

THE **RESOLUTION PROCESS**

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The purpose of this section is to describe the process by which resolutions are written and administered from origination through the AMVETS national convention. AMVETS is a large organization, and a well-defined process will ensure that all AMVETS have the opportunity to address an issue with their fellow AMVETS, and to have an impact on AMVETS' national policies and programs.

THE RULES

The resolution process is straightforward and conforms to just five simple rules required by AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws (CBL).

Rule 1: Resolutions may originate at any levels of AMVETS: post, state executive committee (SEC)/department, National Executive Committee (NEC) or national convention.

Rule 2: Resolutions applicable to national programs and policies that do not affect the national CBL require a simple majority vote for approval.

Note: To be included in the pre-convention Proposed Resolutions book, these proposed resolutions must be sent to National Headquarters and be postmarked not later than the date published each year by the headquarters.

Rule 3: National Headquarters must forward resolutions (with proposed constitutional amendments) to the National CBL Committee, the National Executive Committee and the departments for information and review, postmarked not later than 30 days prior to the opening date of the national convention.

Note: National Headquarters will publish a postmark date necessary to allow the national staff to process all proposed changes to the national CBL and meet the 30-day advance mail-out requirement. Resolutions proposing amendments to the national CBL received at National Headquarters and postmarked after the announced deadline will be referred by the headquarters to the National CBL Committee and will be considered to have originated at the national convention.

Rule 4: Resolutions that propose amendments to the national constitution require a two-thirds majority at the national convention for approval, unless the proposed amendment(s) originate at the national convention require a unanimous vote of the convention body for approval (*AMVETS National Constitution, Article XXII*).

Rule 5: Resolutions that propose amendments to the national bylaws require a simple majority at the national convention for approval, unless the proposed amendment(s) originate at the national convention. Proposed amendments to the national bylaws originating at the national convention require a two-thirds majority of the convention body for approval (*AMVETS National Bylaws, Article XVI*).

RESOLUTIONS

Scope: Resolutions may involve issues concerning posts and local communities, department and state matters, or broad national policies, programs and procedures. It would be inappropriate, for example, to forward the following resolutions to National Headquarters for consideration at a national convention.

Example A

Be It Resolved that AMVETS Post #99 will participate in all patriotic parades held in Smith County.

In Example A, the local post wants to take an action that has no bearing on department or national policies/procedures. Therefore, this resolution should not be considered beyond post level.

