

AMVETS Family Traditions and Protocols Guidebook

Harold Collins, Committee Chair

Committee Members: F. Bates, G. Cummings, C. Kissel, L. McGriff,
S. Vorhies, R. Thibodeau

Ex-Officio Members: D. McLean, J. Chenelly, C. King, J. King

Issue Date: 17 Aug 21

Revision Date: August 2023

Table of Contents

Page

Section I. Administrative

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. AMVETS Family Traditions and Protocols Committee – Background | 2 |
| 2. Definitions | 2 |
| 3. Committee Mission Statement | 2 |
| 3a: Mission Statement – Organizations | 3 |
| 4. Work Product for 2019-2020 | 4 |

Section II. General Section

- | | |
|--|---|
| 5. Introduction | 4 |
| 6. Decorum | 5 |
| 7. Traditions | 5 |
| 8. Protocols | 7 |
| 9. Modifying Protocols to Achieve a Mutual Balance | 7 |

Section III. Specific Section

- | | |
|--|----|
| 10. Introduction | 8 |
| 11. Committee Appointments and Posted Relationships (August-September) | 8 |
| 12. Roster Information (October) | 9 |
| 13. Overseas Pacific Tour (variable) | 9 |
| 14. Veterans Day (November) | 10 |
| 15. Fall NEC Meeting (December) | 10 |
| 16. Congressional Medal of Honor Reception (January, every 4 years) | 10 |
| 17. Auxiliary Leadership Training (TBD) | 11 |
| 18. Commander's Congressional Report (March) | 11 |
| 19. Annual Memorial Service (March) | 11 |
| 20. Madame President's Testimonial (variable) | 11 |
| 21. National Commander's Testimonial (variable) | 12 |
| 22. Legislative Advocacy Week (LAW) (March) | 12 |
| 23. Spring NEC Meeting (March) | 12 |
| 24. Silver Helmet Awards (variable) | 13 |
| 25. Sons of AMVETS National Commander's Testimonial (variable) | 13 |
| 26. Budget Meeting (July) | 14 |
| 27. Pre-Convention Activities and Preparations (August) | 14 |
| 28. National Convention (August) | 14 |
| 29. Evening Activity by the National Convention Hosting Department (Aug) | 15 |
| 30. Visit by the Taiwanese Delegation (August) | 15 |

31. Annual Leadership Banquet	16
32. Joint Installation Ceremony (August)	16
33. Joint Committees (August)	17
34. Concluding Remarks	17
35. Expenses to AMVETS Subordinate Organizations	18
36. POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony	18
37. References	20

Section I. Administrative

1. AMVETS Family Traditions and Protocols Committee - Background

The AMVETS Family Traditions and Protocols Committee was established in October 2015, as a special committee under the AMVETS Headquarters' Bylaws, Art. II, Sect. 2. Committee members are appointed by the National Commanders from the various AMVETS Families so that each have a formal representation. A Resolution passed by the August 2016 AMVETS National Convention allowed the committee to gain permanent status under the National Bylaws, Art. II, Sect. 2(u). The committee was originally formed to investigate issues that arose between some of the AMVETS Families prior to the final days of the August 2015 Convention, and to recommend appropriate solutions. During the August 2018 Convention, other issues arose again between some AMVETS Families. During that timeframe, written reports and written recommendations may not have been produced. The Committee shall create a preliminary "Guidebook" on the protocols for typical AMVETS Family interactions.

2. Definitions

AMVETS Family: The combined community consisting of AMVETS National Headquarters, Ladies Auxiliary, National Service Foundation, AMVETS Charities, Sons, Sad Sacks, Sackettes, Juniors and Riders.

Interactions: The actions taken by different AMVETS Families when working with each other.

Traditions: Past customs and usages that influence or govern acts or practices.

Protocol: Rules of etiquette and practices that are observed by the AMVETS Families in the course of the interactions with one another.

Policy: General principles used by the AMVETS Family to guide in the management of affairs between the Family members.

Pertinent AMVETS Regulations: Roberts Rules of Order, Section 2 under Custom; "In some organizations, a particular practice may sometimes come to be followed as a matter of established custom so that it is treated practically as if it were prescribed by a rule. If there is no contrary provision in the parliamentary authority or written rules of the organization, the established custom should be adhered to unless the assembly, by a majority vote, agrees in a particular instance to do otherwise".

