucher should agree with the invoice and the check.

A double-entry bookkeeping system requires at least two entries, a debit, and a credit for every transaction. When funds are received, there is a debit (or increase to the cash account) and a credit (or increase to an income account such as membership dues.) When monies are paid out there is a credit entry made to the cash account to decrease its balance and a debit entry to another account such as national membership dues, when these monies are paid to AMVETS National Headquarters. One ledger sheet per month can be used to show all transactions. There should be a separate column for each account. The account balances at the end of each month should be carried forward as the beginning balance of the next month. Reconciliation of your bank statement to your cash account is required. The balance in the checking account should always agree with the total cash balance recorded in the general ledger.

The post must have a bank account, which requires two signatures on each check. When officers are changed, the newly authorized signatures must be given to the bank via appropriately completed signature cards. The officers who will sign the checks on the account must sign the signature cards.

Many banks will give a veterans’ organization an account that will be free from service charges and other fees, and the finance officer should inquire about the bank’s policy toward veterans’ groups.

When opening a new account, the finance officer must take the adopted resolution, which instructs that a post bank account is to be opened to the local bank along with the post’s federal

I.D. number. The resolution may read as follows:

Be It Resolved: That the finance officer of AMVETS Post (number), Department of (state), be instructed to open a checking account in the name of the above post at a local bank of his/her choice. Checks on the above account must have the signature of the finance officer and the signature of either the commander or adjutant of the above named post.

All posts are required by the bylaws to have the finance officer bonded in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which he/she may be accountable. The bond does not take the place of insurance in any way. It pays only for loss due to fraud or dishonest acts of the person bonded.

Budget: Every post, small or large, should have a balanced budget. A balanced budget means that income (or all cash received) and expenses (or all cash disbursed) are equal. This is the only way to manage the finances of the post or department.

When it is time to prepare the annual budget for the post, the finance committee meets to review all income and expenses during the past year and recommend a budget for the coming year. In developing a budget, consideration must be given to the long- and short-range goals of the post.

The post finance committee should meet at least two months prior to the annual meeting to set up a budget. Copies of the recommended budget should be distributed to the membership during the finance report at the annual meeting. It is every member’s right to know where money is being spent.

After the adoption of the budget by the membership, it is the finance officer’s responsibility to insist that the post limit its expenditures to the budgeted items within the anticipated income. This will provide stability and build a financial reserve for unanticipated expenses while maintaining a balanced budget.

The Internal Revenue Service: Under the provisions of a Bureau of Internal Revenue Ruling all AMVETS posts are entitled to exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(19).

For this reason, AMVETS maintains a group exemption that helps to expedite coverage. You must annually file information returns on the IRS 990 Form if required by current IRS regulations. This form may be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service and is required to be filed on or before the 15th day of the 5th month following the close of your accounting period. The “Post Revalidation Form” must be marked indicating whether your post is required to file IRS Form 990.

Bonding: Bonding is mandated in the AMVETS Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1: All national, department and post officials managing AMVETS funds more than $5,000 shall be properly bonded with a good and

solvent bonding and surety company, acceptable to the United States Treasury, as surety to cover the average amount of AMVETS funds, managed by such individual in a single year. In case of delinquencies in the payment of accounts due the department or National Headquarters, action shall be taken at once by the proper officials to bring about an immediate and complete settlement. The National Executive Committee shall approve the bonds provided by national officials, and the department executive committee shall approve those provided by department and post officials.

Changeover: Prior to the annual meeting, the post’s books must be in good order so that an adequate financial report can be made, and the books turned over to the newly elected finance officer. In the transition, the new finance officer should provide a written receipt to the retiring officer on the surrender of the post books and monies.

## Judge Advocate

The post judge advocate is responsible for drafting the post’s constitution and bylaws (CBL) for presentation to and adoption by the general post membership. The original post CBL, together with any changes, additions or corrections must be sent to the department judge advocate for review, approval and forwarding to the national headquarters. The National Membership Department maintains a permanent file of important documents on each post. A post may adopt its own CBL, provided the provisions are not in conflict with the department or national constitution and bylaws. A sample post CBL is provided as an addendum to the Officer's Manual (last item in this section).

## Provost Marshal

The provost marshal is responsible for keeping order at post meetings, for the care of post colors and for performing other duties as assigned.

## Chaplain

The chaplain is a member of the commander’s staff and acts as advisor and consultant to the commander in all matters relating to religion, morals, and morale as affected by religion. The chaplain assists the commander and his/her staff with integrating the principles of good moral conduct and citizenship in the post. He/She represents religion which teaches fortitude, reverence, and justice, as well as kindness, sympathy, and humility.

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# Meetings

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## Conducting the Meeting

The post commander is the chairperson of all post and executive committee meetings. In his/her absence, the vice commander acts as the chairperson. If neither of these officers is present, another officer can call the meeting to order. A temporary chairperson should be elected to preside until the commander or vice commander arrives. The chairperson oversees the meeting and must see to it that the meeting starts on time and that the business is conducted in an orderly fashion (without moving too fast or too slow). He/She must keep order, explain matters that are not clear, and see that each member has a fair chance to participate in the discussions and decisions. Most posts’ bylaws state that a certain number of members, known as a “quorum,” must be present before a legal meeting can be held.

