

SECTION 7

Administrative

Policy for Ceremonial

Rifles & Ammunition

Statement of Policy for Clubs/Canteens

VFW Rules & Officer Responsibility

Administrative Procedures & Policies

Rulings & Appeals

Section 518 of the National By-Laws places on the State Commander the responsibility for deciding all questions of law and usage within his Department, subject to an appeal to the Commander-in-Chief. Where such questions are submitted directly to National Headquarters, it is our policy to refer them back to the Department.

Generally speaking, an appeal cannot be made nor will a ruling be given until after an action has actually taken place. For instance, a member cannot appeal a proposal that has not as yet been acted upon. The decision of a Post Commander can be appealed to the District Commander. If the District Commander upholds the Post action, an appeal may then be made, through channels, to the State Commander. If the State Commander upholds the District action, an appeal may then be made, through channels, to the Commander-in-Chief.

A State Commander or State Adjutant may request information or guidance from the National Headquarters prior to entering into a contemplated action. Such requests will be honored and information provided to the best of our ability.

The Post Advocate, State Judge Advocate, or Judge Advocate General do not rule - they offer advice when asked to do so by the appropriate Commander. However, if an opinion written by the Advocate in his advisory capacity is adopted and promulgated by the Commander, it then becomes the decision of the Commander.

Post & Member Correspondence

Letters from Post officers or individual members are answered promptly and courteously. If the response requires that a decision be rendered, the letter will be forwarded to the State Adjutant for the consideration and decision of the State Commander. Correspondence of a general nature and questions of a routine nature will be answered directly to the individual. Posts should, however, be encouraged to carry on such correspondence with the Department rather than National Headquarters.

Membership Eligibility

Questions of eligibility are answered routinely. Where copies of separation documents are submitted, they are checked and information given as to whether eligibility is indicated. Where general information is asked, it is provided. We will give every possible assistance to a Post, or to the Department, in determining whether it should accept an applicant as a member.

National Headquarters has no facility for determining the eligibility of an applicant except by a check of the separation documents. We have no access to military records nor do we maintain any type of list of persons who are eligible for membership. Neither can we certify that an applicant is eligible merely because he was previously a member of another Post. All we can provide is general or routine information.

Once the applicant has been accepted as a member, however, the questions no longer are routine.

The procedure in removing ineligible is covered very specifically in Section 108 of the National Manual of Procedure. There is no short-cut to the procedure.

Members-at-Large

Section 101 of the National By-Laws makes provision for members-at-large for any eligible person by reason of location, current active military service or personal preference who does not wish to affiliate with a local Post. The eligible person may become a Department member-at-large as a matter of personal choice.

Continuity of Membership

National Headquarters cannot provide a Post with a list of its members showing the years in which their dues were recorded. Neither can we check the continuity of membership of an individual. Records are not maintained in a manner which makes it feasible to provide such information.

Complimentary lapel pins recognizing 25 or more years of continuous membership were discontinued several years ago. Where Posts wish to continue to recognize such members, the appropriate pins must be purchased through the National Emblem and Supply Department. These pins may be ordered by the Post Quartermaster in the same manner as other merchandise. It is not necessary to provide a list of the recipients nor a sworn statement that they have earned the pin if the order is submitted by the Quartermaster or other responsible Post Officer.

National Headquarters Mailing Lists

National Headquarters maintains an officer mailing list of certain State Officers and Committee Chairmen, District Commanders, Post Commanders, and Post Quartermasters.

Every effort is made to keep this list current and correct. Changes and corrections are made daily as information is received. Some State Adjutants routinely forward such changes. This service is appreciated and encouraged.

A mailing list of all members is also maintained and is constantly being updated. This computerized list is entirely separate from the officer mailing list.

A major source of confusion results from a change of address being submitted without identification of any office the member may hold. In such cases, the address may be changed on the computerized membership list but not on the officer list.

A typical letter may state "I've sent my change of address to you twice and I get my magazine correctly addressed but you keep sending my Post Commander mail to my old address." This will ALWAYS happen if the member does not indicate any office held so that it will be corrected also.

**Appropriate forms are available
through Department Headquarters.**

Post Election Report

With the increased need for early, accurate information on new Post Officers and the amount of Post dues, a "Post Election Report" form is now being distributed to Post Quartermasters prior to Post elections. These forms are to be completed immediately following the Post election and a copy mailed prior to June 1st to National Headquarters, a copy to the Department, and a copy to the District or County Council. The installing officer is still required to make his report of installation but this does not include the names of the officers unless they have not been previously reported.

Where changes are reported on the installing officer's report, or from other sources, they must be immediately reported to the Adjutant General. Of most importance to National Headquarters are the names and addresses of Post Commanders and Quartermasters and the amount of Post dues.

Change of Post Name or Location

A Post cannot change its name or location without carrying out the provisions of Sections 206 or 208 of the National Manual of Procedure. We will NOT make such changes on the strength of a phone call or a letter. Bitter experience has taught us that an enterprising or obstinate Post Officer may take it upon himself to make changes which have not been approved by the Post. We must have the properly signed documents on file before the change is recognized. This is true even where the name was incorrectly spelled on the muster report or the location has changed because of annexation or other legal action.

Posts ordering banners with the wrong name, location, or muster date will not receive them until the proper procedure has been followed.

Forms for Change of Name, Correction of Name, Change of Location, and Correction of Location are available without charge from the Adjutant General. Sample copies of the forms are appended herewith.

Change of Meeting Place

The change of a Post meeting place is covered in Section 206 of the National Manual of Procedure. Such a change requires the approval of the State Commander but not the Commander-in-Chief.

A Post changes its location when it moves into a different political sub-division (from one city to another, from a city into a township, etc.). It changes its meeting place when it moves to another building in the same city—even if that city is as large as Chicago.

A Post could conceivably meet temporarily outside the limits of its chartered location without changing its official location, but the location should be changed when moving to a permanent home elsewhere.

Charter Replacement

A Post having lost, damaged, or destroyed its charter may obtain a replacement from the Adjutant General's Department. This replacement charter will bear the same names as the original although it may be slightly different in appearance. The charge for a replacement charter is \$25.00.

Some Posts organized in 1945 and 1946 never have requested nor received their original charter. They are still entitled to one without charge but must submit a list of their charter members, certified as correct and carefully checked for spelling.

District Chapters

It is safe to say that most Districts have lost their original charter. A District wishing a replacement may obtain it with a written request to National Headquarters. National Headquarters cannot provide any information as to if or when a charter was ever issued to a District.

Golden Anniversary Award Certificates

The National VFW issues Golden Anniversary Citations to Posts which have completed 50 years of continuous existence. These are prepared from records at National Headquarters and are mailed to the Department Headquarters at least two weeks in advance of the Anniversary with the request that arrangements be made for presentation.