3. Committee Mission Statement

The committee is to develop a recommendation to the floor bodies that addresses policies and procedures for various AMVETS traditions. The approved policies and procedures shall be provided to the members and the Families in written form like a "guidebook" and post on the

Families' websites. The collection of these policies and procedures shall be used by all members of all Families as per the AMVETS National Bylaws, Article XV, Policy.

3a. Mission Statements - Organizations

National AMVETS

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

National Ladies Auxiliary

PREAMBLE: We, the mothers, wives, widows, grandmothers, sisters, daughters, stepdaughters and granddaughters of the American Veteran and female veterans, fully realizing our responsibilities to the community, State and nation, associate ourselves for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to safeguard the principles of freedom, liberty and justice for all; to promote the cause of peace and good will among nations; to maintain inviolate the freedom of our country; to preserve the fundamentals of democracy and Americanism; to perpetuate the friendship and associations of the American Veteran and to dedicate ourselves to the cause of mutual assistance...this by the grace of God.

National Sons of AMVETS

Founded in 1983, Sons of AMVETS is a nationwide service organization comprised of male descendants of American veterans. As part of the AMVETS family we are united in service and dedicated to improve quality of life, advocate legislation for increased benefits and care, plus provide and support charitable assistance to veterans, their families, and community.

National Sad Sacks

A fun making and honor organization comprised of AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary and Sons of AMVETS members.

The Sad Sacks (who derive their name from the famous cartoon character of World War II) provide, as their chief community service project, scholarships for nurses.

National Sackettes

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this organization shall be for the official honor group of the National Ladies Auxiliary to honor qualified members and to promote Nurses Education. To create more enthusiasm and interest in the welfare of our fellow man and to increase attendance and participation at all levels of AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary.

National Junior AMVETS

We the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren of the AMVETS, Auxiliary and Sons of AMVETS, fully realizing our responsibility to our parents, community, state, and nation, associate ourselves for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States; to safeguard the principals of Freedom, Liberty, and Justice for all; to promote the cause of peace and goodwill among nations; to maintain inviolate the freedom of our country; to preserve the fundamentals of democracy; to perpetuate the friendships and associations of the AMVETS organization; and to dedicate ourselves to the cause of mutual assistance ... this by the Grace of God.

AMVETS National Riders

We the AMVETS Riders are a dedicated and patriotic group of motorcycle riders who hold true to an unwavering respect for our Nation, our Flag, and our Military...past, present and future.

We are committed to the freedom of this Nation, and to provide community service and fellowship, and to preserve and support the aims and goals of the AMVETS National organization.

National AMVETS Riders is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Veterans and the community.

4. Work Product for 2019-2020

The desired work product for this committee is to establish a printed document that contains a general section describing the etiquette and protocols that are embodied in all subsequent descriptions of activities and events wherein members of different AMVETS organizations interact with each other. This document (work product, guidebook) is to be added to the National website under Membership's "Resources and Forms". The general upfront section should address concerns by the various Families and provide a general set of protocols that address those concerns. The section that covers special events and activities should provide information dealing with those event and activities that have additional or modified needs not included in the general upfront section.

Section II. General Section:

5. Introduction:

AMVETS is a paramilitary organization, and so the general membership may regard paramilitary solutions as a starting basis. However, some of the AMVETS Families are not military-oriented, and so, there is a basis for their dissimilar solutions. "Jointness" is a doctrine of the United States Armed Forces, derived from the 1950 United Nations' unified command structure, and certain operations during WWII, which describes the cross-service cooperation of all aspects of a mission activity in use by all services involved. It now can often be referred to as "The color PURPLE". Jointness provides for increasing efficiency while keeping expenses at a minimum. It can also provide for a flexible command of the operation. In these ways, the common goal of all AMVETS Family members involved can be attained by relying on those strengths that each Family member brings to the operation.

In every situation, there is a need for proper decorum. This involves the use of good manners and politeness, which are fitting for the particular situation that the involved AMVETS Families are interacting with each other at the time.

Beyond that are the needs for established conventions that set forth how things are actually done. That generally starts with general societal procedures, but the military thinking on customs and courtesies must also be incorporated. It is usually best to provide a written account of what is mutually determined.

Such situations produce the need for the concepts of command and control. In such cases, the proper respect for leadership and military forms of courtesies are observed in the areas of respect, authority, the chain of command and achievement. Again, a written consolidated account is usually the better way.

