

National Constitution - The American Legion Official

The National Constitution of The American Legion as set out herein, is in full force and effect and represents action taken by National Conventions, being the Constitution adopted at the First Annual Convention, Minneapolis, Minn., November 10-12, 1919, and as amended at the Second Annual Convention, Cleveland, Ohio, September 27-29, 1920; Fourth Annual Convention, New Orleans, La., October 16-20, 1922; Fifth Annual Convention, San Francisco, Calif., October 15-19, 1923; Sixth Annual Convention, St. Paul, Minn., September 15-19, 1924; Seventh Annual Convention, Omaha, Neb., October 5-9, 1925; Ninth Annual Convention, Paris, France, September 19-22, at Ratification Convention, New York, N.Y., October 19-22, 1927; Twelfth Annual Convention, Boston, Mass., October 6-9, 1930; Fifteenth Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., October 2-5, 1933; Nineteenth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., September 20-23, 1937; Twentieth Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Calif., September 19-22, 1938; Twenty-first Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., September 25-28, 1939; Twenty-second Annual Convention, Boston, Mass., September 23-26, 1940; Twenty-third Annual Convention, Milwaukee, Wis., September 15-18, 1941; Twenty-fourth Annual Convention, Kansas City, Mo., September 19-21, 1942; Twenty-fifth Annual Convention, Omaha, Neb., September 21-23, 1943; Twenty-seventh Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., November 18-21, 1945; Twenty-eighth Annual Convention, San Francisco, Calif., September 30-October 1-4, 1946; Twenty-ninth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., August 28-31, 1947; Thirtieth Annual Convention, Miami, Fla., October 18-21, 1948; Thirty-first Annual Convention, Philadelphia, Pa., August 29-September 1, 1949; Thirty-second Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Calif., October 9-12, 1950; Thirty-third Annual Convention, Miami, Fla., October 10-13, 1955; Thirty-eighth Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Calif., September 3-6, 1956; Fortieth Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., September 1-4, 1958; Forty-second Annual Convention, Miami Beach, Fla., October 17-20, 1960; Forty-eighth Annual Convention, Washington, D.C., August 30-September 1, 1966; Fifty-second Annual Convention, Portland, Ore., September 1-3, 1970; Fifty-fourth Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., August 22-24, 1972; Fifty-fifth Annual Convention, Honolulu, Hawaii, August 21-23, 1973; Fifty-sixth Annual Convention, Miami Beach, Fla., August 20-22, 1974; Fifty-eighth Annual Convention, Seattle, Wash., August 24-26, 1976; Fifty-ninth Annual Convention, Denver, Colo., August 23-25, 1977; Sixty-first Annual Convention, Houston, Tex., August 21-23, 1979; Sixty-ninth Annual Convention, San Antonio, Tex., August 25-27, 1987; Seventy-second Annual Convention, Indianapolis, Ind., August 28-30, 1990; Seventy-third Annual Convention, Phoenix, Arizona, August 30-September 5, 1991; the Seventy-seventh Annual Convention, Indianapolis, Ind., September 4-6, 1995; and the Seventy-ninth Annual Convention, Orlando, Florida, September 2-4, 1997.

The By-Laws as adopted at the Fourth Annual Convention, New Orleans, La., October 16-20, 1922, and as amended at the Fifth Annual Convention, San Francisco, Calif., October 15-19, 1923; Sixth Annual Convention, St. Paul, Minn., September 15-19, 1924; Eleventh Annual Convention, Louisville, Ky., September 30-October 1-3, 1929; Fifteenth Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., October 2-5, 1933; Nineteenth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., September 20-23, 1937; Twentieth Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Calif., September 19-22, 1938; Twenty-first Annual Convention, Chicago, Ill., September 25-28, 1939; Twenty-second Annual Convention, Boston, Mass., September 23-26, 1940; Twenty-third Annual Convention, Milwaukee, Wis., September 15-18, 1941; Twenty-seventh Annual convention, Chicago, Ill., November 18-21, 1945; Twenty-ninth Annual Convention, New York, N.Y., August 25-28, 1952; Thirty-ninth Annual Convention, Atlantic City, N.J., September 16-19, 1957; Fifty-second Annual Convention, Portland, Ore., September 1-3, 1970; Fifty-eighth Annual Convention, Seattle, Wash., August 24-26, 1976; and Fifty-ninth Annual Convention, Denver, Colo., August 23-25, 1977.