These certificates are prepared automatically and do not have to be requested.

We have had requests for similar citations for 25th anniversaries, but we are not able to provide these.

Inspections

A supply of inspection forms and work sheets sufficient to perform one inspection of each Post is mailed upon request to each Department Headquarters in April. Where State Inspectors require an additional supply, they are available upon request. It is the duty of the State Commander to follow up on discrepancies.

Financial Reports & Budgets

One of the major duties of the State Quartermaster, as outlined in Section 518 of the National Manual of Procedure, is the preparation and submission of properly prepared financial reports and budgets. A certain amount of leeway is allowed in the preparation of these documents but the Manual is very specific in requiring that they be submitted promptly and accurately.

Prepared forms are distributed to State Quartermasters prior to the end of each quarter. While the use of these forms is preferred, a State Quartermaster has the privilege of preparing his own report, as long as the information required on the National form is provided.

Formation, Chartering & Instituting of VFW Posts

Pertinent points to organizing new VFW Posts:

1. Only the Commander-in-Chief can authorize a charter for a new Post.
2. Charter application must contain the names of 35 eligible veterans of which 25 must be new members.
3. A member may transfer from one Post to another provided the following conditions are met: 1) completion of the application as prescribed in Section 102 of the Manual of Procedure, 2) signing a Member Declaration, and 3) acceptance by the Post.
4. No new Post shall bear the name of a living person nor adopt the name already adopted by any other Post in the Department.
5. A Post shall not be instituted unless 25, or more, qualified members are present for the institution.
6. Posts shall be instituted within 60 days of the date the charter is authorized.
7. The charter of a new Post shall remain open 90 days from the date of institution of a Post.
8. The official date of charter for a Post is the date it is instituted.

Procedure in Issuance of Charters

A new procedure has been developed in the issuance of charters for new Posts. Under the new system:

1. A letter is addressed to the Post Quartermaster about two weeks prior to the expiration of the 90 day charter period, informing him that the charter period is due to close and instructing him to make up and submit his dues report covering all previously unreported members just as soon as the charter period expires.
2. About one week following the close of the 90 day charter period, an alphabetical print-out of names of members, including transfers, is mailed to the Post Commander and Post Quartermaster. A cover letter requests him to certify the list, making such corrections and/or additions as necessary, and return it in a self-addressed, stamped envelope. He is asked to return the list in 15 days.
3. When certification is received, and corrections and/or additions verified, the charter is engrossed and mailed to the Post Commander. If additional names are included, a reasonable time is allowed for reports to clear so that verification can be made. If questions still remain, further correspondence is required.
4. The charter is not engrossed until the certified list is returned and verified from National Headquarters records.

The State Adjutant receives a copy of all correspondence and is kept informed as to the problems encountered. He is also informed as to any changes in official information and is notified when the charter is mailed.

Some of the problems we have encountered in the issuance of the charters include:

1. **No dues payment reports received until long after the date of institution.** The Post Quartermaster should be assisted in making up his report. This should be ready for submission at the time of institution or immediately thereafter.
2. **Delay in submitting subsequent reports.** For obvious reasons, the Post Quartermaster must be instructed to submit a report at least once a month. Members names cannot be included on the charter if they have not been reported. This includes paid-up members transferring from another Post and transferred life members.
3. **Charter periods extending into a new dues year.** If, for instance, a Post is instituted in May, the charter period would expire in August. The Post may, in addition to its members for the current year, include on its charter members reported for the next year.

Cancellation of Post Charter

Charters of VFW Posts may be cancelled under the provisions outlined in Sections 211 and 212 of the Congressional Charter and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

Before cancelling the charter of a Post, under Section 211, Congressional Charter and By-Laws, the Commander-in-Chief will suspend the charter, giving the Post an opportunity to appeal the suspension and possible revocation of charter.

The Commander-in-Chief may declare a Post defunct and its charter forfeited for failing to pay Department and

National dues on a minimum of ten members by February 1, under the provision of Section 212 of the National By-Laws.

Suspension of Post Charter

The State Commander may suspend the charter of a Post for a period of 30 days or more (not to exceed 90 days) for failure to comply with lawful orders and/or for violation of the laws and usages of the organization. The State Commander must notify the Commander-in-Chief of such action within 48 hours.

Voluntary Surrender of Charter

A Post may surrender its charter providing all members in good standing of the Post at the time are notified at least 20 days in advance of the proposed action and the proposition is voted on and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a designated meeting where such action is considered.

Section 210 of the Congressional Charter and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure covers the requirements for such action.

Visitations—National Officers

Invitations to National Officers must be forwarded through channels to the Adjutant General with approval of the State Commander. This applies to all National Officers, and unless the above is complied with, invitations will not be given consideration.

Policy and Instructions for Conditional Donation of Military Equipment, Ceremonial Rifles, and Blank Ammunition to Veterans Organizations

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Public Law 106-65 (10 USC § 4683) allows for the conditional donation of M1 rifles to eligible organizations for use by that organization for funeral ceremonies of a member or former member of the armed forces, and for ceremonial purposes. The rifle, U.S. caliber .30 M1 (Garand), is currently the only ceremonial rifle being donated. The weapon is safe to fire blank ammunition.
- b. Public Law 100-456 (10 USC § 2572) authorizes the conditional donation of certain types of military combat equipment no longer needed by the military department concerned to approved organizations and entities for memorial or historical static display.
- c. Due to limited availability, military equipment conditionally donated for display is limited to one piece. However, rifles donated to any one Post or Chapter is limited to no more than 15 rifles.
- d. The replacements or exchange of ceremonial rifles is authorized on a one for one basis if the organization's weapons have been destroyed by fire or flood, lost through theft, or are unserviceable beyond repair.
- e. Display equipment and ceremonial rifles remain the property of the United States government and cannot be borrowed, loaned, sold, transferred, or given to anyone else

2. APPLICATION & PROCEDURE FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT OR CEREMONIAL RIFLES

- a. A written, formal request must be completed and signed by the current *Post Commander, Adjutant, or Quartermaster*, one of who needs to be the contact person. Include that contact person's mailing address (street number) and phone number, not the Post's. Address the request to the Adjutant General, VFW National HQ, 406 W. 34th St., Kansas City, MO 64111.

If the request is for military display equipment, include the type of equipment desired and the intended display site.

If the request is for rifles, include the number desired, the intended use of the weapons, and the number of active organization members. If the request is for replacement rifles, include the manufacturer and serial numbers of the rifles on hand and the quantity of rifles desired. The approved request is forwarded by VFW National Headquarters to the US Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command (LCMC) for processing.