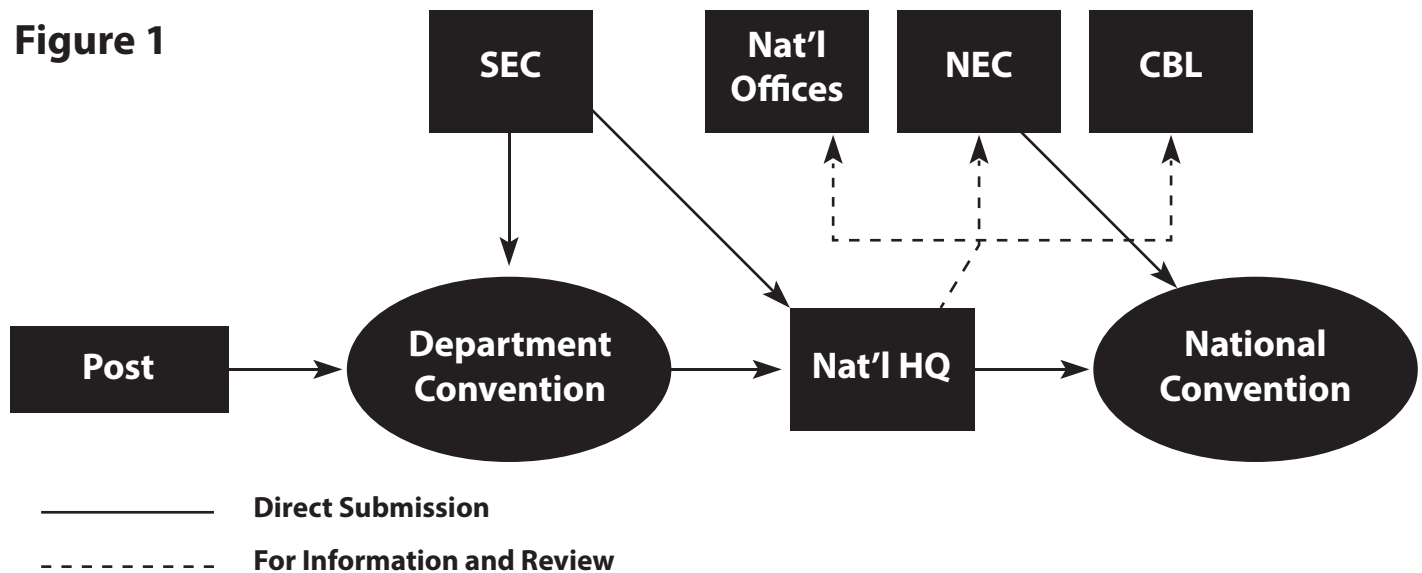
Example B

Be It Resolved that the AMVETS Department of Anystate will contribute x dollars to the state veterans home.

Example B commits a department to a specific action and does not require national funds or participation. Therefore, this resolution should not be submitted to National Headquarters for consideration at the national convention.

Types: There are three major categories of resolutions, although any resolution may fall into more than one category.

Figure 1



• **Resolution to Amend AMVETS National Constitution or Bylaws.** Figure 1 illustrates the proper path of a resolution to amend the national constitution and/or bylaws.

• **Resolution Requiring Funding Decisions.** Figure 2 below illustrates the proper path of a resolution requiring a funding decision by the National Finance Committee.

Note: Any resolution involving the expenditure of funds or any financial committee shall be referred to the National Finance Committee for consideration. In reviewing resolutions adopted at a national convention, the National Finance Committee shall have three options: (1) provide funding from the newly adopted national budget, (2) defer funding, pending appropriate

planning by the national staff as part of the next fiscal year or (3) deny funding, based on current and projected funding levels. If a resolution is denied or deferred because of a want of available funds, the National Finance Committee shall report such decision to the National Executive Committee at its next meeting (*AMVETS National Constitution Article XI, Section 9*).

• **General Resolutions.** The third category usually represents the majority of resolutions. Typically, these are resolutions that direct the national staff to seek legislation, state AMVETS' policy on a national issue of interest to veterans, or establish new AMVETS programs. Figure 3 illustrates the path of a general resolution that does not propose a change to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws nor require a funding decision by the National Finance Committee.