The chairperson calls the meeting to order by rapping the gavel three times and announcing, “The regular meeting of AMVETS Post (number) will now come to order.” He/She should then proceed with conducting the meeting’s agenda in the following order:

* Posting the Colors
* Pledge of Allegiance
* Invocation
* Preamble to the AMVETS Constitution
* Roll Call of Officers
* Minutes of the Previous Meeting and the Executive Committee Meeting
* Bills and Communications
* Introduction of Guests
* Applications for Membership and Initiation of New Members
* Reports of Officers, Committees and Delegates
* Unfinished Business
* New Business
* Good and Welfare
* Benediction
* Retiring the Colors
* Adjournment

Every meeting may not have business under each of the items. The above agenda is a guide for the chairperson to ensure that all necessary business is conducted correctly and efficiently.

The chairperson must listen carefully when the adjutant reads the minutes of the previous meeting, so that he/she can note those items, which must be acted on either because they were left unfinished or because reports are expected from committees or officers. When he/she can, the chairperson should also note items of new business that he/she knows should be conducted.

When special items of business come before the meeting, the chairperson may suggest changes in the agenda or the omission of certain items such as the reading of minutes, to save time. This may be done only with the body’s consent. Post meetings should be limited to one hour. In special situations, a two-hour meeting may be allowed or necessary; however, long meetings discourage members from coming back.

Posting the Colors: If the colors are posted with only the United States flag, there should be a guard on both sides of the flag bearer. If both the U.S. flag and the post standard flag are used, the post standard flag is carried to the left of the U.S. flag, with a guard on the outer side of each flag (or to the front and rear of the flags when it is necessary to walk single file in a narrow aisle or area).

The U.S. flag is always to the fore, top or right of any other flag or pennant and the post flag should never cross in front of it.

Never have an armed guard without uniform caps. When the color guard is unarmed but wearing uniform caps, the command is "salute" and the color guard gives the regular military salute, while the bearer dips the post colors. The U.S. flag is at “Carry” and is never dipped. If the color guard is unarmed, without caps, and the order “salute” is given, each member of the guard salutes by placing his/her right hand over his heart. When civilian hats or caps are worn, the salute is given by removing the hat or cap and placing it against the left shoulder, with the hand placed over the heart. If the color guard is armed, the command given is "present arms” and the command following is always "order arms."

When the command from the provost marshal to the color guard is “Forward march,” guard members should start to shoulder arms on the first step and complete it on the third step. Depending on the room or area where the marching begins, the guard could also start with shoulder arms before the command “Forward march” is given. The color guard should march from the rear of the room until it reaches the front row of seats where it should halt.

The next command is “Advance and post the colors.” When the color bearers reach a point directly in front of the flag stands, they should halt while the color guard executes “present arms.” Both flags should then be posted simultaneously. When both are in position, the color bearers should take one step back, face the U.S. flag and execute the hand salute. (Whenever the guard is unarmed, its members should execute the hand salute at the command “Present arms.”) After approximately five seconds, the provost marshal should command:

“Order arms. ““Right (or left) face.”

“At trail arms; forward march.”

Invocation: the chaplain should give the invocation and may substitute their own prayer appropriate to the meeting or say the invocation as follows:

“Our Father Who art in Heaven, may Thy name ever be hallowed by the people of America, whom Thou hast blessed as Thou has blessed no other people. May Americans ever adore Thee and thank Thee for those blessings guaranteed to us by law established. Much in us has not been such as to indicate appreciation of those blessings, and we are sorry tonight (this morning/this afternoon) as we gather in devout and patriotic assembly. Bless all nations; we beseech Thee, that they may dwell together in peace and justice. Bless our nation that she may ever be strong and generous, right, and victorious, among the family of nations on this earth. Bless us banded together for good in this organization, that we may serve our nation and our fellow men well, in peace as in war. Bless, we beseech Thee, our fallen comrades, and those whose price of patriotism causes them to suffer today from mental and physical disability. In Thy holy name, most humbly do we pray. Amen.”

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.”

Preamble to the AMVETS Constitution: The chairperson may read The AMVETS Preamble, or the entire post can recite it as follows:

“We, the American veterans who have served or are serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during and since World War II, fully realizing our responsibility to our community, to our state and to our nation, associate ourselves for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States; to safeguard the principles of freedom, liberty and justice for all; to promote the cause of peace and goodwill among nations; to maintain inviolate the freedom of our country; to preserve the fundamentals of democracy; to perpetuate the friendship and associations of these veterans; and to dedicate ourselves to the cause of mutual assistance, this by the grace of God.**”**

Roll Call: When the roll call of officers begins, all officers should stand. The adjutant then reads the names of each officer, and the provost marshal responds, “Present,” or “Absent,” when each name is called. Once counted present, the officer can be seated.