- b. Upon receipt of an approved application for military equipment or ceremonial rifles, TACOM will provide the requesting organization with a self-explanatory checklist and the specified forms. These documents require the signature of the Post Commander, Adjutant, or Quartermaster. Some forms require a notary public endorsement. An exterior photograph of the organization's building, if applicable, is also required.
- c. Return the requirements within 60 days to TACOM or contact them for an extension when completing the eligibility requirements. Otherwise, the request is closed for non-response and your organization will have to reapply.
- d. The issue of rifles at no cost is based upon an organization meeting the specific requirements of the law and policy that govern this program along with the availability of funds. TACOM cannot make this determination until the review of an organization's qualification documentation is completed.

- e. If your organization was previously issued M1 Garand rifles and they are not functioning properly, the Post is required to have a licensed gun dealer or armorer certify the serviceability to fire blank ammunition for each weapon in question. They must provide a report listing by model, manufacturer, and serial number, what is wrong with each rifle and the cost to fix it. TACOM will then determine if the cost to repair exceeds the cost to refurbish and authorize replacement of the rifle(s). If not, the Post is responsible for the cost to repair. Care and maintenance of the conditionally loaned rifles is the responsibility of the post.

3. STORAGE AND SECURITY OF CEREMONIAL RIFLES

- a. Storage of the ceremonial rifles is at the discretion of the Post as long as you comply with local/state/federal regulations. It is not recommended to store the weapons at a private residence.
- b. It is recommended to maintain a log showing serial numbers of weapons and names of the individuals whenever rifles are checked out and in for use by your organization.
- c. The *Post Commander, Adjutant or Quartermaster* is required to sign a notarized certificate regarding storage and security as indicated above.

4. DISPOSITION OF DONATED RIFLES

- a. If for any reason it may become necessary for the Post to dispose of, or to return donated rifles, disposition instructions must be requested in writing, from the *Post Commander, Adjutant, or Quartermaster*, to TACOM, Attn: AMSTA-LCL-SMD, M/S: 419D, 6501 East 11 Mile Road, Warren, Michigan 48397-5000. NEVER return any weapons to TACOM.
- b. Shipping costs for the return of rifles is at the expense of the Post.
- c. The Post is provided with the information to return the rifles with receipt requested to Anniston, Alabama. Two known carriers who can ship weapons are the U.S. Postal Service or UPS. Please contact them to get their requirements for returning the rifles. The organization may have to go through a licensed gun dealer to have the rifles packaged and sent to Anniston Army Depot. Let the carrier know the rifles are Army property and are being returned to an US Army depot. NEVER return any weapons to TACOM. The Army does not endorse any specific mail carrier. Therefore, you can choose any, but please ensure you comply with local and state laws.
- d. A copy of the serial numbers for the rifles along with a document number assigned by TACOM should be listed and packed in the box. If the rifles are split into more than one box, this information should be included in all of the boxes.
- e. After Anniston receives the rifles and they return the receipt to you, make a copy and send the receipt, along with a list of the returned rifles to TACOM. TACOM will send a letter absolving your organization of all liability for the returned ceremonial rifles

5. BLANK AMMUNITION & CLIPS

- a. A written, formal request must be completed and signed by the current Post Commander, Adjutant or Quartermaster, one of who needs to be the contact person. Include that contact person's residential mailing address (street number) and phone number, not the Post's. Address the request to the Adjutant General, VFW National HQ, 406 W. 34th St., Kansas City, MO 64111. The approved request is forwarded by VFW National Headquarters to the Commander, US Army Joint Munitions Command, ATTN: AMSJM-CDS (Dawn Folland), 1 Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, IL 61299-6000.

- b. The .30 blank ammo (1,240 rounds) is sent in 2 metal cans in a wooden box. The quantity is limited to two boxes and provided free with no shipping charges.
- c. Between 6-8 weeks after Rock Island processes the request, the ammo is shipped FEDEX Ground from Lake City Army Ammunition Plant, Independence, MO. The recipient will be notified of the tentative ship out date by letter from the US Army Joint Munitions Command in Rock Island, IL. Normal FEDEX delivery is between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Prefer the ammunition be shipped to a residence and not to the post. A signature is required upon delivery. If absolutely necessary to be delivered to the post, an Officer's signature is required. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- d. Blank ammunition is authorized for use in United States Army issued ceremonial weapons ONLY. Ammo is not authorized to posts who receive rifles through any other source. The use of ammo obtained from sources other than the US Army Joint Munitions Command is prohibited as it may result in damage to the rifles. More importantly, it could cause harm or serious injury to the user.

NOTE: US Army Joint Munitions Command will contact TACOM Army Donations Office to confirm that the organization's rifles are from the program and all records are current.

6. SLINGS AND REPAIR PARTS

Slings and repair parts are not provided through TACOM. Your organization is required to obtain slings and repair parts from commercial sources. Two known sources are: Amherst Arms, PO Box 1457, Englewood, FL 34295, phone no. (941) 475-2020. Their website is www.amherst-depot.com. Another source is Fulton Armory, 8725 Bollman Pl. #1, Savage, MD 20763. Their phone no. is (301) 490-9485. Their website is www.fulton-armory.com. VFW National Headquarters and the US Army does not endorse any specific commercial source for rifle accessories.

Statement Of Policy

Operation, Management & Control of Clubs and/or Canteens

The purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational.

To preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members.

To assist worthy comrades.

To perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans.

To maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws.

To foster true patriotism.

To maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom.

And to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies whomsoever.

The operation, management and control of clubs and/or canteens were not envisioned in the purposes of our organization as described above both in our Congressional Charter, National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. The first and foremost consideration of Posts shall be to the objects of the VFW listed above. VFW clubs and/or canteens shall be of secondary interest and concern and compatible with our stated purposes.

Rules and Regulations and Management Guides for the operation of Post sponsored clubs and/or canteens have been adopted by some Departments in compliance with state and local regulations and the applicable mandates of Section 708 and 709 of our National By-Laws which address incorporation and control of units. Also, many Posts have incorporated the above in their By-Laws or adopted Rules and Regulations for the operation, management and control of their canteens and/or clubs in accordance with the above.

Although differing laws at the local and state levels preclude the promulgation of universally acceptable rules and regulations, certain principles are essential for good management and proper control of Post sponsored clubs and/or canteens and certain policies are mandatory to insure total compliance with the National By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars both as to incorporation and control of units and to be in keeping with the objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In adopting rules and regulations for the operation, management and control of clubs and/or canteens, the following provisions of the National By-Laws must be adhered to:

Any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or in behalf of a Post, incorporated separately from the Post or unincorporated, shall be at all times under the direct control of the Post and all funds derived therefrom shall be at all times under the direct control of the Post.

All money, property or assets of any kind or nature, as well as all books and records owned, held or used, by any such activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of a Post, shall be the property of the Post and must be placed in the care and custody of the Post Quartermaster.