Figure 2

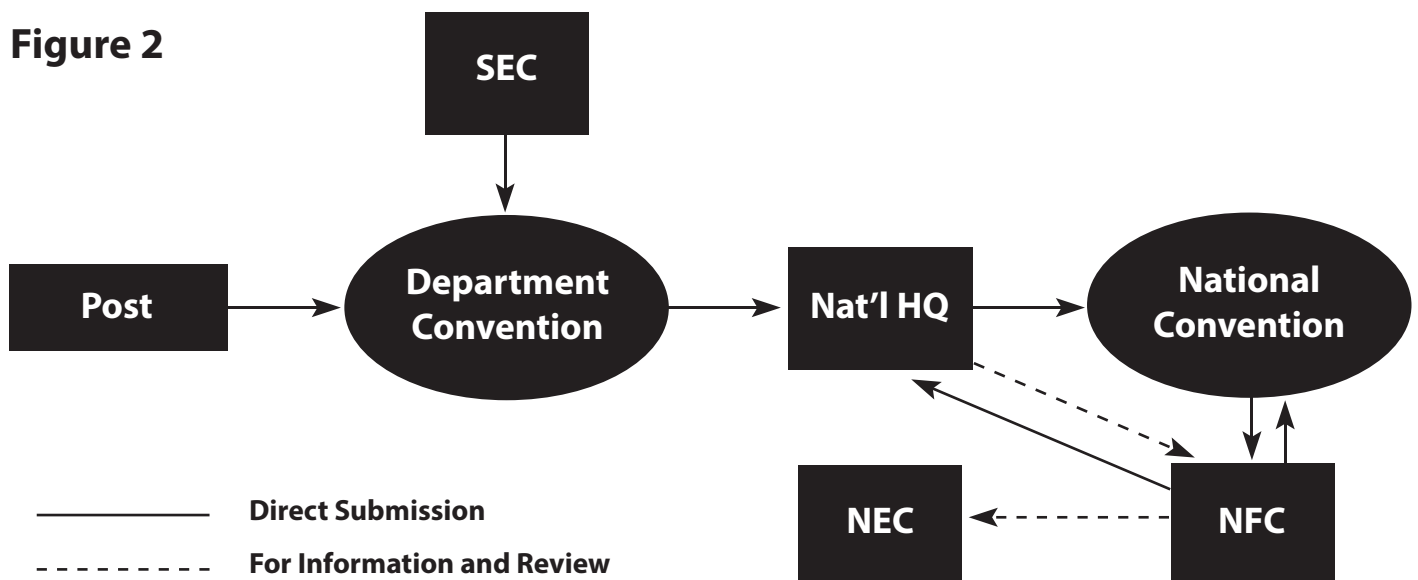
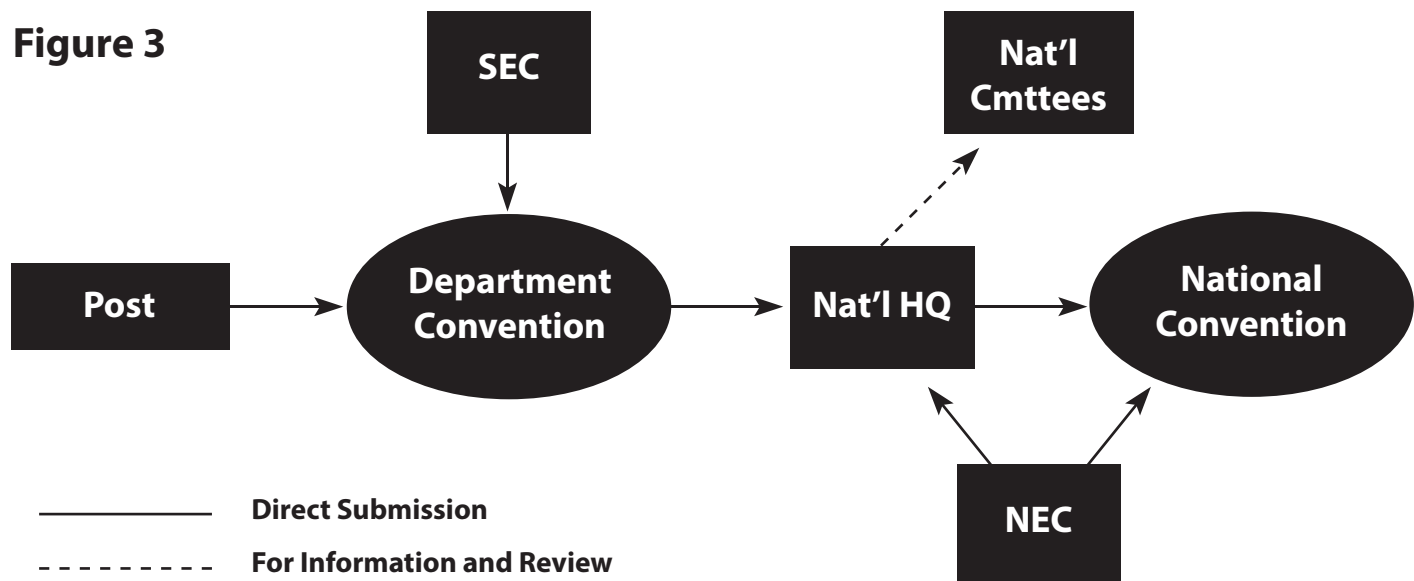


Figure 3



RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/SEC/NEC: Resolutions adopted at the SEC/department level that deal with national matters should be forwarded via email by the adjutant/executive director to AMVETS National Headquarters (amvets@amvets.org) for review.