Reading the Minutes: The minutes of last post meeting and any executive committee meetings held since that meeting should be read. The minutes should be an accurate account of what business was conducted, including:

* The kind of meeting (regular, special, or executive committee).
* The date, time, and place of the meeting.
* The name of the chairperson and adjutant and, where the bylaws require it, the roll call of officers.
* The action taken on the minutes of the previous meeting.
* Summaries of committees and officer reports and the action taken on them.
* The text of all motions made and seconded, the name of the maker and the action taken on the motion. When the vote is by show of hands, roll call, or secret ballot, the exact vote for and against the motion should be entered. It is not necessary to record the debate, although some adjutants include the main points made for or against important motions.
* The time of adjournment.

The minutes should be typed or written in ink and bound in a book with strong covers. To get all important business recorded, the adjutant should take notes during the meeting or tape record the meeting and then copy the minutes into the permanent minutes book. This should be done as soon as possible so that notes do not get "cold." The adjutant should sign the minutes of each meeting. If the minutes are bound in a loose-leaf binder and are longer than a page, the adjutant should sign each page.

Bills and Communication: At each meeting, important correspondence should be read to or summarized for the members. The finance officer should also give a report, including a statement of the post’s financial condition, complete with itemized income and expenditures and the post’s banking balance.

Introduction of Guests: When the chairperson introduces a guest speaker, he/she should include in the introduction, the name of the speaker, his/her title or qualifications and the subject of the speech. The chairperson may call on a committee chairperson to make the introduction, especially when the talk has specific reference to that committee. Remember, the shorter the introduction, the better.

Membership Report and New Member Initiation: The first vice commander gives the membership report. The report identifies the paid-up members and addresses the efforts being made to secure renewals and new members. During this report, applications for membership are voted on and new members are introduced to the post. It is acceptable to call a short recess so that a proper welcome may be extended to the new members.

Other Reports: The sick call committee reports all the names of sick and needy AMVET members, veterans, and veterans’ dependents. Events such as marriages, births and deaths in members’ families should also be noted. The post service officer should report on his/her work since the last meeting. He/She should share information on proposed legislation pertaining to veterans on the state and national level and recommend follow-up action. The entertainment committee, athletic committee and the Americanism committee should also give reports. The public relations officer should report on any promotional programs AMVETS has participated in or publicity the organization has received since the last meeting. All publicity should be preserved as valuable history of AMVETS and the post.

Unfinished Business: Any pertinent issues that were left unresolved in previous meetings or considered important to the post’s welfare can be discussed at this time.

New Business: Any important business that has yet to be discussed in the meeting can be mentioned at this time.

Good and Welfare: During the "good and welfare" announcements, the members may mention matters pertaining to the welfare of veterans that require no action to be taken. Educational and entertainment features are often presented during this portion of the meeting rather than waiting for a formal adjournment.

Benediction: the chaplain should make the benediction. He/She may substitute his own prayer appropriate to the meeting or say the following benediction:

“Let us pause this moment that each of us, in the faith of his own heart, may hallow the memory of those, our fallen comrades, who made the supreme sacrifice, and gave their lives on the altar of patriotism to a great and grateful America.” (Pause 30 seconds.) “God of all consolation and all mercy may those comrades ever sleep in the bosom of Thy love. And do Thou bless us, our loved ones, our comrades, and our fellowman everywhere, now, and evermore.

Amen.”

The following is the official AMVETS prayer:

“Almighty God, the Father and Guide of our great nation, we beseech Thee to give us the light and strength faithfully to uphold and defend our constitution, to safeguard our principles of liberty and justice, to promote the cause of peace throughout the world, and to strengthen the bonds of friendship and mutual assistance among our fellow citizens. Amen.”

On more solemn occasions, the chaplain prays as follows:

“Give Thy blessing to our world, to our nation, to our loved ones, and to our lives, that all may dwell in charity, in justice, and in peace under Thy loving care. Grant that we may serve our country well, in peace as in war; and that she may ever prevail as good and great, right, and victorious among the family of nations on this earth. We beseech Thy special blessing on ourselves, banded together for good in this organization, and on all who have served our nation by suffering and sacrifice in time of national emergency, particularly those who today suffer from mental and physical disability. Most humbly do we ask these graces of Thy bounty, Amen.”

Other prayers may be substituted so long as they are nondenominational.

Retiring the Colors: Nearly the same procedure used in posting the colors is used when retiring the colors. Simply substitute the command of “Retire colors” for the command “Post colors.” Also, the command “Present arms” is given when the color guard arrives in front of their respective colors. The color bearers should then salute. The command “Right shoulder arms; take colors,” is given and the guard should stand at attention and secure the flag. Next, the command “Assemble march,” is given, at which time the guard should execute the same marching order, as was done returning from posting the colors. The guard is retired in the same fashion as in posting the colors, except for the last command, which should be, "dismissed."

Adjournment: The chairperson adjourns the meeting by rapping the gavel once and saying:

“I now declare this meeting of AMVETS Post (number) of the Department of (state) adjourned. Our next meeting will be at (time) on (date).”

