

Officers and Their Duties

Commander

The commander, as the senior executive officer of the post, shall preside at all meetings of the post and executive committee but may delegate a vice commander to serve as a temporary substitute when needed. The commander is an ex officio member of all committees. The commander directs and supervises the activities of all elected and appointed officers and committees. Together with the adjutant and finance officer, the commander is responsible for all monies received by the post. He or She also has automatic access to the online data base. He or She may view a roster 24/7 and update the contact/address information for any post member. The Commander may add new members online and renew members online. The commander will ensure that the post meets regularly on the appointed dates unless otherwise dictated by the post membership. It is the commander's responsibility to disseminate, to the membership, all pertinent information that is sent from the department and National Headquarters.

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

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

Vice Commanders

Posts may determine the number of vice commanders they wish to elect and the duties of the vice-commanders shall be prescribed by the post constitution. It is customary to elect two vice commanders who may be assigned duties by the commander or post executive committee.

The first vice commander serves as the membership chairman and is responsible for all matters pertaining to membership.

The second vice commander is responsible for programs and their promotion. 2nd Vice has access to the National web-reporting site and will document post members participation in all National and State approved functions.

In the absence of the commander, the vice-commanders in order of their rank shall preside at meetings and represent the commander. Like the Commander, he or she too can access post member information online and has the same privileges as the commander.

Adjutant

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

- Maintain one complete membership master file. This master file may be maintained on computer or arranged alphabetically on 3-by-5-inch index cards. Each member's file should provide all the information given on the original application: name, address, branch of service, serial number, blood type, occupation, business address, home and work phone numbers and date of acceptance into AMVETS;
- Maintain records of current and past officers. Forward a new list of officers to the department and national headquarters within 30 days of the election. Any changes made on the post level must be documented and forwarded to the headquarters no later than July 15;
- Notify the department and National Headquarters promptly of a member's change of address, change of membership status, disciplinary action or death;
- Keep the membership informed of all post functions and activities. Ensure that all members are notified in advance of the time, place and date of post meetings. Take particular care to ensure that all members are properly notified at least 30 days in advance of all elections of officers, change in CBL, etc.;
- Be present at all meetings (or have an assistant in attendance) to record all business transacted and report on the minutes of the previous post meeting or executive committee meetings;
- Present all communications and correspondence at regular post and executive committee meetings;

- Keep a complete record of the post's property, including a description of the item, its estimated value, its location and any other pertinent information deemed necessary. Trustees of post homes and clubs are sometimes held responsible for the safety and maintenance of post properties. This, however, should not be interpreted as being in conflict with procedures already established by the post for custody of the property;
- Apply to the IRS for an employer identification number (EIN), by completing the SS-4 Form and filing the IRS 990 and the State 199NForm as required;
- File all correspondence according to the subject matter. Keep copies of all letters sent to the department and National Headquarters; and Maintain separate files for members, correspondence, D&R Forms as well as for post publicity and fund-raising programs and any other topics relating to post activities.

Like the Commander, he or she too can access post member information online and has the same privileges as the commander.

Finance Officer

The post finance officer is the treasurer. His responsibilities include receiving membership dues, banking, disbursement of monies and accounting for all post funds. The finance officer and one other post officer, usually the commander, sign and countersign all post checks only after payment is authorized.

The post finance officer should collect all monies due the post and keep an account of receipts for each member. All members in arrears should be notified personally. He should see that all post funds are secured in a bank account. Before a new post finance officer assumes his duties, his predecessor must have been given a "clean opinion" by the auditors, the audit committee or the finance committee. (The new finance officer does not want to become involved in any problems that existed prior to his appointment.) The finance officer should make a financial report at all regular meetings (to be included in the meeting minutes) and prepare a complete financial statement and budget to report at the annual post meeting. He should also report to the post on all receipts collected and on all bills outstanding and paid. Major expenditures, and those not within the current budget, should first be reported to the executive committee and at a post meeting. The finance officer may be assisted and guided by a finance committee of three or four members appointed by the commander with the approval of the post executive committee. The primary duty of a finance committee is to provide an annual audit of the books and assist in the preparation of the annual budget. The commander, being a member of all committees by virtue of his office, may assist the finance committee.