When either proper decorum, or command and control conditions, or both are neglected, undue friction results between the interacting AMVETS Families that are engaged in a joint activity. So, a protocol must balance these two in most situations, and then be adjusted for other specialized ones.

6. General Section: Decorum

The basic manners to be practiced during AMVETS Families interactions perhaps should incorporate some of the aspects cited in George Washington's The Rules of Civility. There are 110 rules listed, and not all pertain. However, those that are relevant, should be followed by all involved in the AMVETS Families during a particular activity when interacting with each other. Such rules are relevant if they are topics of (1) respect, (2) dealing with others of a higher, lessor or equal level to your own, (3) handling insults, (4) paying attention in meetings, (5) dealing with the misfortune of others, (6) currying favor, (7) properly greeting others and bidding goodbye, (8) knowing the subject before commenting, (9) commit to tasks you can perform and carefully keep your promises, (10) dealing with the missteps of others in private, (11) and behavior during meetings when not on duty.

Members of the AMVETS Families coming from different environments and training does not really fit into Jointness, since basic training is provided by the armed forces components. In AMVETS, Jointness is more complicated and probably works best when members of the AMVETS Families working together on the same project perform to the best of their abilities and work in good faith, so that the tasks are successfully concluded.

Jointness is also complicated since participating members may be either employees or volunteers. As employees, they are covered by at-will or contract status, the federal and state laws dealing with human resources, and the company's personnel manual. Under these terms, employees are largely available at specific work week times. They also have available company provided resources. On the other hand, volunteers are unpaid for their donated time, and donate their assets, unless reimbursement is available. Volunteers may also be working for an outside company, and so have difficulty being available at the times where employees are available. Retired volunteers may have difficulties in timeliness due to family, medical, or other factors. Volunteers often do not have access to some forms of infrastructure needed to do perform selected tasks.

In today's world, some serious situations arising from friction related to lack of decorum between members of the AMVETS Families interacting on a specific project, or between the

difference AMVETS Families acting as companies, can become quite costly. Besides civility, placing yourself into the other's situation can often help to understand what and/or why an action is being done, and might help avert a problem before it becomes a problem.

7. General Section: Traditions

The National AMVETS organization was founded by local members from many different states. These delegates sought an economy of scale in much the same way Jointness was conceived, due in large part by a need to consolidate similar needs and resources. At the very beginning, they codified the relationships, into a common de-facto articles of incorporation not with any given state, but as a US Congressional Charter. That document sets forth the required activities for AMVETS. To attempt to deal with those activities, the rules were quickly compiled in written form and became the AMVETS Constitution and Bylaws ("CBL").

AMVETS traditions originate from extending the CBLs. All subordinates are part of the AMVETS Family as specified in Section 1 of each Family's Article 1 within the National CBL. That section uses the verb "recognizes" the subordinate Family member, and that word means AMVETS National Headquarters by a floor vote at an annual convention, is formally acknowledging the legal existence of the subordinate Family member. Each subordinate's articles of incorporation cite the general activities of that particular organization. Those activities become the strengths of that AMVETS Family member and allow that company to be involved as an interactive participant in a specific project when those strengths are a good and valuable contribution.

In both usual businesses and the military, there is a leadership hierarchy. In both instances, each organization usually attempts to do things using its own internal resources. When a decision to use external resources is deemed appropriate, then there is a tendency to hire an outside vendor or work with a subordinate/subsidiary company, who are under the control of the hiring company. AMVETS traditions follow those principles. Also, when a company or military service uses assistance, then the leadership may shift in part to the company best suited to the job. AMVETS normally adheres to those methods also. For instance, the Ladies Auxiliary usually dominates the leadership for Madame President's Testimonial and the Sons of AMVETS are the leadership of the "LAW – Legislative Advocacy Week" activity. For fundraising, the IRS and state charitable trust laws afford 501(c)(3) companies with the best tax-exempt status, so the National Service Foundation with the AMVETS Charities, Inc., and Department foundations and charities handle most development projects. These laws also afford the c(3)'s with those tax-exempt benefits because they usually have no members.