# Meeting Protocol

## Unanimous Consent

The Commander should remember that a great deal of the business of the meeting can be accomplished by unanimous consent. For example, when the secretary adjutant has finished reading the minutes, the Commander will ask, “Are there any corrections?” and then if none are made, “If there is no objection the minutes will stand as read, “or “as corrected,” if corrections have been made.

This same procedure may operate regarding communications and reports. In those instances, in which communications do not require action, the Commander may say, “If there is no objection, the letter will be received and filed,” or in the case of a report, which contains no recommendations, “If there is no objection, the report will be accepted.”

Many a meeting has been killed by a large pile of longwinded communications, read in a monotonous voice by an adjutant who is not at all interested in what they have to say. This can be avoided by having communications go to the executive committee, which decides which of them shall be read to the membership, or by having the adjutant summarize the less important ones.

## Motions

Whenever a body desires to act on any problem it does so through the passage of some motion dealing with that question. All the activity of a meeting, therefore, revolves around motions and what happens to them, whether they are adopted, amended, defeated, or postponed for future action.

## Getting the Floor

No one has a right to talk at an AMVETS meeting unless he/she has first been recognized by the Commander, that is, has been “given the floor.” A member desiring to present a motion, or to speak on any question, arises and addresses the chair as “Commander.”

Ordinarily the Commander recognizes the first member to arise, but when two or more arise at the same time he/she may use their own judgment. When a member has the floor the remainder of the group should sit quietly until he/she has finished. The Commander recognizes a member by nodding or pointing to them, or by calling out their name or position. Thus: “AMVET Brown,” or “the member in the third row.”

## Making the Motion

Every motion should begin with the words **“I move that,”** not “I make a motion that,” or “I move you that.”

## Motions should be stated positively, that is in such a manner as to require some action.

Thus, it is not necessary to pass a motion “not to hold a picnic.”

A motion cannot be made while there is another motion on the floor, except for certain types of motions, which will be noted later.

Every motion must be “seconded” before it can be discussed. This is to ensure that at least two people in the meeting are interested in the motion. In some instances, a member desiring to make a motion will ask the privilege of explaining the subject matter and intent of their motion before making it. If there is no objection from the body, the Commander may allow them to do this. Otherwise, no motion may be discussed before being seconded.

In most AMVET meetings all that is required for a motion to second is for a member to call out “Seconded” in a loud voice, while remaining seated.

## Stating the Question

When a motion has been made and seconded the Commander should repeat it clearly, so that all members will know what is before the body. If the motion is awkwardly worded or confusing, the Commander, with the permission of the maker, should reword it so that its meaning will be clear. If the Commander believes the motion is “out of order” he/she should say so as soon as it is made. In repeating the motion, the Commander may ask the secretary adjutant to read it.

## Discussion

When a Commander has finished stating a motion, he/she should ask for discussion, thus: “A motion has been made and seconded,” or “It has been regularly moved and seconded that this AMVETS should put into effect the AMVETS MEMBERS juvenile opportunity program. Is there any discussion?

The maker of the motion is usually given the first opportunity to speak since he/she is the one who can be expected to give the best arguments for it. A member who has not yet spoken on the motion is given preference to one who has; in fact, except for the maker of the motion further explaining its meaning, no one should speak twice on a motion so long as there is some desiring to speak who have not done so.

It is a good practice for the Commander to alternate speakers for and against a motion. If he/she does not know on which side members wishes to speak, he/she can ask, “For or against?” and should be guided accordingly. A member who seldom talks should be given preference over one who speaks frequently. Discussion should be limited to the matter before the meeting.

The Commander has the right to speak on a motion but should not make a practice of long speeches from the chair, or otherwise dominate the meeting so that the members fear to express their own opinions.

It is best that the Commander speak only when he/she feels that there are certain implications in the motion, which have not been brought out by others, or feels that the matter is so important that he/she wants their position known before the vote is taken.

## Amendments

Suppose the AMVETS is considering a motion, which the members would like to see, changed a little. That is the time when the amendment is used. The amendment may be offered at any time after the motion has been seconded and before the vote is taken. The mover of the amendment must get the floor in the same fashion as one wishing to speak on the motion, and the amendment must be seconded before it can be considered.

The maker of the amendment should state clearly what their amendment is, and to which section of the motion it applies. For example, the body is acting on a motion that “a picnic be held on August 15, with tickets at $1 a couple.” The maker of an amendment wishing to change the date would say, “I make an amendment that the date of the picnic be August 22 instead of August 15.”

No Amendment can be made which is directly contrary to the motion. For instance, an amendment not to hold a picnic would be out of order.

## Amend the Amendment

Just as it is possible to amend a motion, so it is also possible to change an amendment. Suppose the motion is that “the executive committee, investigate the possibility of organizing a new AMVETS in Smithville.” An amendment might be made that “a special committee be appointed to investigate, etc.”

Some members might feel that the committee should be elected, and so would move “an amendment to the amendment, providing that the committee be elected.”

That is as far as the situation can go, for there can no amendment to an amendment to amendment.

When during the discussion neither the original motion, nor the motion as amended will be satisfactory, the best plan is to offer a “substitute for the whole, “that is one motion to replace the original motion and the amendments.