No Post and no activity, clubroom or holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of any Post, may own any property jointly or in common with any individual, firm, partnership association, corporation or other business or charitable entity including veterans organizations nor may they participate in any arrangement whereby the funds of such Post or activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or in its behalf are expended on property held by another entity for the joint use of such Post, and other individuals, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations or other business or charitable entities, including veterans organizations.

VFW Rules & Officer Responsibility

Introduction

When the Veterans of Foreign Wars was first organized, it was primarily an association of individual groups all working toward common goals of veterans legislation, veterans benefits, veterans rehabilitation and patriotism. Administration was comparatively simple since the only problems were those of getting information to the members and getting them to agree as to what was to be done.

These **still** are our major goals but the interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have broadened and activities on the local -- Post -- level have grown far beyond the original purpose.

Youth Activities -- Civic Betterment -- Humanitarian Projects -- Community Service -- these all take a tremendous amount of individual volunteer effort and a lot of money. In the raising of that money -- and in providing recreation and social activities for our own members -- our Posts have branched into activities which have multiplied administrative problems far beyond what our founders could possibly have dreamed.

These problems are compounded by the fact that a VFW Post is almost a pure democracy and nearly all of its programs depend upon volunteers. Decisions are made by vote of people who are completely informed on the subject and are carried out by volunteers and amateurs. As a result, if there is not a set of hard and fast rules to follow -- and a clear understanding of fields of responsibility and limits of authority -- there are going to be misunderstandings and irritations which create dissension and detract from the purpose of the organization.

This problem has been recognized and very sincere efforts have been made -- and continue to be made -- by the National and Department Organizations to provide rules and guidance for Post Officers and committeemen in carrying out the duties of their particular field of responsibility.

The **master set of rules** for the guidance of all Post activities is the VFW National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. The By-Laws are the basic rules -- the Manual of Procedure goes into further detail. These govern all activities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and are inflexible. They are worded very clearly, and they mean just what they say.

Because of the fact that state laws differ and there is a wide variance between Departments in their organizational make-up, most Departments have adopted **Department By-Laws** which apply only to Posts within that Department. These must not conflict with the National By-Laws nor can they permit anything which is prohibited by the National By-Laws.

In most cases, Department By-Laws deal with policies to be followed at the Department or District level and do not attempt to go into detail in the operation of the Post. They can impose **more** restrictions on Posts but never **less** than are provided in the National By-Laws.

Naturally, a basic set of rules cannot contain much detail nor can it specifically provide for every possible contingency in every Post -- from the little 25 member Post which holds a meeting once a month and lives off its

dues -- to the thousand member Post which owns its own home and conducts dozens of activities in as many different fields.

For that reason, **specialized** rules must be formulated and adopted to cover specific activities. The more complicated the activity, the more specific the rules must be.

These rules seek to prevent Posts from falling into the common pitfalls of poor planning, deficit financing, loss of control, and illegal operations.

Since the By-Laws are designed to cover a wide range of operations, they cannot -- and do not attempt to -- specifically detail every move of the Post. They are something like a building code. They establish certain minimum requirements but they permit you to build a lot of different kinds of houses.

As a Post grows in size and activity, there are certain steps it either should take or must take to protect itself and its officers and avoid future arguments and misunderstandings which can create problems and dissension.

Incorporation

The first steps that any Post must take before it branches into any type of community project, social activity or financial undertaking is incorporation. Most Posts are already incorporated -- the rest should be.

There are two general sets of rules which cover incorporation of a VFW Post: the laws of the individual state, and the National By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (Section 708). To be recognized, your corporation must comply with both and must be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for review.

In just about every Department, incorporation of a Post is a comparatively simple matter since forms which meet the requirements of state law and the National VFW are available upon request from Department Headquarters. If they are not available, I would strongly urge that such forms be prepared, approved by the appropriate state official and the National VFW and reproduced for use by the Posts.

Incorporation is necessary for several purposes. To begin with, in many States, the Post must be incorporated before it can hold property in its own name and before any type of liquor license may be issued to it.

Secondly -- and perhaps just as important to the officers of the Post -- the act of incorporation takes individual responsibility away from the Post Officers and places it upon the Post itself. The individual officers of an incorporated Post cannot be sued for financial obligations of the Post.

It is the general policy of the National Veterans of Foreign Wars that approval will not be given to separate Holding Corporations or Club Corporations. Some of these have been approved in the past and conceivably will be permitted to exist under that approval, but there will be no more in the future. (Unless changes in laws or regulations make a change in policy necessary.)

There is no particular advantage in the pyramiding of corporations. The Post incorporation is sufficient to protect all its operations -- **if those operations are kept under control of the Post**. The general purpose of a separate Club Corporation or Holding Corporation is to take control **away** from the members of the Post. Usually it has not been done for any dishonest purpose but in the belief that more efficient operation will result from tighter control by a smaller group of people. It is the contention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that sufficient control may be exercised -- without sacrifice of democratic processes -- by the adoption of Post By-Laws and rules.

An exception to the "no separate corporation" rule may be made in the case of sponsorship of large-scale "one-shot" activities such as an air show, a community celebration, a Department Convention, etc. It is sometimes better in these cases to incorporate the individual activity for ease in obtaining insurance, settling financial obligations, etc. These corporations have a limited existence and are dissolved after their purpose is served.

Post By-Laws

Every Post operating any type of activity -- particularly a Club or Post Home -- should adopt Post By-Laws. Section 202 of the National Manual of Procedure requires that such By-Laws be submitted to the State Commander and Commander-in-Chief for review.

The **Post By-Laws** can cover the gaps left in the National By-Laws and Department By-Laws and Rules. Where the former are the **building code**, the Post By-Laws are the **house plan**. They show just what you are trying to accomplish.

The National or the Department Organizations can furnish you with a Post By-Law template. However, they are the responsibility of the Post and may be set up in the way best suited to the type of operation contemplated by the Post. They **cannot** permit anything prohibited by National or Department rules, nor can they take away any of the responsibilities or authority of Post Officers. They **can** set up general procedures and policies within the Post.

Post By-Laws may provide for the establishment of certain standing committees within the Post, state how they are to be selected and the limits of their powers and duties; they may give authority for the sponsorship of recurring activities; limit the expenditures of funds; establish the procedure for carrying out certain objectives; and provide for their own amendment.

Generally speaking, they set up the **policies** of the Post and provide for carrying them out. They protect the member against ill-conceived or hasty actions since they generally provide for prior notice and a 2/3 vote for amendment, and they promote a clearer understanding of operating procedures.

Matters of **policy** are covered in the By-Laws, **details of management** of a Post Home or Club are left to the Post Club or Home regulations.

Club Regulations

These, again, are left to the Post for adoption although they must not conflict with the National By-Laws, Department Post Home Rules or Post By-Laws. Suggested forms are available although they are not designed for adoption in their entirety. The variance between Posts make it impossible to adopt a standard form for all Posts. Some operate entire buildings with activities scheduled every day of the week; others may own or rent very modest quarters and only be open occasionally. Some have a full-time paid staff of employees while others may operate entirely on volunteer help.