The hierarchy also traditionally defines the tasks assigned to the various sections of the hierarchy. This can get complicated and have lots of moving parts. Corporate presidents and military generals/admirals are the visionaries with overall command authority. Together with middle management and field grade officers' strategy is developed. Assisting in these tasks, are the senior NCO's. The middle managers and field grade officers generally are involved with the development of tactics. These folks are assisted by middle NCO grades. The general workforce in each situation carryout the planned missions. In the process of carrying out a mission, there is an additional administrative ladder and a technical ladder. AMVETS Family's boards govern and oversight the executive directors. These executive directors administrate the senior section directorates. There are general staff to provide overlapping assistance, while dedicated staff can assist specific directorates and the executive director. In AMVETS, CBL provisions for specific committees provides additional inputs by appointed folks from the

AMVETS Families membership base. The AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws provide specific details for the National HQ Officers duties and the Posted Job Descriptions deal with the National Directorates and employees.

AMVETS Families generally operate on an annual basis, which is periodic, in that events in any given year occur each and every year at more or less the same time. Repetition becomes the tradition by definition. This is part of the AMVETS governance rules, by the AMVETS' de-facto rule book, Roberts Rules of Order Revised ("ROR"), wherein repetition becomes "custom", which is a legal term meaning tradition. Added to this is the fact that AMVETS families routinely produce agendas, and specific script for major events that cite actions and language to be observed during the event, that generally copies prior text and formats.

There are typically two types of events run under the banner of the AMVETS Family. These are: (1) Joint Functions, (2) Organizational Functions open to other AMVETS Family members. Examples of Joint Functions include the Joint Opening of the National Convention, the Silver Helmet Banquet, and the Joint Installation of Officers. Examples of an Open Organization Function includes the various Testimonials and Memorial Services for an individual member.

8. General Section: Protocols

The combination of decorum and traditions become intertwined by suggesting protocols favorable to the interactions of AMVETS Family members for some specific project. Under the newly created restructuring at Lanham, the Commander or President of an AMVET Family organization routinely converses with the executive director. The Commander or President leads their board. A board is in charge of oversight and responsible for out comes as a matter of legal requirement. Both the Commander or President and their boards direct the executive director. The executive director delegates to the staff. The duties of staff are shown in the bylaws, and in formal job descriptions. A board member or a non-board should not go directly to any employee, a volunteer staff member, or outside vendor without the Commander or the President being prior informed and providing approval. Usually, equals communicate with equals, and the chain of command is how matters flow through personnel. These lines of communication can be vital for the success of any interactive AMVETS Family endeavor.

Committee chairs interact with their committee members, and the committee collectively produces recommendations dealing with the subjects the committee is assigned to handle. Chairs provide primary information to the members of the committees at the beginning of the term. Chairs provide recommendations and reports to the body that formed the committee, or each other's organization in the cases where more than one Family is part of the same committee.

The formation of an interactive group of AMVETS Families will inform those involved on how to communicate between themselves. Also, the primary information relating to the job at hand should be properly distributed to those involved in a timely manner. Unfinished work should be indicated as the term ends, so that the incoming members will be properly informed at the start of the following cycle.

Protocols for Joint Functions should have the attendees aware of being supportive of the spirit of the affair. Whenever there is a Joint Function, the AMVETS HQ usually takes the lead and will request what they require from the subordinate Family Organizations. In addition to deciding the level of formality, they will select the Master of Ceremonies, etc. In general, the order of hierarchy is as follows: AMVETS HQ, National Service Foundation, AMVETS Charities

Inc., AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary, Sons of AMVETS, Sad Sacks, Sackettes, Juniors, Riders. For Joint events having other AMVETS Families being the operational organization, the hierarchy would be the same with the exception of the hosting organization being first.

9. General Section: Modifying Protocols to Achieve a Mutual Balance

Changes can be either favorable or have a negative impact. A protocol attempts to balance the interactions by each of the participating AMVETS Family with the desired project or activity to obtain the desired result under the rules and laws. In these cases, the Families and the kind of activity are variables, while the related rules and laws are relatively constant unless governmental changes occur. So, a main focus should be on the sensitivities of the AMVETS Family units involved, with the project or activity's requirements factored into planning and execution. Any change must cause a re-evaluation of the protocol. Each of the AMVETS Families must respond with plausible changes, and afterwards, all must be told the outcomes and any redirection of efforts caused by the new changes. All suggested changes to this guidebook will be sent to the Chairman no later than June 30 to allow dissemination to the AMVETS family members on the Traditions and Protocols Committee.