It is important to note that while there can be an amendment to an amendment; there cannot be two amendments to a motion before the meeting at the same time. In the instance cited above, after the amendment had been made to appoint a special committee to make the investigation, it would be out of order to make another amendment asking, that the committee also investigate the possibilities of organizing another AMVETS.

Once an amendment is before the body the discussion is limited to the amendment until it is disposed of. A Commander can sometimes save time be calling upon the maker of the motion and the second and asking whether they would be willing to accept the amendment as part of the original motion. If they agree, and no other members objects, this can be done, saving time and energy.

## Voting

When there has been sufficient discussion, the Commander may say, “Are you ready for the question?” And if no one desires to speak the vote is taken. So long as anyone desires to debate the Commander himself cannot close the debate. This can only be done by a majority vote of the body (see “Previous Question”).

Before putting the matter to a vote, the Commander should make it clear just what the members are acting on—the motion, the amendment, the amendment to the amendment, or the motion as amended.

## Amendment First

When a motion with an amendment is before the body, the vote on the amendment comes first. If the amendment is passed the body, then acts upon the motion as amended.

If the amendment is defeated, the vote then is on the original motion. Another amendment may be offered when the first has been disposed of. When a “substitute for the whole” is offered voted upon first. “If adopted, the substitute then takes the place of the original motion and becomes subject to debate.

In certain cases, it is not advisable to use the normal order for voting on amendments. There may be a motion to set up a committee of five, an amendment to make it seven, and an amendment of the amendment to fix the size three. The best procedure is to vote on the largest figure first, with next largest, and so on.

In most instances the members will first vote vocally by saying “Aye” or “No” in chorus with position seeming to have the most voices winning. The form is this: The Commander: “All those in favor of the motion say aye…those who opposed, no…the aye’s have it and it is so ordered.”

## Show of Hands

When there is any doubt in the mind of the Commander or the membership as to which side has the majority, a vote should be taken by a show of hands. The phrase the Commander uses are:

“The chair is in doubt. We will vote by show of hands.” Any member may call for a vote by show of hands by calling “division” from his seat. The chair should grant this request.

In voting by show of hands the members raise their right hand as the Commander calls for the ayes and nos. If the group is a large one the Commander may appoint tellers who will count hands on each side. Otherwise, the secretary adjutant and the Commander can do the counting. The hands should be counted unless the results are so obvious as to be without question. In large meetings voters are often asked to stand rather than to show hands.

## Vote by Ballot

On important questions, such as elections, voting may be by ballot, so that each member may keep his vote secret. Unless otherwise specified in the by-laws, a vote by secret ballot may be called by a majority of the members of the meeting; such a motion is not debatable. Tellers are chosen, who are responsible for distributing the ballots, seeing that the vote is correctly counted. They report the total to the Commander, who announces the results to the meeting.

The Commander has the right to vote when the vote is by ballot, or when his/her vote will affect the decision. Thus he/she may vote with the minority to make break a tie, and prevent the approval of a matter, or he/she may vote with the majority to break the tie and provide the passage of a measure. Under no circumstances may he/she vote twice.

## Acting on a Motion

Let us try to fill in the outlines we have given of motions, amendments, discussion, and voting, by taking an actual instance of a local AMVETS acting on a problem that has been brought before it.

The Commander: “Is there any new business?”

AMVET MEMBER Grady is given the floor.

“Commander, we have a genuinely nice AMVETS home here, but we do not make enough to use of it. What is the use of paying for a hall?”

## Making the Motion First

The Commander interrupts, “AMVET MEMBER Grady, if you have any suggestion to make regarding the use of our home, please put them in the form of a motion. Unless there is a motion before the body you cannot speak.”

“Then Commander, “says AMVET MEMBER Grady, “I move that the Commander appoint an educational committee to organize activities for our members in the home. The reasons why we need such a committee”

## Getting the Second

Again, the Commander interrupts. “Is there a second to the motion that I appoint an educational committee?” Several cries of “Second” are heard. “All right, AMVET MEMBER Grady, now you may speak on your motion.”

“I only wanted to say, “Grady finally asserts, “that it is a shame to have a home as nice ours and not use it more regularly. At the same time, it is obvious that an educational committee could plan classes, and other affairs, which would be helpful to the AMVETS. It looks like I could use a class in parliamentary law myself.

## An Amendment

AMVET MEMBER Lucia gets the floor. “I agree with AMVET MEMBER Grady that we ought to have an educational committee, but I do not see much point in renaming one unless we give it some money to spend. If we are going to have worth - while program, we will have to be willing to pay for it. I, therefore, move to amend the motion that we appropriate $200 for the use of the committee.”

“Is there a second to the amendment?” There is a cry of Second!”

“We will now discuss the amendment that we appropriate $200 for the use of the educational committee. AMVET MEMBER Cuneo.”

## One thing at a time

“There are a lot of activities that we ought to start. For example, this AMVETS has never sponsored a dance which would benefit the member’s greatly ”

“Just a minute, AMVET MEMBER Cuneo, you are out of order a dance is a fine idea, but this is not the time to discuss it. We are now deciding whether we should appropriate $200 from for the educational committee. AMVET MEMBER Horn, did you want to speak?”