The Club regulations cover the details of operation. They outline the responsibilities and limits of authority of the Post membership, the House Committee, the Club Manager, and the guests. They cover opening and closing hours, decorum, enforcement of rules, hiring of paid help, financial authority and keeping of records.

For any Post operating a Club or Post Home, local regulations are a **must**. They will save many hours of argument, and remove most causes for misunderstanding and dissension.

Officer Responsibility & Limits of Authority

If every Post Officer were familiar with his duties and responsibilities and their limitations -- and carried out his duties to the best of his ability -- there would be very few squabbles within a Post and none which would require outside intervention. The National Manual of Procedure specifically lists certain duties for each officer and, in the normal course of events, this would be sufficient. However, the complex nature of the operations of many Posts make it necessary that we look beyond a mere listing of duties and fully understand the reasons for the division of authority. In this way we can apply them to the unusual situations which are bound to crop up from time to time.

The **Post meeting** is the center of all Post activities. Every member has a right to attend all meetings and has a voice in their proceedings. It is at the Post meeting that the Post adopts its By-Laws, its Club Regulations, decides its policies, and distributes responsibilities. Within practical limitations, the Post meeting is supreme to the Post Officers, committees and employees. The membership present may overrule decisions of the Post Commander or House Committee; they may approve expenditures, set policies, and delegate authority. The Post meeting cannot take any action contrary to the National or Department By-Laws or rules or in conflict with its own By-Laws.

It is important to understand that there **are** limitations on the authority of the Post. A member has the right to appeal any Post action to the District Commander (Section 109 of the Manual of Procedure), who will determine whether that action was proper. In extreme cases, a member can go to the courts if he feels that his rights have been abused by an action of the Post. The Post cannot take **unreasonable** actions at a meeting. For instance, it could not refuse payment of a legitimate bill for an item authorized for purchase at a previous meeting. It cannot direct an officer or member to do anything contrary to VFW regulations or public law. It **cannot** take away any of the authority given to individual officers through the National By-Laws.

Ideally, the Post meeting makes the rules and sets the policy for the Post; other levels of authority carry them out.

The **Post Commander** is the key officer of the Post. He, alone, represents the **judicial** branch of the organization and also has some of the responsibilities of the **executive** branch. He presides at all meetings, enforces the rules, appoints committees not otherwise provided for, and makes certain that the other officers and committeemen perform their duties.

His authority extends to the Post Home or Club to the extent of enforcing the rules of the Post and the National and Department VFW, and public laws. He represents the authority of the Post between meetings, and his voice is that of the Post membership. He sees that the Post Trustees conduct their audits, that the Post Quartermaster is bonded, and that the House Committee properly supervises the activities of the Post Home.

His authority also is limited according to the rules of the organization and the bounds of common sense. He is in no sense a dictator. He cannot order nor permit the breaking of laws nor can he supersede the recognized authority of other officers or committees. He could not, for instance, order the Club Manager to keep the club-rooms open after hours, nor could he direct the Post Quartermaster to pay an unauthorized bill.

He should be familiar with all activities of the Post. He should sit in with the Trustees at their audits, or, at least, have a sufficient knowledge of their procedure to know whether they are doing their job. He should attend the meetings of the House Committee, calling to their attention any discrepancies he may have observed or complaints he may have received. He must know that, when he signs a check, it is in payment of a legitimate expenditure.

He is the arbitrator of arguments and the judge in disputes. As a general rule, his decisions are considered correct until over-ruled by the Post meeting, the District, State Commander or Commander-in-Chief.

The **Post Quartermaster** has certain definite responsibilities and duties. He is the responsible officer for all Post funds and property and his signature validates all checks. He keeps the fiscal records for the Post and has the duty of overseeing all financial transactions. He must be bonded to the Post for all funds under his control.

In the case of a large-scale Club operation, it often becomes impractical or impossible for the Post Quartermaster to physically handle all the funds or to personally keep the detailed records of operation. It is not uncommon in these cases to require that the Club Manager or a hired bookkeeper keep a separate set of club books, subject to the control of the Quartermaster and reported to the Quartermaster at regular intervals.

The Quartermaster is the **responsible** Post Officer in financial matters -- not necessarily the Post book-

keeper. In a large corporation the treasurer does not physically handle the bookkeeping obligations but he is responsible that they are done properly, efficiently and accurately. This may also be true of the Post Quartermaster, depending upon the Post By-Laws and Club regulations. In any case, he must be familiar with all books of record and is responsible for all required Federal and State reports and payments.

Remember that the Post cannot take away any of the authority of the Post Quartermaster although he may be relieved of some of the **work**.

The Quartermaster only pays bills which are authorized by Post action or under Post rules. He cannot refuse to pay a legitimate and properly authorized bill except for a lack of funds. Neither can he be forced to pay one which is not properly authorized.

Quite often a controversy arises between the Quartermaster and Club Manager as to responsibility for Club funds. Sometimes a fine point arises which must be arbitrated. As a rule of thumb, the Quartermaster keeps his nose out of the cash register except for checking purposes, and the Manager hides no transactions from the Quartermaster. The Quartermaster does have the right, and the duty, to determine that all reports are correct and that all funds are handled properly. He does not have the right to assume managerial responsibilities.

The **Post Trustees** duties are probably the most misunderstood of any of the Post Officers. They are primarily the **watchdogs** of the Post funds. They make certain that no one has his fingers in the till. They audit the Post funds regularly -- at least once each quarter.

While the National By-Laws are silent on this point, it would seem logical that the Trustees also have authority and responsibility concerning the proper handling of funds. It is only reasonable that their authority should not be limited to catching a dishonest person. Equally important should be the prevention of dishonesty. Where funds are guarded carelessly or records are kept inefficiently, the Trustees should call attention to this and make every effort to correct it.

The Trustees duties extend to **every** operation of the Post. Their audits must cover all activities, including the clubrooms, the bar, bingo, or any other source of income or financial transactions.

Again, it is not always entirely necessary that the Trustees do their own investigating and conduct their own audits. In most cases, the Trustees are not qualified accountants, particularly where large amounts of cash are involved and the operations are especially complex. Many Posts employ a private firm of accountants for the purpose of an audit. This is to be encouraged rather than discouraged. In these cases, the auditors report to the Trustees and the Trustees make certain that the audit is conducted correctly.

A quarterly audit of all funds and accounts is an absolute necessity. If the Trustees do not function in a proper manner, the Commander may deem it an emergency situation and appoint an auditing committee on his own initiative.

Regardless of the size of the Post, a quarterly audit is mandatory. Failure to conduct one may result in the cancellation of the Post Quartermaster bond and will take away all voting privileges at District and Department Conventions.