Note: Resolutions must be emailed to National Headquarters no later than 30 days before the next national convention because of publication scheduling requirements. Resolutions received after the deadline date may not appear in the Proposed Resolutions book. All resolutions should be in a Word or similar type of electronic document, signed by the department adjutant/executive director or the department commander. Resolutions not in proper form, unclear in meaning or concerning local matters will be returned to the originator and not included in the Proposed Resolutions book.

National Headquarters: National staff will review resolutions to ensure they are in proper format, clearly written and pertinent. The national executive director will assign each incoming resolution to an appropriate national committee. Subsequently, the staff will publish the national convention Proposed Resolutions book. Concurrently, all resolutions affecting the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws received at National Headquarters by the deadline will be *posted on amvets.org before the start* of the forthcoming national convention.

The chair of each committee assigned resolutions for review must report on the convention floor his or her committee's recommendation. If a committee moves to amend a resolution, the committee chair must present on the convention floor.

Following the national convention, the national judge advocate will compile and publish the post-convention Adopted Resolutions book containing all resolutions adopted at the national convention.

Committee: Because AMVETS is a large organization and veterans issues are highly complex and diverse, we have established committees to study issues and resolutions and to make recommendations to the convention body. Therefore, the committee members have a serious responsibility to the whole membership of AMVETS. Committee members have an obligation to give a fair and impartial hearing to any proposal before the committee. Committee members, especially the chairperson, should remain actively involved when the convention in considering any resolution within their jurisdiction.

Many resolutions fall within the jurisdiction of more than one national committee. A resolution calling for

a change in membership criteria, for example, would be referred to the National Membership Committee. But because it would also involve a proposed change to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws, it would also be referred to the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Each committee would separately consider such a resolution. Therefore, in the case of a jointly-referred resolution, it is the responsibility of each committee chairperson to keep other chairpersons informed of respective committee recommendations.

If two (or more) committees having jurisdiction over the same resolution differ in their recommendations to the convention floor, it is the responsibility of each committee chairperson to report his/her respective committee's recommendations to the convention body.

CONVENTION FLOOR PROCEDURES

Agenda: To assist the convention body, the national convention agenda will detail the date(s) and time(s) when resolutions will be brought up on the floor. Resolutions will be considered in order of their appearance in the Proposed Resolutions book. Resolutions originating from national committees and those coming directly from the convention floor will be considered following action on those in the Proposed Resolutions book.

Floor Action: Committee chairpersons will be present on the convention floor when resolutions are considered. As each resolution is presented to the floor, each committee chairperson having jurisdiction over the resolution will be polled to determine that committee's recommendations. Once all committees with jurisdiction over a resolution have reported their recommendations to the floor, the presiding officer will proceed to act on the resolution.

Resolutions originating in committee that propose amendments to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws will be read once on the convention floor and immediately referred to the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee for consideration and recommendation. As soon as practicable, the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairperson will report back to the convention floor on the recommendations for action on all such resolutions.

The national legislative staff will prepare copies of all resolutions that originate in national convention committees which propose amendments to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws. One copy of each such resolution will be provided to each department on the convention floor for review prior to voting.

Voting: Robert's Rules of Order (*Newly Revised*) governs the disposition of all resolutions on the national convention floor.

WRITING A RESOLUTION

Correctly prepared resolutions contain two separate parts: 1) Whereas clauses that describe a problem or situation which requires action and 2) Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved clauses that propose action(s) to be taken, program(s) to be created or change(s) to be carried out.

Give careful consideration to the exact wording of the resolution and the impact of its possible adoption. In the final analysis, the Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved clause(s) are the meat of the resolution and must be carefully written.

The Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved

Write the *Be It Resolved* clause(s) first! Describe exactly what action or policy you are advocating AMVETS adopts. It also makes writing the supporting (but less important) Whereas clauses much easier. Limit the *Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved* clauses to a total of two.

Example C illustrates how not to compose a *Be It Resolved* clause. Note that, when read by itself, this *Be It Resolved* clause is meaningless. Just what is it that Congress should do?

Example C

Be It Resolved that we petition Congress to do so immediately.

Example D illustrates a complete and properly constructed *Be It Resolved* clause. Note that this clause contains a specific course of action to resolve and issue. The clause is easily understood without needing to refer to the Whereas clauses.

Example D

Be It Resolved that AMVETS petition Congress to enact legislation to provide a 5 percent increase in service-connected disability compensation.

As Example E illustrates, resolutions to amend the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws must be definite and specific as to the exact citation and language to be amended. Example E illustrates the proper format for the *Be It Resolved* portion of a resolution to amend the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws.

Example E

Be It Resolved that AMVETS National Constitution Article V, Section 2b be amended to read as follows:

“Each department shall choose 10 delegates and 10 alternatives at its convention.

The Whereas: When writing *Whereas* Clauses, state a minimum amount of factual information in support of the action or policy being proposed. Keep *Whereas* clauses simple and present them in a logical order.

In clear and concise terms, Example F illustrates a situation that calls for action on the part of the AMVETS National Legislative Department.

Example F

Whereas inflation has eroded the buying power of those on fixed incomes; and

Whereas many disabled veterans live on fixed incomes based solely on VA disability compensation payments; not therefore...

Dos and Don'ts

- Do use short, clear sentences; they are much more effective.
- Do seek to state your justification with as few *Whereas* clauses as possible.
- Do propose changes to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws that are well thought-out and researched. Consider whether a change in one part will create a conflict with another. When proposing

a change to either the national constitution or the national bylaws, be sure to thoroughly review both.

- Don't be long-winded; it only detracts from the message.
- Don't use more than four *Whereas* clauses. If you can't justify your proposed action or policy with four *Whereas* clauses, your proposal is either weak or too complex.
- Don't refer to specific bills before Congress, either in support of or opposition to. The content of a bill can change often in the legislative process, and a bill that starts out good for veterans may end up being very bad for them. Therefore, a resolution in support of such a bill would force the national department to act in a manner contrary to the best interests of the veterans we serve. For example --
- Don't propose changes to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws unless they are absolutely necessary.

Do Not Say:

Be It Resolved that AMVETS opposes (or supports) H.R. 9876.

Do Say:

Be It Resolved that AMVETS opposes any legislation that decreases Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) rates.

REVIEW

- A resolution can originate at any level of the organization but should be forwarded only if it is pertinent to a broader portion of AMVETS. When a legislative resolution is passed by the body at the annual national convention, it becomes AMVETS' legislative agenda for two years (from September 1 to August 31).
- Each level of the AMVET organization has responsibilities in the resolution process:
 - **The Individual** proposing the resolution has the responsibility to compose a coherent, concise resolution.

- **Deliberative Bodies** such as posts, SEC, NEC and the national convention body are responsible for giving careful consideration to each resolution presented.

- **AMVETS National Staff** is responsible for the overall administration of national resolutions and for ensuring that all valid proposed resolutions are presented to the national convention and incorporated into national policies and procedures when adopted by the national convention body.

- Write resolutions clearly and simply. Thoroughly research resolutions pertaining to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws.

Note: If you have questions or comments regarding these guidelines, contact the national legislative director by calling or writing:

AMVETS National Headquarters,
4647 Forbes Boulevard, Lanham, MD 20706;
(301) 459-9600; (301) 459-7924 (FAX).

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. It is the duty of the Commander to maintain an orderly meeting, and to conduct the meeting in such a manner that all business transacted or discussed shall follow in proper sequence.

The Commander, when presiding, always accedes to the will of the majority of the members present, and it is not for him to insist on points against the decision of the members.