Redirection can occur as a result of financials, manpower, performance capabilities or unexpected circumstances, to name a few. The number of AMVETS Family members originally involved can increase or decrease as a result. Outside assistance may be a factor to reconsider. Critical thinking and weighing of pluses and minuses will enable better judgement calls.

Section III. Specific Section:

10. Introduction

In every repeating year, starting after the National Conventions, there is a cyclic parade of events that are treated as traditions with their own particular protocols. The Sections are presented in typical chronological order, running from the end of a convention's Swearing-in Ceremony and end at the same point the following year. In each Section, some description of the event/activity is given as draft inputs, but the main themes are traditions and the related protocols. The Special Section also includes the joint committee traditions and protocols. The final recommended form or portions of this document may be consolidated into tables or sections with bullet-points.

11. Specific Section: Preliminary Committee Appointments and Posted Relationships: (August-September)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, NSF, Auxiliary, Sons, Sad Sacks, Sackettes, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: Newly elected commanders and Presidents appoint key personnel prior to required approvals at the post-NEC meeting immediately after elections. The names of the newly elected AMVETS Family officers must be sent to AMVETS National Headquarters just after the end of the annual convention. By doing these chores, the information will be readily available for the preparation of the new National Roster.

The National Commander appoints members from other AMVETS Families to serve on selected committees. These traditional committees which incorporate at least one other AMVETS Family are: (1) AMVETS 401K Advisory Committee (National HQ, Ladies Auxiliary); (2) AMVETS National Finance Committee (National HQ, NSF); (3) Americanism & Patriotic Activities Committee (National HQ, Ladies Auxiliary, Sons of AMVETS); (4) AMVETS Family

Traditions and Protocols Committee (AMVETS HQ, Ladies Auxiliary, Sons of AMVETS, AMVETS Riders, AMVETS Juniors, NSF); (5) Community Services and Activities Committee (National Membership Committee (National HQ, Ladies Auxiliary); (6) Legislative Committee (National HQ, Sons of AMVETS); (7) Long Range Planning Committee (National HQ, NSF); (8) Membership Committee (National HQ, Ladies Auxiliary); (9) POW/MIA Committee (National HQ, Sons of AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary); (10) Programs Committee (National HQ, Ladies Auxiliary); (11) VAVS & VA Hospital, Medical Services, Rehabilitation Benefits Committee (National HQ, Ladies Auxiliary, Sons of AMVETS).

There are also Board Members that serve as coordinators between AMVETS Families. All subordinate organizations interact with National HQ in general. Specialized relationships are: (1) Ladies Auxiliary (VAVS, Honors and Awards, Juniors, Convention chairs, Sad Sacks, Sackettes); (2) Sackettes (Ladies Auxiliary); (3) Riders (Liaison Officer); (4) Junior AMVETS (Ladies Auxiliary, Sons of AMVETS).

Protocols: If asked and accepted, one must participate and contribute to the benefit of the Committee's goals, or those of the combined Families' needs. Chairs need to keep the meetings on point. Casual business attire is customary during sessions for nonparticipants and most participants.

12. Specific Section: Roster Information (October)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, NSF, Sad Sacks, Sackettes, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: The National Roster is important for some committees to receive as early as possible so that things begin in a timely manner. National should produce that document and at least send it to the committee chairs as soon as time permits.

Protocols: If asked and agreed, then the committee members should attend the meetings and participate in a positive manner. Chairs may consider sending an acknowledgement communication to their new committee members. When the roster is provided, one should examine their contact information and make corrections known to Headquarters staff for revision purposes, and Headquarters must notify the affected chair.

13. Specific Section: Overseas Pacific Tour (variable)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons, Riders

Tradition: The National Commander and spouse/SO and the Ladies Auxiliary's President and spouse/SO travel on behalf of the AMVETS Families visit the Republic of China and Pearl Harbor. In the past, the tour also included visiting Korea, but that portion is no longer performed. This is a reciprocal visit to the Republic of China's Delegation coming to the National Convention. This usually includes an audience with the President of the republic and an appearance (speaking) at their Veterans Reunion. Appropriate gifts should be purchased and presented to various dignitaries.

While in Hawaii, visits will also be made to PACOM for a briefing on the military situation in the Pacific Theatre and to the Forensics Lab where the remains of POW/MIAs are identified. A visit to Pearl Harbor includes being a part of a ceremony on the USS Arizona; AMVETS is the "Keeper of the Wall".