“Yes. I noticed that the motion does not provide any size for the committee, so I would like to offer another amendment that the committee be composed of five members.”

“Only one amendment at a time, AMVET MEMBER Horn, your amendment is out of order and cannot be accepted now. It is now proper only to offer an amendment to the amendment, such as that the amount to be voted be $100 rather than $200. Your amendment will be in order after we have acted on the present amendment.”

A confused murmuring arises in the hall. “Quiet please,” the chairpersons call out.

AMVET MEMBER Robinson is recognized. “I do not think we should appropriate any money for the committee until we see what plans they have. Let us wait until they report back to us the next meeting.”

AMVET MEMBER Schwartz arises. “I don’t want see why we want to bother with this educational business at all, after all its ”

## Vote on the Amendment

The Commander: “AMVET MEMBER Schwartz, you are out of order; you are talking on the main motion while we are discussing the amendment. Is there any further discussion on the amendment?”

“There being none we shall vote on the amendment?”

“There being none we shall vote on the committee. All in favor say aye…those opposed…no…the chair is in doubt. We will vote by a show of hands. Will the adjutant please function as teller? All in favor of the amendment will please raise their hands…those opposed…”

The provost marshal counts and turns the results over to the Commander.

“The amendment is lost 76 to 60. The original motion is now before the house. AMVET MEMBER Horn, you may now make your motion as to the size of the committee.”

AMVET MEMBER Grady rises. “I’ll accept the motion as part of my original motion.”

“If there is no objection, the amendment will become part of the original motion. Is there any further discussion? We will now vote on the motion that the Commander appointed an educational committee of five to organize activities for the AMVETS home. All those in favor say aye…opposed, no. The ayes have it and the motion are carried.”

“I will name Grady, Horn, Stupak, Conrad, and O’Brien as members of the committee. (In some cases, the Commander may desire to name the committee later after giving the matter some thought). Is there any further new business?”

## Keeping the Order

When a football player violates the rules the game, he/she is penalized. In the same fashion a AMVETS member who does not abide by the parliamentary rules of the meeting finds themselves unable to function.

You have seen how he/she may be restrained and prevented from making motions or amendments. If he/she persists in being out of order the Commander may have them removed from the hall.

However, the rules of parliamentary procedure are not all simple, and it is not likely that every member will know all the fine points. Therefore, it is the duty of the presiding officer, the Commander, to see that the rules are lived up to by calling them to the attention of the members as they are violated or are needed.

Thus we have seen that he/she has forbidden a member to speak on a motion until it had been seconded, he/she has forced members to speak on the question before the house, has seen to it that only one motion was before the body at a time, and otherwise seen to it that the rules of procedure were lived up to.

## The Point of Order

However, there are times when someone violates the rules without the Commander noticing it. Or else the Commander may make a ruling which is felt to be wrong. In such a case a member of the body may call it to the attention of the chair by raising a “point of order”

A member wishing to call the attention of the chair to some violation of the rules of order does so by standing up in his place and saying, “Commander, a point of order.” Or simply, “Point of order.” He/she may do this even though he/she interrupts someone else who has the floor. The Commander must recognize them and ask them what their point of order is. The form is this:

“Point of order, Commander.” What is your point of order?”

“AMVET MEMBER Smith is not speaking on the question before the body.”

“Your point is well taken. AMVET MEMBER Smith, will you please confine your remark to the question before the house?”

Or if the Commander disagrees:

“Your point of order is not well taken. AMVET MEMBER Smith’s remarks have a direct bearing on the question before the body. You may proceed, AMVET MEMBER Smith.”

It should be remembered that one of the worst enemies of a well-conducted meeting is the “point of order pest,” that is, the member who regards themselves as the expert on the parliamentary procedure and looks for opportunities to prove it. It is much better to keep quiet when the Commander has missed a minor infraction of the rules than to disrupt the meeting.

## A point of order is not:

* An excuse to slow down a meeting.
* A convenient way to interrupt a speaker.
* An excuse to make a speech.
* An excuse to criticize the Commander.

## Appeal from the Decision of the Chair

In most instances the best thing a member can do when ruled out of order, or when their point of order is not recognized by the chair, is to keep quiet about it, and abide by the decision of the Commander. When, however, he/she feels that a grave injustice has been done them, or that the decision of the Commander was a definite violation of the rules of procedure, or that the best interests of the AMVETS will be served, the member has a right to “appeal from the decision of the chair,” and have the whole membership decide if they or the Commander was right.

The appeal can be taken only immediately after the ruling has been made. It may be made by the member called to order, or any other member. The member announces:

“I appeal from the decision of the chair.”

After discussion, if any, the question is put to a vote by the chair in this fashion:

“All those in favor of upholding the ruling of the chair, say aye…Opposed, no…the chair is sustained.”

Or if the vote is the other way:

“The chair is overruled.” Immediately upon the decision of the appeal the business of the meeting is continued.

## Point of Information

A member who feels that he/she needs certain information, either about the meaning of a motion, or its effect, or other facts to enable them to vote intelligently, has the right to ask for it at any time. He/she simply gets up and says, “Point of Information.”