He should not allow discussions between members across the floor. No member may speak unless first recognized by the Commander. Each AMVET Post should have a Robert's Rules of Order at each meeting, so there should never be a doubt as to procedures or decisions.

The rules of parliamentary law did not develop out of thin air, nor are they devices to complicate the business of AMVET meetings, as the new member sometimes thinks, when a barrage of "points of order," or "previous questions" confronts them.

Like the other rules, which govern modern society, those of parliamentary law are based upon actual experience. If each one of us made up our own traffic regulations, no one would be able to drive a car. In the same way there are rules for football games, for the payment of taxes or the drawing of unemployment compensation, the building of houses, and almost every other activity in which we take part.

Rules for meetings enable the business of the AMVETS to get done with speed and efficiency, while at the same time protecting the rights of all of the members. To the newcomer they may seem confusing, until he learns them.

Just as you can't play baseball unless you know that three strikes are out, so you can't play your proper role in the functioning of the rules, which control its actions.

These might be stated briefly as follows:

1. Only one subject can come before the meeting at one time.
2. Each proposal coming before the AMVETS shall be freely debated.
3. Each member has rights equal to those of every other member.
4. The will of the majority shall be carried out, yet the minority shall have the right to present its case.
5. The desires of the membership should be brought together in such a way that the welfare of the organization as a whole is served.

HOW BUSINESS GETS DONE

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

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

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

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

Getting the Floor: No one has a right to talk at a meeting unless they have first been recognized by the Commander, that is, has been "given the floor." A member desiring to present a motion, or to speak on any question, arises and addresses the chair as "Commander".

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

Making the Motion: Every motion should begin with the words "I move that," not "I make a motion that," or "I move you that." Motions should be stated positively, that is in such a manner as to require some action. Thus it is not necessary to pass a motion "not to hold a picnic."

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

Every motion must be "seconded" before it can be discussed. This is to insure that at least two people in the meeting are interested in the motion.

In some instances a member desiring to make a motion will ask the privilege of explaining the subject matter and intent of his motion before making it. If there is no objection from the body the Commander may allow them to do this, otherwise no motion may be discussed before being seconded.

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

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

Discussion: When a Commander has finished stating a motion they should ask for discussion, thus: "A motion has been made and seconded," or "It has been regularly moved and seconded that this AMVETS should put into effect the AMVETS Members Juvenile Opportunity Program. Is there any discussion?"

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

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

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

It is best that the Commander speak only when they feel that there are certain implications in the motion, which have not been brought out by other, or feels that the matter is so important that they want their position known before the vote is taken.

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

The maker of the amendment should state clearly what his amendment is, and to which section of the motion it applies. For example, the body is acting on a motion that "a picnic be held on August 15, with tickets at \$1 a couple."

The maker of an amendment wishing to change the date would say, "I make an amendment that the date of the picnic be August 22 instead of August 15."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Show of Hands: When there is any doubt in the mind of the Commander or the membership as to which side has the majority, a vote should be taken by a show of hands. The phrase the Commander uses are: "The chair is in doubt. We will vote by show of hands." Any member may call for a vote by show of hands by calling "division" from his seat. The chair should grant this request.

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

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

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

ACTING ON A MOTION

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

The Commander: "Is there any new business?"

AMVET MEMBER Grady is given the floor. "Commander, we have a very nice AMVETS home here, but we don't make enough to use of it. What's the use of paying for a hall."

Making the Motion First: The Commander interrupts, "AMVET Member Grady, if you have any suggestion to make regarding the use of our home, please put them in the form of a motion. Unless there is a motion before the body you cannot speak."

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

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

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

An Amendment: AMVET MEMBER Luca gets the floor. "I agree with AMVET Member Grady that we ought to have an educational committee but I don't see much point in renaming one unless we give it some money to spend. If we are going to have worth-while program we will have to be willing to pay for it. I, therefore, move to amend the motion that we appropriate \$200 for the use of the committee."

“Is there a second to the amendment?”

There is a cry of Second!”