NOTE – Due to budgetary constraints, the Auxiliary President’s participation on the overseas tour will be decided on an annual basis. However, when possible, the Auxiliary President, Sons Commander and Riders President will participate in the Hawaii portion of the trip at their own expense.

Protocols: All timetables and trip plans must be arranged as soon as feasible. All gifts to be used in the exchanges must be ordered in a timely manner (September). These visits are made as a matter of good relations, and all AMVETS members should never create cause for anything otherwise.

14. Veterans Day (November)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: On Veterans Day POTUS usually hosts a breakfast for the Veterans Service Organizations and the AMVETS National Commander is invited. AMVETS also has a box reserved at Arlington National Cemetery for the ceremonies there. Prior to the ceremonies, the AMVETS National Commander will be seated on the stage with other VSO leaders. The AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary National President and the Sons of AMVETS National Commander will be seated in the AMVETS box with others. At the conclusion of the program, the three AMVETS leaders will participate in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

AMVETS National Vice Commanders will lay wreaths at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and participate in ceremonies there. The National First Vice Commander is usually invited to sit on the stage and is recognized. The Sons of AMVETS lay wreaths at the Korean and World War II Memorials. The VSO designated as the host for Veterans Day holds a reception to which all are invited.

Protocols: When possible AMVETS Family members should attend in proper attire and observe these solemn events.

15. Specific Section: Fall Meeting of the NEC (December)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, NSF, AMVETS Charities, Sons

Tradition: Some of the AMVETS Family organizations hold meetings during this period.

The NSF and National Headquarters NFC work together at this time in the areas of budget, financials, Form 990's, and audits.

During that time, the NSF Board along with the National Commander and the Executive Director, the Ops. Assistant, and the National Ladies Auxiliary National President meet with the Cain thrift store operators at an annual Holiday affair for AMVETS to witness the donations by the Cain Family to various local groups including police, the VA, and local AMVETS posts.

Protocols: In all meetings, please Honor the Colors and recite the Pledge, then remain standing and silent for the Invocation. Attendees are there for the Meeting of the NEC, so one is expected to attend that floor session. If you arrive the day before and attend the NSF, Charities, and/or NFC meetings, sit in the chairs placed around the room and be attentive and silent unless you ask questions. Private talking during meetings is discourteous and undesirable. AMVETS covers are customary during the meeting of the NEC.

16. Specific Section: Congressional Medal of Honor Reception (January, every 4 yrs.)

Primary families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: This activity occurs every 4 years and is connected to the US Presidential Inauguration and also in conjunction with the attendance of the related Congressional breakfast and Presidential Ball.

Protocols: The following attire is outdoors at the inauguration shall be suitable according to the weather; the morning breakfast should be business attire; the Presidential Ball attire should be evening dress. Attending AMVETS shall uphold proper support of the agenda items.

Suitable business attire is allowed according to the weather.

17. Specific Section: Auxiliary Leadership Training (TBD)

Primary Families Involved: AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary, AMVETS HQ

Tradition: This event is operated by the Ladies Auxiliary.

Protocol: The AMVETS National Commander is invited to attend.

18. Specific Section: Commander's Congressional Report (March)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, NSF, Auxiliary, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: This is an opportunity for the National Commander to provide testimony to the Joint House-Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. AMVETS Family members are invited to attend and witness this event. Travel may be using AMVETS provided buses to and from DC.

Protocols: Attendees are expected to be attentive and silent during the reporting by the various veterans' service organizations, as well as the Q&A session by the Congressional Committee members. Sometimes these sessions are delayed due to Congressional needs on the floor, so attendees shall maintain a patient posture.

19. Specific Section: Annual Memorial Service (March)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: This event held at the Lanham Headquarters site is a demonstration of the care and attention given by those AMVETS PNC's, Ladies Auxiliary PNP's, and Sons PNC's that have passed on during the previous year. If no AMVETS PNC's have passed away within the year, this event will be postponed until the following year. It is held after the National Commander's Congressional Testimonial in DC. Each of the Families should provide the names of its members promptly to AMVETS National Headquarters, so they might be listed in the remembrance program. AMVETS provides bus service from the DC venue and back to the hotel, and there is a free lunch to the attendees. One can also visit the National offices and converse with staff while there.

Protocols: During the memorial presentations, attendees shall remain silent, attentive and reverent. If you take a program, please do not let it be seen in the nearby trash can.