The Commander should recognize the questioner, but he/she cannot interrupt another speaker. The questioner states their problem, and the Commander should answer it as well as he/she can. Sometimes the questioner desires information from another member. In such a case, the Commander should ask the one who had been speaking whether he/she will yield for the purpose of the question. He/she cannot be forced to do so. The questioner must address their question to the chair even though he/she wanted information from another member, thus:

“Commander, I wonder if AMVET MEMBER Jones can tell us how many World War II veterans collaborate with them.”

## Parliamentary Inquiry

When the information that the member seeks has reference to the rules of parliamentary procedure this is known as a “parliamentary inquiry,” – for example:

“Is it in order now to make a motion with reference to the problem of unemployed World War II veterans?”

The Commander’s answers to such questions do not constitute decisions that can be appealed. Only a decision he/she would make after such a motion had been brought up would be subject to appeal.

## How to Do What You Want to Do

We have seen how a AMVET acts in the normal course of events in dealing with motions and amendments. However, there are times when some unusual action is desired. This is accomplished by what is known in parliamentary law as “subsidiary” motions. They are intended primarily to help the handling of the business rather than to deal with it directly. Many of them differ from the motions for action which we have discussed in that they can interrupt a speaker, require no second, cannot be debated, or require more than a majority of the votes cast to be carried.

## Prevent Something from Coming Before the Bod y (To Object to the Consideration of a Question)

On occasion a motion is made which deals with a matter the very discussion of which, it is felt, will cause ill feeling or friction, or be otherwise harmful to the body. A member who feels this way will arise immediately after the motion has been made, but before discussion has started, and say, “Commander, I object to the consideration of the question.”

The Commander must reply: “There has been an objection to the consideration of this question. Will the assembly consider it?”

The matter is then immediately put to a vote. There can be no discussion. If two-thirds of the members vote against considering the question, then it cannot be brought up again during that meeting.

A member desiring to “object to the consideration of the question” may interrupt another speaker. No second is required for the objection. It should be remembered, however, that this motion should be used only in exceptional cases:

## Take Back Something You Have Started (Withdrawing a Motion)

After a motion has been made and seconded it becomes the property of the body and cannot be withdrawn without its consent. The maker of the motion asks the Commander for permission to withdraw his/her motion, and the Commander puts the question before the members thus: “If there is no objection the motion will be withdrawn.” When an objection is raised the question of withdrawal must be put to a vote. It requires no second, cannot be debated, and requires a majority vote to pass. Drop the Matter for the Present (“To Table” “To Lay on the Table” or “To Defer” “To Defer Indefinitely”)

Sometimes a member may feel that a motion under discussion is taking up too much time, or that the motion is unwise and should be gotten out of the way without spending any more time debating its merits. In such a case he/she makes a motion to “table the Motion,” or “to lay the motion on the table.” THIS IS AN IMPROPER MOTION!

This motion is intended to postpone action on a matter, to start more pressing business. The proper motion to delay action on or dispose of a motion in these circumstances is to move to “defer the motion” or to “defer the motion indefinitely.” If more information is needed before a motion can be decided, the member would ask for recognition and, upon being recognized, state, “I move to defer the motion until we can receive additional information as to .”

If the object is to drop the matter altogether, the member would say, “I move to defer this indefinitely. The Commander then asks for a second, and if the motion is seconded, puts the question of deferring to a vote.

A motion to table discussion on a motion to discuss an urgent matter is stated, “I move to table this motion in order to determine .” The commander then asks for a second, and if a second is made, puts the question of tabling to a vote. There is no discussion on a motion to table.

A motion which has been tabled can be “removed from the table” as soon as some other business has been transacted. A member making the motion “to remove from the table” is recognized in the usual manner, and again the question is decided without debate, and by a majority vote.

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The use of the “motion to defer” as a means of killing a measure to be discussed; can be overdone by a reckless majority. It is a much wiser policy to close debate in the regular fashion (see below) and then defeat the motion if that is the end desired.

## To Limit or to Extend Debate

Only by action of the members themselves can debate on a motion be stopped so long as some of the members desire to speak. The body, however, can limit the amount of debate which shall be allowed, or stop it altogether. Motions to do this are made in the usual fashion, require a second and are not debatable. They may be amended and are debatable only when they come before the body as a rule for all questions.

Debate may be limited by setting a time when the motion before the house shall come to a vote, by limiting the number of speeches and the time for each speech, or by allotting a certain amount of time for each side of the question. In the latter case, members on the same side may get together to divide the time. In some auxiliaries it is the practice to have a standing rule in the by-laws fixing the maximum amount of time that a member may speak on any motion.

When there is a standing rule fixing the time for debate, or when the body has acted to limit debate, and it is found advisable that the time for debate be extended, this may be done by a motion like that limiting discussion.

In both cases, the maker of the motion to limit or extend debate must get the floor in the usual manner and cannot interrupt someone who has the floor.