The Trustees do not have any authority over the management of the Post Home, nor is property held in their name in an incorporated Post. They cannot serve on any committee having to do with the handling of Post funds, and cannot therefore serve as members of the House Committee, Bingo Committee, etc. There is nothing to keep a Trustee from serving as a volunteer worker or in an appointive capacity where Post funds are not handled.

The **House Committee** functions only in a Post which operates a Post Home or Club. This committee may be selected in anyway the Post determines but it is generally considered advisable that it be elected by the Post membership, with the members serving staggered terms, on the order of Post Trustees. This lessens the

possibility of one certain group gaining and retaining control of the Club.

The duties of the House Committee should be laid out in the Post By-Laws and/or Club regulations so there is no misunderstanding of their powers and responsibilities. The purpose of the committee is to act on behalf of the Post in making certain that the club is run in an efficient, reputable and legal manner and that the rules of the Veterans of Foreign Wars are adhered to.

It is the general procedure for the House Committee to hire all employees, set their salaries, and issue necessary instructions and orders to the Club Manager. The committee usually meets at least once a month for the purpose of discussing problems, taking inventory, studying financial reports, and in general, acting as an advisory, supervisory and disciplinary board. No member of the House Committee should ever be permitted to act as Club Manager or as a paid employee of the Club.

The House Committee is generally given authority to suspend the Club privileges of any member and to establish and enforce, through the Club Manager, rules of decorum and behavior. They usually, also, have the authority to suspend or discharge the Club Manager or any employee for good and sufficient cause. In any disciplinary action, discharge or suspension, there should be provision for an appeal to the Post meeting.

The committee cannot make or enforce any rules contrary to the rules of the Department, public law, or the lawful instructions of the Post. If it is elected from the Post floor, the committee is directly responsible to the Post floor and makes its reports to the Post at meetings. Refusal to comply with the rules and instructions of the Post is grounds for removal of any or all members of the House Committee.

The **Club Manager** is directly responsible to the House Committee for the management of the Post Clubrooms. He has the direct responsibility for supervising employees, enforcing rules, and accounting for receipts and expenditures. He must have enough authority to permit him to do so with a reasonable degree of freedom from interference. He must keep his accounts in such a manner as to justify all expenditures and verify all receipts. He must make reports to the Post Quartermaster and to the House Committee. He enforces the rules but he does not make them.

The Club Manager keeps all payroll records, recording amount of pay to each individual and withholding the proper amount of Federal and State Income Taxes and FICA Taxes. Either he or the Post Quartermaster must make the necessary Federal and State reports and payments for withholding taxes, Social Security and Unemployment Compensation.

The Club Manager has the right to appeal any decision of the House Committee to the Post floor for arbitration. Post members should, however, be cautious in overruling the actions of its own representatives on the House Committee, particularly in the case of frequent appeals. A dishonest Club Manager generally has no problem in bringing in enough friendly votes at a meeting to uphold his appeal.

In summary, it must be remembered that the Veterans of Foreign Wars itself is supreme in any dispute. The Department rules and the Post By-Laws and rules outline the way the Post and the Club must be run. The Post, in **all** cases, is above the Club. The Club is merely an activity of the Post and must be treated as such. **In no case is it a separate entity.**

When a Post is chartered it is granted a license or franchise for the use of the name of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the carrying out of programs which are assumed to be of value to the entire organization. At any time that a Club or other activity is managed in such a manner as to harm the good name and reputation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the right to use the name can be revoked.

As a general rule, the operations of VFW Posts and their Clubrooms in the Departments are a credit to the organization and a source of pride to its membership. Through proper adherence to the rules of the VFW and the duties and responsibilities of our officers, we can avoid the many misunderstandings and bitter arguments which can break the finest Post.

Suggested guidelines of By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation are available from Department Headquarters.

Duties & Responsibilities of the District Commander

There is **no one** in the Veterans of Foreign Wars with a tougher job than the District Commander. And there is **NO ONE** who can have a greater effect on the success or failure of the Posts in the District.

The **National** and the **Department** organizations have the responsibility of administration, direction and development of programs and activities. and must come from the person who is close enough for personal contact -- **the District Commander**.

A successful Commander must be **enthusiastic ... dedicated ... well-informed ... sympathetic ... and, above all ... available!**

The National VFW recognizes the importance of the District Commander and provides you with informational material on every activity and every program. You will receive copies of all promotional and informational material sent to Post Commanders.

The magazine, , your Department publications, General Orders and other mailings **must** be **studied** and **absorbed** if you are to keep one jump ahead of your Post Commanders.

You must also have a copy of and be familiar with the VFW By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, and your own Department By-Laws and rules. A copy of Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Procedure will aid you in running your own meetings and settling arguments in Post meetings.

As a **good Commander** you **must**:

1. **Appoint a Chairman** for every VFW activity and make sure the Chairman is doing the job. If not, remove the Chairman and appoint a new one. A Chairman must know the program, be interested in it, promote it actively, and be able to sell it to others.
2. **Use Your District Officers.** You can't do everything yourself. Assign duties to them and make them feel they are needed.
3. **Keep in Constant Contact** with your Posts through regular letters, bulletins, telephone calls, personal notes and visits. Know every Post Commander by first name and familiarize yourself with the interests and background of your Post Commanders. Make certain that your Posts conduct regular audits, hold regular meetings, conduct membership drives, order and sell Poppies, and carry out the programs of the VFW.
4. **Visit Each of Your Posts at least Once.** There is no substitute for personal contact. The District Commander should be the **FIRST** person the Post Commander thinks of when help or advise is needed.

5. **Hold Regular District Meetings** -- well planned and well conducted.

A meeting must be interesting and educational or you won't have attendance at the next one. Here is where the Post Officers get their direct information and their inspiration. In many cases, these will be the ONLY higher level meetings some of the Post Officers and members will attend during the year. The impression they receive here will determine their attitude toward the entire Veterans of Foreign Wars.

6. **Schedule and Hold Instructional Meetings**, whether they are in connection with a regular meeting or in local areas within the District. If the Posts won't come to you, bring the programs to them. Send out notices well in advance and call the Post Commander ahead of time to remind him to be present.
7. **Help Your Weak Posts.** Show a concern for their problems, assign a junior officer to help with their membership drives, suggest programs and methods of carrying them out, encourage other Posts to help their weak neighbors.
8. **Organize New Posts** . . . Every District has some areas where the VFW is not represented.
9. **Work with the Auxiliary.** You won't get off the ground in your Poppy, Community Activities, Voice of Democracy or many other programs without their help. Treat them as partners -- not subordinates.
10. **Remember that You are an Officer of Your Department.**
YOU represent the VFW as far as the Posts in your District are concerned.