20. Specific Section: Madame President's Testimonial (variable)

Primary Families Involved: Auxiliary, HQ, NSF, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: This event is for attendees to engage and listen to speeches related to Madame President's activities during her term. The location is usually in the area nearby the Madame President's city where resides.

Protocols: Attendees shall be supportive of the spirit of the affair. Attendees should remain silent and attentive during speeches by others, and if speakers, the talk should be short and exacting. Business casual attire is customary.

21. Special Section: National Commander's Testimonial (variable)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, NSF, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: This event is for attendees to engage and listen to speeches related to the National Commander's activities during their term.

Protocols: Attendees shall be supportive of the spirit of the affair. Attendees should remain silent and attentive during speeches by others, and if speakers, the talk should be short and exacting. Business casual attire is customary.

22. Specific Section: Legislative Advocacy Week – (LAW) (March)

Primary Families Involved: Sons, HQ, Auxiliary, NSF, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: This event has members of the AMVETS Families assist the Sons of AMVETS in a legislative awareness program that demonstrates support of AMVETS Family members for importance of current National legislative actions of interest by presenting the duly approved AMVETS National legislative agenda to the members of Congress. The AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary has designated Legislation as a part of their Americanism Officer's duties and is now mandated to promote and attend this event. Bus transportation from the hotel to the Hill is provided by the Sons of AMVETS.

Protocols: Attendees are to participate with the discussions as planned by the Sons of AMVETS in conjunction with National Headquarters Legislative operations. The uniform of their respective AMVETS Family should be worn or business casual attire is customary.

23. Specific Section: Spring Meeting of the NEC (March)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons, Juniors

Tradition: Almost all AMVETS Families meet during this time. Again, there is a customary address by the current Commander or President to update the other Families of matters of mutual interest.

Protocols: In all meetings, rise for the Invocation, Honor the Colors and recite the Pledge. Attendees are there for the Meeting of the NEC, so one is expected to attend that floor session. If you arrive the day before and attend the NSF, Charities, and/or NFC meetings, sit in the chairs placed around the room and be attentive and silent unless you ask questions. Private talking during meetings is discourteous and undesirable. AMVETS covers are customary during the meeting of the NEC. Attendees should stand when the visiting Family leadership is escorted to and from the podium by the Provost Marshal; in such cases, the normal rhythmic clap is performed. In the case of the Sad Sacks and Sackettes, the usual vocal greeting is to be made instead of the clap.

24. Specific Section: Silver Helmet Awards (variable)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: There are 2 aspects of this activity. First, the Honors and Awards Committee meets to determine the year's Silver Helmet Recipients, except the AMVETS of the Year. The Honors and Awards Committee Chair is the second youngest PNC in attendance. Nomination forms are distributed to the Departments and posted on the AMVETS website under Resources and Forms found on the Membership dropdown tab. Submission booklets are available to the Awards Committee members only. The information contained in the binders is considered to be strictly Company Confidential. The binders are to be returned to HQ after the Committee meets. Nominations for AMVETS of the Year are provided to an outside firm for their consideration. That result contained in an unopened, sealed envelope is provided to the chair at the beginning of the Honor and Awards Committee meeting. After the name is revealed, there is a Motion made to decide how many other awards will be voted upon.

Second, there is an evening Silver Helmet Awards Ceremony that is held to present the Silver Helmet recipients of the prior year with their Silver Helmet. While this seems unusual, it takes time to actually make these precious statuettes. That is part of the reason why this is called the AMVETS Oscars. Additionally, the AMVETS of the year becomes part of the voting members on the Honors and Awards Committee for the next 5 years, starting when they are named as being the newly decided recipient. The Ladies Auxiliary also presents their award for Humanitarian Award, the Sons of AMVETS presents their Aid and Support Award, the Junior AMVETS presents their Great Appreciation Award, and the Riders presents their Guardian Award.

Protocols: This is meant to be a cheerful experience. Both presenters and recipients must adhere to a courteous time limit for their remarks. Nonparticipants are to be supportive. The customary attire is evening to formal dress. If a meal is provided, then it is bad form to eat and then leave the activity.

The recipients of these awards are based on criteria decided by the respective Family organization and then presented to the National Honor and Awards Committee during their meeting at the National Convention for ratification.

25. Sons of AMVETS National Commander's Testimonial (variable):

Primary Families Involved: Sons, HQ, NSF, AMVETS Charities, Inc., Auxiliary, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: This event is for attendees to engage and listen to speeches related to the Sons of AMVETS National Commander's activities during their term and to honor the hard work of the Sons National Commander.