## Stop Discussion and Take a Vote (The Previous Question)

When it is desired to cut off debate entirely, and come to a vote at once, the motion is the “previous question.” For the “previous question” to be moved it is necessary for the mover to be recognized by the Commander in the usual manner. The motion requires a second, and like the motion to limit debate it is not debatable and requires a two-thirds vote. The form is “I move the previous question,” or “I move that we close debate and vote on the question.” Immediately after the motion is made and seconded the Commander must put it to a vote thus: The previous question has been called for. Will those in favor say aye…opposed, no….”

In some organizations it is the practice to close debate when several members call out “Question” from their seats, showing that they are tired of the debate, and want to vote. This practice is proper in most cases but should not be used when there are members who desire to speak. Then the motion for the “previous question” is the proper one.

## Change a Previous Decision of the Organization (To Reconsider)

When it is felt that a body has acted hastily on some matter, or later events or latest information indicate that the decision was unwise, the organization may decide to “reconsider” or “rescind” the action.

The motion to “reconsider” is used when it is desired to bring the whole matter up anew for discussion and action. It must be made on the same day that the vote to be reconsidered was taken. It must be made by someone who voted with the majority in the original instance, but any member may second it. When the vote has been by secret ballot, any member may move to reconsider.

# Procedures

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## Discipline

Guidelines for the suspension or expulsion of a member are identified in the Uniform Code of Procedure of the AMVETS National Bylaws, Appendix B. A post can suspend or expel any member showing just cause, such as disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty, or conduct unbecoming a member of AMVETS. The post’s charges should be committed to writing and presented to the member. According to the National Bylaws, Appendix B, any member who has been disciplined has the right to appeal his suspension or expulsion to the department executive committee. The decision of that committee shall be final.

## Membership

# Post Constitution and Bylaws

The post CBL is the most important document that a post develops and adopts. It lays out the ground rules for post members to follow. The rights and responsibilities established must be fair and understood by all the members. The national CBL mandates that each post CBL be consistent with the national and department CBLs. A prototype CBL is provided, together with instructions for customizing your post's CBL, in the Membership Reference Manual. It is also available on the AMVETS website.

The post judge advocate is responsible for writing, maintaining, interpreting, and updating the post CBL. The CBL must be forwarded to the department judge advocate for review and approval after which it is sent to AMVETS National Headquarters for placement in permanent files.

# Programs

As they assume office, one of the first duties of the post commander and second vice commander is to review post-sponsored programs. They must develop an overall plan complete with committee assignments), set goals, establish timetables, promote existing programs to their fullest potential, and consider and adopt new programs. These commanders should begin by looking at national and department programs modified to fit the post’s needs. See AMVETS PROGRAMS MANUAL.)

Successful programs not only help the community but also involve members in structured activities. A well-organized program that demonstrates an answer to a need will generate interest plus stimulate media coverage, while it increases involvement and promotes membership. The public relations officer should contact the newspaper, radio, and TV stations to advise them about what is being planned, who is involved and what will be accomplished before, during and after the program. Remember to acknowledge and thank those who helped; a little recognition goes a long way. As each program progresses, document all pertinent information for future reference. Good records ensure continuity; therefore, additional copies should be made and given to the designated AMVETS record-keeper to put on file.

To get volunteers, personally call on some members who were active before or who have not been active at all. Tell them you need their help and get them involved. Look beyond your post membership to the auxiliary, Sons of AMVETS and Junior AMVETS who can aid. Identify individuals who have similar interests and concerns. Also look to other community service-oriented organizations and individuals like the Scouts, Jaycees, or chamber of commerce. Get your entire community to rally behind your cause.

Lastly, if a program works, share it with other posts, departments, and National Headquarters. It may be adopted nationwide. Keep in mind, however, that it may take weeks or months to plan and develop each program. Make it a success; plan the program well.

# Revalidation

As a tax-exempt veterans’ service organization, the national department, each recognized department, and all posts must observe federal, state, and local laws as well as our own constitution and bylaws. Our document mandates that each entity complies with the annual charter revalidation process outlined in the AMVETS National Constitution, Article X, Section 3:

Every post shall be required to revalidate its charter annually prior to July 15. Such charter revalidation shall be evidenced by an appropriate device to be issued by National Headquarters. To revalidate such charter, and to receive a Certificate of Revalidation of its charter, each post, aside from any other requirements imposed in the constitution and bylaws, shall—

1. Furnish National and its department headquarters with a fully completed and certified Post Revalidation and Officers form.
2. File Internal Revenue Form 990, 990M or 990EZ for the post calendar or fiscal year with the United States Internal Revenue Service as required by current IRS regulations and note same on the Revalidation form.
3. Furnish National Headquarters with a copy of the post’s current constitution and bylaws or a certification stating the copy previously submitted has not been amended.
4. Be fully paid up in all post accounts with National Headquarters.
5. If required, have complied with Article VII, Section 3(c), of AMVETS National Bylaws.
6. Have at least 10 members in good standing at the time of revalidation; and
7. Provide National Headquarters a copy of the post articles of incorporation and certificates of good standing. If required, comply with AMVETS National Bylaws Article VII, Section 3(d), and provide National Headquarters with proof of compliance.