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

Transmittal or remittance forms provided by the AMVETS National Headquarters shall accompany such payment. The finance officer should handle all dues revenues and membership cards. Although the actual issuance of the membership cards may be done by or in conjunction with the membership contact, the finance officer should handle the funds and account for the cards. The cards are an important investment and should be inventoried upon delivery and then locked up in a fireproof container. The finance officer may be given permission from the Post Commander (via email or telephone call to the National Membership Director) to obtain access all the online capabilities. AMVETS Accounting System for Posts and Departments: Because an elected finance officer may have little or no bookkeeping/accounting experience, an easy and efficient accounting system must be adopted. The “double entry bookkeeping” system requires little experience, time and effort. For this system to work, each and every financial transaction must be recorded. The finance officer uses an income voucher or disbursement voucher to authorize every transaction. When an income voucher is written and posted to the general ledger, the money that is deposited in the bank should agree with the voucher and general ledger. Likewise, when a disbursement voucher is written, the voucher should agree with the invoice and the check. A double-entry bookkeeping system requires at least two entries, a debit and a credit for every transaction. When funds are received, there is a debit (or increase to the cash account) and a credit (or increase to an income account such as membership dues.) When monies are paid out there is a credit entry made to the cash account to decrease its balance and a debit entry to another account such as national membership dues, when these monies are paid to AMVETS National Headquarters. One ledger sheet per month can be used to show all transactions. There should be a separate column for each account. The account balances at the end of each month should be carried forward as the beginning balance of the next month. Reconciliation of your bank statement to your cash account is required. The balance in the checking account should always agree with the total cash balance recorded in the general ledger. The post must have a bank account, which requires two signatures on each check. When officers are changed, the newly authorized signatures must be given to

the bank via appropriately completed signature cards. The officers who will sign the checks on the account must sign the signature cards. Many banks will give a veterans organization an account that will be free from service charges and other fees, and the finance officer should inquire about the bank's policy toward veterans groups. When opening a new account, the finance officer must take the adopted resolution, which instructs that a post bank account is to be opened to the local bank along with the post's federal I.D. number. The resolution may read as follows:

Be It Resolved: That the finance officer of AMVETS Post (number), Department of (state), be instructed to open a checking account in the name of the above post at a local bank of his choice. Checks on the above account must have the signature of the finance officer and the signature of either the commander or adjutant of the above named post. All posts are required by the bylaws to have the finance officer bonded in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which he may be accountable. The bond does not take the place of insurance in any way. It pays only for loss due to fraud or dishonest acts of the person bonded.

Budget: Every post, small or large, should have a balanced budget. A balanced budget means that income (or all cash received) and expenses (or all cash disbursed) are equal. This is the only way to handle the finances of the post or department. When it is time to prepare the annual budget for the post, the finance committee meets to review all income and expenses during the past year and recommend a budget for the coming year. In developing a budget, consideration must be given to the long- and short-range goals of the post. The post finance committee should meet at least two months prior to the annual meeting to set up a budget. Copies of the recommended budget should be distributed to the membership during the finance report at the annual meeting. It is every member's right to know where money is being spent. After the adoption of the budget by the membership, it is the finance officer's responsibility to insist that the post limit its expenditures to the budgeted items within the anticipated income. This will provide stability and build a financial reserve for unanticipated expenses while maintaining a balanced budget.

The Internal Revenue Service: Under the provisions of a Bureau of Internal Revenue Ruling all AMVETS posts are entitled to exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(19). For this reason, AMVETS maintains a group exemption that helps to expedite coverage. You must annually file information returns on the IRS 990 Form if required by current IRS regulations. This form may be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service and is required to be

filed on or before the 15th day of the 5th month following the close of your accounting period. The "Post Revalidation Form" must be marked indicating whether or not your post is required to file IRS Form 990.