Robert W. Spanogle,
National Adjutant

PREAMBLE

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

ARTICLE I: NAME

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

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

ARTICLE II: NATURE

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

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

ARTICLE III: ORGANIZATION

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

ARTICLE IV: ELIGIBILITY

Section 1. Any person shall be eligible for membership in THE AMERICAN LEGION who was a member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Air Force of the United States and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990, to the cessation of hostilities as determined by the government of the United States; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of his entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during any of said periods; provided, however, that such service shall have been terminated by honorable discharge or honorable separation, or continued honorably after any of said periods; provided further, that no person shall be entitled to membership who, being in such service during any of said periods, refused on conscientious, political or other grounds to subject himself to military discipline or unqualified service.

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

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

Section 4. No person who has been expelled by a post shall be admitted to membership in another post without the consent of the expelling post, except that where such consent has been asked for and denied by such post, he may then appeal to the Executive Committee of the department of the expelling

post for permission to be admitted to membership in another post, and shall be ineligible for membership until such permission is granted.

ARTICLE V: NATIONAL CONVENTION

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

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

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

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

Section 5. A quorum shall exist at national convention when sixty percent of the departments are represented as provided above.

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

ARTICLE VI: NATIONAL OFFICERS

Section 1. The national convention shall elect a national commander, and five national vice-commanders, who shall serve without seniority. No two vice-commanders shall be chosen from the same department. No persons shall be eligible for re-election to the office of national commander or national vice-commander.

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

Section 3. The National Executive Committee at its first meeting following the national convention shall appoint the national adjutant, national treasurer, national judge advocate, national chaplain, and national historian, such officers to hold office at the pleasure of the appointing power. All persons having the custody of funds shall give adequate bonds which shall be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Section 4. All past national commanders, while in good standing in their respective posts, shall be members for life of the National Executive Committee, without vote, and shall also be life delegates to all national conventions of THE AMERICAN LEGION, with vote, to be exercised by them with their respective departments.

ARTICLE VII: NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Between national conventions, the administrative power shall be vested in the National Executive committee, which shall be composed of the national commander, the national vice commanders, and one National Executive committeeman and one alternate from each department to be elected as such department shall determine, the alternate to act only in the absence of the committeeman.

Section 2. The term of office of such National Executive Committeemen and alternates shall be two years. The term of office of each National Executive committeeman and alternate shall commence immediately upon the adjournment of the national convention next ensuing after their election and shall end at the adjournment of the second next succeeding annual convention. Section 3. Members of the National Executive Committee shall be delegates to the national convention with vote, which vote shall be exercised with their respective departments, except that the vote of the National Commander shall be exercised only in his capacity as chairman of the national convention.

ARTICLE VIII: DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Departments shall be chartered by the National Executive Committee and shall be composed of the posts within their respective areas, and such other posts as the National Executive Committee may approve. Each department charter shall be signed by the national commander and national adjutant.

Section 2. Each department shall have a department commander, one or more department vice-commanders, a department adjutant and a department executive committee, and may have a chaplain and such other officers as the department shall determine.

Section 3. Departments shall have authority to create intermediate bodies between the posts and department to act as a liaison between such organizations and for the purpose of promoting the program of THE AMERICAN LEGION.

Section 4. The department executive committee shall define the powers of such intermediate groups, but in no event shall such powers invade the prerogatives now vested either in the post or department or national organization.

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

ARTICLE IX: POST ORGANIZATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE X: FINANCE

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

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

Section 3. The annual dues shall be collected by each post and transmitted promptly through the department to the national treasurer. Departments are designated agents for collection for The American Legion with respect to such annual dues and upon the receipt thereof shall remit them promptly to The American Legion. In no event shall the period transpiring between the receipt of such annual dues by a department and the remittance thereof to The American Legion exceed thirty (30) days.

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

ARTICLE XI: DISCIPLINE

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE XII: CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

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

ARTICLE XIII: AUXILIARIES

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

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

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

ARTICLE XIV: RATIFICATION

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

ARTICLE XV: AMENDMENTS

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

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

ARTICLE XVI: NATIONAL INCORPORATION

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

ARTICLE XVII

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

BY-LAWS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

ARTICLE I: NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

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

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

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

Section 5. The National Executive Committee shall appoint, upon nomination by the National Commander, a National Finance Commission to be composed of seven (7) members. Of the seven members appointed following the national convention (1945) at which this amendment is adopted, two shall be appointed to serve for a term of one year, two shall be appointed to serve for a term of two years, and three shall be appointed to serve for a term of three years; thereafter each succeeding appointee shall serve for a term of three years or until removed by the majority vote of the National Executive Committee. The National Commander and the National Treasurer shall be ex officio members of said commission and the National Adjutant shall be ex officio secretary of the said commission. The National Finance Commission shall be charged with the preparation of the yearly budget and the handling of funds under that budget, and such other duties as shall be prescribed by the National Executive Committee, subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee.