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

One thing at a time: “There are a lot of activities that we ought to start For example; this AMVETS has never sponsored a dance which would benefit the members greatly____”

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

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

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

A confused murmuring arises in the hall.

“Quiet please,” the chairmen calls out.

AMVET Member Robinson is recognized. “I don’t think we should appropriate any money for the committee until we see what plans they have. Let’s wait until they report back to us the next meeting.”

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

Vote on the Amendment

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

There being none we shall vote on the amendment?

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

The provost marshal counts and turns the results over to the Commander. “The amendment is lost 76 to 60. The original motion is now before the house. AMVET MEMBER Horn, you may now make your motion as to the size of the committee.”

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

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

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

Keeping the Order: When a football player violates the rules the game he is penalized. In the same fashion a AMVETS Member who does not abide by the parliamentary rules of the meeting finds themselves unable to function.

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

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

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

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

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

The form is this:

“Point of order, Commander.”

“What is your point of order?”

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

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

Or if the Commander disagrees:

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

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

A point of order is not:

An excuse to slow down a meeting.

A convenient way to interrupt a speaker.

An excuse to make a speech.

An excuse to criticize the Commander.

Appeal from the Decision of the Chair.

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

The appeal can be taken only immediately after the ruling has been made. It may be made by the member called to order, or any other member. The member announces: “I appeal from the decision of the chair.”

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

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

Or if the vote is the other way: “The chair is overruled.”

Immediately upon the decision of the appeal the business of the meeting is continued.

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

The Commander should recognize the questioner but they cannot interrupt another speaker. The questioner states their problem, and the Commander should answer it as well as they can. Sometimes the questioner

desires information from another member. In such a case, the Commander should ask the one who had been speaking whether they will yield for the purpose of the question. They cannot be forced to do so.

The questioner must address their question to the chair even though they wanted information from another member, thus:

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

Parliamentary Inquiry: When the information that the member seeks has reference to the rules of parliamentary procedure this is known as a “parliamentary inquiry,” – for example: “Is it in order now to make a motion with reference to the problem of unemployed World War II veterans?”

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

HOW TO DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

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

Prevent Something from Coming Before the Body:
“To Object to the Consideration of a Question”

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

The Commander must reply:

“There has been an objection to the consideration of this question. Will the assembly consider it?”

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

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

TAKE BACK SOMETHING YOU HAVE STARTED

Withdrawing a Motion: After a motion has been made and seconded it becomes the property of the body, and cannot be withdrawn without its consent. The maker of the motion asks the Commander for permission to withdraw his motion, and the Commander puts the question before the members thus: “If there is no objection the motion will be withdrawn.” When an objection is raised the question of withdrawal must be put to a vote. It requires no second, cannot be debated, and requires a majority vote to pass.

DROP THE MATTER FOR THE PRESENT

To Table or To Lay on the Table: Sometimes a member may feel that a motion under discussion is taking up too much time, or that the motion is unwise and should be gotten out of the way without spending any more time debating its merits. In such a case they make a motion to “table the Motion,” or “to lay the motion on the table.”

Originally this motion was intended to postpone action on a matter, in order to take up more pressing business. However, its most frequent use today is to kill a motion without allowing it be fully debated. This is true because the motion to table cannot be debated and requires only a majority vote.

The maker of the motion to table is recognized in the usual manner; upon being recognized he says: “I move to table the motion.” The Commander then asks for a second, and if the motion is seconded, puts the question of tabling to a vote.

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

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

LIMIT OR EXTEND DEBATE

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

Debate may be limited by setting a time when the motion before the house shall come to a vote, by limiting the number of speeches and the time for each speech, or by allotting a certain amount of time for each side of the question.

In the latter case, members on the same side may get together to divide the time. In some auxiliaries it is the practice to have a standing rule in the by-laws fixing the maximum amount of time that a member may speak on any motion.

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

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

STOP DISCUSSION AND TAKE A VOTE

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

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

CHANGE A PREVIOUS DECISION OF THE ORGANIZATION

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

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