Bonding: Bonding is mandated in the AMVETS Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1: All national, department and post officials handling AMVETS funds shall be properly bonded with a good and solvent bonding and surety company, acceptable to the United States Treasury, as surety to cover the average amount of AMVETS funds, handled by such individual in a single year. In case of delinquencies in the payment of accounts due the department or National Headquarters, action shall be taken at once by the proper officials to bring about an immediate and complete settlement. The National Executive Committee shall approve the bonds provided by national officials, and the department executive committee shall approve those provided by department and post officials.

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

Judge Advocate

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

Historian, *appointed*

The historian shall compile and maintain complete historical records of post activities and will submit a full historical report annually, or as requested.

Provost Marshal

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

Service Officer, *appointed*

General duties of an AMVETS post service officer include the following:

- Sharing information about veteran's benefits at post meetings and other AMVETS functions.
- Referring veterans to an AMVETS national service officer, AMVETS state service officer, county veterans service officer or an accredited representative for assistance in filing for veterans benefits
- Becoming familiar with the application forms necessary to assist in the preparation and the proper filing of claims for benefits.
- Being familiar with requirements for veterans in need of medical attention to obtain VA hospitalization and medical care, both under emergency and normal conditions.
 - To successfully assist in the development and presentation of any claim, the post service officer must safeguard all confidential information.

Under authority of Public Law 844, Section 200, the Department of Veterans Affairs has recognized and granted authority to AMVETS to present claims and assist veterans in the prosecution of their claims against the department. This law states that .no fee or compensation whatsoever shall be charged veterans or dependents for services rendered in connection with any claims in which AMVETS (or other recognized organizations) holds power of attorney. Under Public Law 346, Sections 301 and 302, the 78th Congress similarly accorded recognition to AMVETS in acting as counsel in the presentation of petitions for review of discharges and for other matters before the Army and Navy departments. Only those persons recognized by the secretary of veterans affairs as AMVETS accredited representatives or national service officers may present claims and act on behalf of the veteran. Before VA, however, will recognize AMVETS to represent any veteran's claim, it is necessary for the claimant to execute a power of attorney in favor of AMVETS by completing the Appointment of a Service Organization as Claimant Representative Form (VA Form 22-23). Only one organization will be recognized as the claimant's representative at any one time. Once the claimant has completed the form in favor of a veteran's organization, he cancels all claims with previously appointed representatives.

Public Relations Officer, *appointed*

The community will not know of the special and outstanding activities sponsored by AMVETS without being told; therefore, it is the job of the public relations officer (PRO) to spread the word. There are many avenues of publicity available; those found most

useful are outlined in the AMVETS PUBLIC RELATIONS MANUAL. The PRO should take advantage of opportunities to enhance the prestige of the post.

Chaplain, *appointed*

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

Quartermaster, *appointed*

The quartermaster on the post level acts as a liaison between the members and National's resource for quartermaster items. AMVETS' national quartermaster functions are located with the Department of Ohio. The address and phone number for the AMVETS National Quartermaster are:

AMVETS Quartermaster

1395 E. Dublin Granville Rd., Suite 222

Columbus, OH 43229

Toll free phone: 1-800-454-3254

Fax: 614-431-6990

Email: ohamvets@aol.com

Posts and individuals may obtain a catalog by sending \$5.00 to the address listed above. Requests for catalogs must be made by mail only, not by phone. The national quartermaster's hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time. All quartermaster needs will be handled by the national quartermaster with the exception of gold cards (Membership Department, National Headquarters) and reference manuals (Administrative Department, National Headquarters). The national quartermaster is not a lending agency; therefore, all purchases from departments, posts and individuals must be made by credit card (Visa and MasterCard only), check or money order. No items will be shipped until the quartermaster receives payment. Remember, all applicable taxes, shipping and handling charges apply.

Women Veterans' Representatives, *appointed*

AMVETS departments should appoint a women veterans' representative who will report on the department level all subjects pertaining to women veterans. Duties of the women veterans' representatives are as follows:

- Try to make all women veterans aware of their "rights" as veterans.
- Tour state VA hospitals, whenever feasible, to observe the individual VAMC facilities for women veterans.
- Contact local VA women veterans' coordinators.
- Report to the respective department at every SEC meeting and state convention as to information, progress, etc.