Here are some things you shouldn't do:

1. **Don't Knock Your National Organization or Your Department.**
You can't keep respect for your District if you make the members feel that the rest of the VFW is bad.
2. **Don't Embarrass Your Post Officers.** Treat them with respect and courtesy, even if they are way off base. Don't laugh off a silly question. It's a serious one to the person who asked it.
3. **Don't be Afraid to Admit You Don't Know Something.** A wrong answer is much worse than none at all.
4. **Don't Get Discouraged.** You'll have some disappointments and discouragements but you will accomplish something if you keep trying. Once your Posts know you are sincere they will overlook your shortcomings and appreciate your success.

Remember that the future Department and National leaders are coming from your ranks. Conduct your affairs just as though you intend some day to be **Commander-in-Chief!**

Tips for the District Commander

History of Districts

During the early years of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Posts were directly responsible to the National Organization. The first mention of a "Department" appears in the National By-Laws following the 1920 National Encampment (convention).

Districts appear to have come into existence in an evolutionary process, probably because of the need for an intermediate body between the Post and the Department. The first mention of "Districts" appears in the 1931 By-Laws which provided that District representatives on the Department Council of Administration be elected at the Department Encampment. Districts finally gained a section of their own in the By-Laws following the 1938 National Encampment but were denied any legislative or taxing power. It was only with the complete revision of By-Laws in 1948 that Districts gained full recognition under a special article devoted only to that subject. Jurisdiction over Districts is given to the Department, with their boundaries determined by the Department and their charters issued by the Department.

Districts have flourished and exist in every Department except the District of Columbia, Alaska, and Hawaii. Their popularity probably stems from the flexibility of their boundaries to meet specific conditions, plus the fact that the National By-Laws grant them representation on the Department Council of Administration.

Districts have earned a very definite place in the VFW structure. Their size is such as to permit direct supervision of Posts within their jurisdiction. Not the least of their value is the pride, loyalty and comradeship developed among the Posts within their boundaries. Anyone who has attempted to re-district a Department knows of the fierce loyalties of a Post to its District.

Your Responsibilities

The National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure give very little space to the purpose of the District or to the duties and responsibilities of the Commander. The District Commander is told to preside at meetings, appoint necessary officers and to "perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office." The District Commander is also expected to promote schools of instruction for Post Officers, to act as liaison between the Post and the Department, and to do "whatever may be for the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

In practice, of course, the District Commander has a great deal of responsibility, and the success or failure of the Department is strongly dependent upon the effectiveness of the District Officers and chairmen.

The District Commander who properly performs all the duties assigned to him is the busiest man in the VFW. In addition to representing his District on the Department Council of Administration, he is expected to maintain constant contact with his Posts, promote the programs of the VFW, coordinate the efforts of the Posts, create enthusiasm, arbitrate Post squabbles, instruct and advise Post Officers, assist weak Posts, organize new Posts and establish Post territories. He must also plan and conduct District meetings, organize District functions, carry out membership drives, and keep the Department informed of what he is doing.

All this must be done without a permanent office, without a paid staff and, in most cases, without an adequate allowance for expenses.

Only through proper planning and organization, through full use of your subordinate elected and appointed officers, and through a thorough understanding of the rules, regulations and programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, can you achieve the goals you have set for yourself as District Commander.

Your Appointments

The officers, committee chairmen, and other positions to be filled by appointment vary greatly with the Department By-Laws, District By-Laws, customs and precedents in effect in your District. You may be **required** to make certain appointments but you generally are not restricted in making additional appointments.

You are required to appoint an **Adjutant**. Your wisdom in selecting him can directly affect your accomplishments. His value extends far beyond his ability to record the minutes of District meetings. He can aid you with your correspondence, help you arrange your travels, advise you on procedures, plan and arrange your meetings and functions, and even give you a friendly pat on the back when you need it.

A well-informed, dedicated and active **Service Officer** is a must in every District. Your Post Service Officers serve one of the most important functions in the aims and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They need the guidance of a readily-available person in their own area to advise and assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.

The appointment of a District **Inspector** and/or a District **Chief of Staff** depends upon the structure of the Department. Where provision is made for such appointments, they must be knowledgeable, available and energetic. They can take a lot of the work off your shoulders.

An **officer of the day, bugler, guard, color bearers** and **color guards** add a great deal to a District meeting or function and certainly set a good example for the Posts in your District. If such officers are appointed, they should be sharp, know their duties and the ritual of the VFW. Sloppy ritualistic work is an embarrassment to everyone.

A **Committee Chairman** should be appointed to match each of the committees of the Department. He will be expected to work with the Department Chairman in the promotion and advancement of his particular activity. This should include, but is not necessarily limited to, **Americanism, Buddy Poppy, veterans employment and training, community activities, hospital, legislative, life membership, loyalty day, membership, National Home, safety, Voice of Democracy and youth activities**. In most cases, a chairman is sufficient. A large committee is not necessary since the District Chairman should be working directly with the Department Chairman and with you.

Preparing for District Meetings

While the National By-Laws only require a District to hold an annual Convention, it is an almost universal practice to schedule one or more meetings during the year in addition to the Convention. Such meetings serve a very useful purpose in creating enthusiasm, exchanging ideas, instructing Post Officers in their duties, and familiarizing members with the programs of the VFW.

To accomplish its purpose, a District meeting must be well planned and well carried out. The following reminders may help you in doing so:

1. Set the time, place and date at a previous District meeting. Posts wishing to host the meeting should be required to be present at the previous meeting to confirm their invitation and must be able to assure the members that proper facilities are available and that proper arrangements will be made.
2. If the Auxiliary meets at the same time, notify the President immediately of the decision.
3. Notify the Department Adjutant of your meeting schedule.

4. Notify, by letter, all District Officers and all Post Commanders of the time, place and date of the next meeting.
5. Make certain that District colors, the Bible, flag, gavel, etc. are present at the meeting.
6. Inform your officers of the part they are to play in the program.
7. Any invited guests should be informed of the time which will be allotted to them. Any guests who ask to appear must provide you in advance with an outline of their purpose in appearing.
8. If a Department representative is assigned, discuss his appearance with him in advance. Tell him what is expected of him; whether he is to deliver a main address, appear on radio or television, will be interviewed by the press, or will be asked to visit the Auxiliary.
9. Obtain all possible information concerning the progress of your Posts from Department Headquarters in advance.
10. Make up your meeting schedule in advance, making note of any particular business to come before the meeting. There is no reason why you cannot have someone primed to make necessary motions.

Running a District Meeting

The order of business of a District Convention or meeting is outlined in Section 1003 of the National Manual of Procedure. This should be used as a guide but is not inflexible. You will probably have a Department representative who must be scheduled on the program and must be worked in somewhere. Don't make him wait until just before the closing ceremonies. You may want to take some action based upon his statements.