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE II: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

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

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

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

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

Section 5. NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE: The national judge advocate shall advise the national officers and the National Executive Committee on all legal matters, including the construction and interpretation of the national constitution and by-laws, and shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

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

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

ARTICLE III: CHARTERS

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE IV: DISCIPLINE OF POST AND POST MEMBERS

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

Section 2. Members may be suspended or expelled from the Legion only upon a proper showing of cause. Charges shall be based upon disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty and conduct unbecoming a member of THE AMERICAN LEGION. All charges must be made under oath in writing by the accusers, and no member in good standing shall lose his membership until given a fair trial by the Post or Department in such manner and form as the department by-laws and department executive committee shall prescribe.

Section 3. Any member who has been suspended or expelled has the right of appeal to his department executive committee, or to the department convention, according to the provisions in the by-laws of such department. The decision of the department shall be final.

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

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in THE AMERICAN LEGION is membership in the national organization of THE AMERICAN LEGION by affiliation with posts.

ARTICLE VI: MONIES AND COLLECTIONS

Section 1. All national, department and post officials handling American Legion monies shall be properly bonded with a good and solvent bonding and surety company, as surety, to cover double the average amount of money handled in a single year. In case of delinquencies in the payments of amounts due department or national headquarters, action shall be taken at once by the proper officials to bring

about a speedy and complete settlement. The bonds provided by national officials shall be approved by the national judge advocate and the National Executive Committee, and those provided by the department officials shall be approved by the Department Judge Advocate and the Department Executive Committee, and those provided by the Post officials shall be approved by the Post Legal Officer and the Post Executive Committee, or such other official or officials as the Department may designate.

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

ARTICLE VII: TRANSFER OF POSTS

Section 1. Posts of THE AMERICAN LEGION formed within units of the army, navy, marine corps or other organizations liable to transfer from one place to another, and which are organized under the department in which they are then located, may transfer to another department in a manner similar to the transfer of individuals from one post to another.

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

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

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

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

Appendix to the Constitution and By-Laws

Amendments to the Charter of THE AMERICAN LEGION enacted by Congress, October 29, 1942, Public Act 767; July 9, 1946, Public Act 495; December 28, 1950, Public Act 895; June 26, 1953, Public Act 80; July 26, 1955, Public Act 178; September 1, 1966, Public Act 89-550; December 27, 1974, Public Act 93-557; August 18, 1978, Public Act 95-346; December 21, 1979, Public Act 96-155; November, 20 1997, Public Act 105-110.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section 3 of the Act entitled "An Act to Incorporate THE AMERICAN LEGION," approved September 16, 1919 (41 Stat. 285, title 36, U.S.C., 1940 edition, sec. 43), is hereby further amended to read as follows:

ORIGINAL SECTION

Sec. 3. That the purpose of the corporation shall be: To promote peace and good will among the peoples of the United States and all nations of the earth; to preserve the memories and incidents of the

Great War of 1917-1918; to cement the ties of love and comradeship born of service; and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country.

AMENDED SECTION

“Sec. 3. That the purpose of this corporation shall be: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to promote peace and good will among the peoples of the United States and all the nations of the earth; to preserve the memories and incidents of the two World Wars and the other great hostilities fought to uphold democracy; to cement the ties and comradeship born of service; and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country.”

That section 5 of such Act of September 16, 1919 (41 Stat. 285, title 36, U.S.C., 1946 edition, sec. 45) as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

ORIGINAL SECTION

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

AMENDED SECTION

“Sec. 5. That no person shall be a member of this corporation unless he served in the naval or military services of the United States at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950, to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982, to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990, to the cessation of hostilities in the Persian Gulf; all dates inclusive, or who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of entry therein, served in the military or naval service of any of the governments associated with the United States during said wars or hostilities: PROVIDED HOWEVER, that such person shall have an honorable discharge or separation from such service or continues to serve honorably after any of aforesaid terminal dates.”