Open the meeting on time and keep it moving. If you open the meeting half an hour late, the members will be that much later at the next meeting. Don't let discussions get out of hand. If a matter is brought up which has no place in the meeting, cut off the discussion. Individual Post problems generally have no place on the District floor. They can be solved much better by you as District Commander than they can by vote of the membership.

Proper procedure in conducting a District meeting is essential. You are setting an example for your Posts and you cannot expect them to operate any better than you do yourself. Familiarize yourself with parliamentary procedure and with the By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the VFW. The appointment of a well-qualified member as a parliamentarian can help you, but remember that you are running the meeting, not him.

Your Power & Authority

The National By-Laws gives the District Commander the authority to rule on questions of law and usage and enforcement of rules and regulations. Questions of discipline are not channeled through him but are handled directly between the Post and the Department.

The Department Commander should consult the District Commander on matters concerning his Posts. Quite often, the Department Commander will authorize the District Commander to take actions in his behalf.

The District Commander cannot suspend the charter of a Post nor can he authorize the consolidation of a Post or the revocation of its charter. He can, however, make recommendations and should be consulted by the Department Commander when such actions are contemplated.

Department Council of Administration

The District Commander serves in a dual capacity. In addition to his other responsibilities, he serves as a member of the Department Council of Administration and, as such, is a high ranking officer of the Department. When he appears at a Post meeting he represents the Department as well as the District. He is expected to uphold the actions of the Department and promote its programs.

The Department Council of Administration is in charge of the working interests of the Department between Conventions. It sets the budget, fixes salaries of Department employees, audits accounts and disposes of the property of defunct Posts. As a member of the Council, you have a responsibility to the entire Department, not just your own District. It is extremely important, therefore, that you be fully acquainted with all the workings of the Department - particularly its financial structure.

National Mailings

As District Commander, you are on the mailing list from National Headquarters for just about all the general information distributed from there. You will receive membership mailings, the bulletins on all programs and activities, and a host of other material. Presumably you are on the mailing list of the Department for similar material.

At any time you have a change of address, notify your Department Adjutant **and** the Adjutant General. Identify yourself as District Commander - otherwise you may find that your magazine is going to your new address and your other mail to your old address.

Special National mailings are also made periodically to the District Poppy Chairman, Voice of Democracy Chairman and Youth Activities Chairman. A change in such officers or a change in their address should also be mailed to the Department Adjutant and to the Adjutant General.

Working with Your Posts

In spite of the fact that the Post Commander is automatically provided with a host of information concerning his duties and the programs of the VFW, just so much can be accomplished through the mail. Personal contact is needed to keep the Posts enthused and to clear up misunderstandings. This personal contact must come from the District.

Don't hesitate to use your District Officers to the fullest extent, whether they are elected or appointed. Your Committee Chairmen should stay on top of their activity and know exactly what each Post is doing; and they should be willing and able to give assistance where it is needed.

You, yourself, should know every Post Commander by his first name. He should have enough confidence in you that he comes to YOU with his problems and will listen to your advice.

Work with your weak Posts. They need your help more than do the strong ones. Encourage active Posts to help the weak ones.

If a Post is lacking in leadership, help develop new leadership. Sometimes you will have to work around a poor Commander. All a dead Post needs to revive it is one or two interested members who are willing to work with you. Don't give up on a Post just because it has done nothing in the past. Just one good accomplishment, whether it is a Poppy distribution, a Voice of Democracy or Patriot's Pen sponsorship, will create interest in the Post.

Hold schools of instruction for Post Officers. If they don't come to the schools, bring the schools to them. Make sure the officers understand their duties and responsibilities. Once they know what they are to do and how to do it they will become more active. Encourage the Posts and their officers - don't just chew them out. If the

old members are all apathetic, sign up some new ones, steam them up and turn them loose.

Post Problems

Even active good Posts develop problems. Sometimes these are such that the Post itself cannot solve them without outside help. Factional disagreements can get out of hand and involve even those members who take no side with either group. A little diplomacy can work wonders, if it is applied before the breach becomes too wide.

Post inspections are the best means of finding out what is going on in a Post. Copies of inspection reports are being provided to District. When you receive your copy of the reports, study them carefully, check any discrepancy, and follow them up to be sure that corrective action has been taken where necessary.

Such things as illegal operations of Clubs, issuance of social cards to non-members, gambling in Post Clubrooms, etc., are not to be tolerated. Stop them before they get out of hand.

New Posts

You are in the best position of anyone to know where a new Post can be put in. You can do it yourself or with the help of a few good members. Keep the Department informed of your intentions and your progress. If you need material, just write to your Department Headquarters.

Don't hesitate to organize a new Post just because a Post in a neighboring area objects. The extra interest engendered by a new Post will help them, not hurt them.

The institution of a new Post should be as big an event in your District as a new baby in your own family. The Commanders of other Posts should be invited to bring a delegation to the institution. In some Districts it is customary for each existing Post to present the new Post with a cash donation at the institution. What better way to welcome the new Post into the family?

Don't let a new Post die on the vine. Have someone at each meeting for at least the first six months. Encourage the Post to take an active part in District affairs and make it feel that it belongs.

Leadership

Leadership is primarily the ability to get people to work together toward a common cause. A good leader must create enthusiasm, provide direction, and encourage initiative. He must be able to set his goals, plan their accomplishments, and obtain the cooperation of others in achieving them.

As District Commander, you represent the VFW in your District. The entire organization is judged by your actions, your appearance, and your personality. Likewise, your own membership will be inspired or turned off by the image you convey. It is very important that your personal conduct be above reproach.

Speaking ability is important. Some are born with it. Most of us have to develop it. Nearly anyone can give a good speech if he is sincere, knows what he is talking about, and plans what he is going to say. It is **always** a good idea to plan your talk ahead of time and to prepare notes as reminders of the points you want to emphasize. Unless you are an accomplished humorist, don't try to tell funny stories. Sincerity, enthusiasm and knowledge of your subject will gain you the respect of your audience. A public speaking course might help and certainly will do no harm. No matter what your audience, it deserves the best you have to give.

Plan your travels. Whenever possible, let a Post know when you are coming. Make full use of your subordinate officers. Coordinate their travels with yours. It is inexcusable to have three officers at one Post and none at another.

Keep informed of progress of your Posts and your programs. Read your National and Department communications. Keep in touch with veterans affairs in your area, in your Department and nationally.

Know your people. Take an interest in their activities. Give credit where it is due. If someone needs a reprimand, do it privately. Don't embarrass anyone in public. You are working with volunteers. Even if you disagree with their actions or beliefs, give them credit for sincerity. You will get better results with persuasion than coercion. Don't win an argument at the expense of losing a worker.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the greatest organization in the world and your District is the best in the VFW. Your goal is to be the best leader it ever had.