Protocols: Attendees shall be supportive of the spirit of the affair. While the Sons Testimonial is a typically less formal affair, attendees should remain silent and attentive during speeches by others and is speakers the talk should be short and exacting. Attire is decided by each Nations Sons Commander and may range from full formal attire to informal, depending on the proclivities of the Commander.

26. Specific Section: Annual Budget Meeting (July)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, NSF, AMVETS Charities, Inc.

Tradition: At this time, the future year's annual budgets are formalized by the AMVETS National Headquarters and the National Service Foundation. Various other Family organizations should provide the NSF with its requests for funding before that time.

Protocols: These are not closed meetings unless called for by members of the Boards or the NFC. Non-board members or NFC members are invited to attend. Originating Family organizations may send presenters to speak to their grant request. Business casual attire is customary.

27. Pre-Convention Activities and Preparations (variable)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, NSF, Sons

Traditions: Prior to the AMVETS National Convention, preliminary plans are developed. Participating Families are involved in inspection of the hotel and convention facilities. Each family meeting during the Convention prepares its agendas and submits to HQ for general publication. Convention Materials are prepared and are provided to attendees. A Commander's Hospitality Room is provided by AMVETS and run by the National Sons.

Protocols: Available convention attendees assist in filling the handout baggies with information as provided by the attending families. HQ prepares the plan for the visiting Taiwanese delegates.

28. Specific Section: National Convention (August)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, NSF, AMVETS Charities, Sons, Sad Sacks, Sackettes, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: All AMVET Families meet during this time. There is a combined opening session. As tradition, all Commanders and Presidents visit the other Families and speak about accomplishments. Also, budgets are formalized as a result of floor vote based on the recommendations of various committees. There is also a vendor display area, where vendors that have dealt with the National Families showcase their products and services. There is a time and place for the Quartermaster and AMVETS merchandise. There is a dinner hosted by the hosting Department, which is open to all AMVETS Families to attend. There is also a dinner celebrating the National Commander and their term in office, that too can be attended by members of all the AMVETS Families.

AMVETS observes a National Convention Opening Ceremony, in which the National Executive Director is the master of ceremonies. If a stage/head table is utilized, the following persons should be seated there:

- a. AMVETS National Executive Director
- b. AMVETS National Commander
- c. Ladies Auxiliary National President
- d. Sons of AMVETS National Commander
- e. Junior AMVETS National President
- f. AMVETS National Convention Chair
- g. Ladies Auxiliary National Convention Chair

- h. National Saddest Sad Sack
- i. National Sappiest
- j. AMVETS National Riders President
- k. Keynote Speaker
- l. Republic of China Veterans Assistance Commission Representative
- m. Republic of China Interpreter
- n. AMVETS National Chaplain
- o. Ladies Auxiliary National Chaplain

If no stage is used, the above listed persons should be seated in front where they can access the microphone as they will be addressing the delegates and guests. Rows down front should be reserved for seating National Officers, PNC's, and PNP's of each family organization. The Agenda for the Convention Opening will be provided by the National Executive Director.

Immediately following the Convention Opening, a Joint Memorial Service will be held with the AMVETS National Chaplain, the Ladies Auxiliary National Chaplain, and the Sons of AMVETS National Chaplain in charge.

Protocols: During convention session meetings, business casual attire is customary, with collared shirts. During the convention sessions, the proper AMVETS cover is required.

29. Specific Session: Evening Activity by the Hosting Department of the Convention (August)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, NSF, Sons, Sad Sacks, Sackettes, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: Usually, the hosting Department for the Convention has an evening activity that is built around a meal. That Department establishes the agenda and theme. Tickets are required.

Protocols: This event is a chance to engage with the hosting Department, in attempts to exchange courtesies and ideas - attendees should do that. Attendees should maintain a positive character. Attire is suggested by the host Department and is related to the chosen theme.

30. Specific Section: Visit by the Taiwanese Delegation (August)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons

Tradition: As a reciprocal visit that includes the Pacific Tour mentioned above, delegation from Taiwan visit AMVETS at the annual National Convention. This relationship involves the long-term affirmation by AMVETS to support the Taiwanese Government. Our pioneering AMVETS first members fought alongside the Chinese troops against two other invaders. There is a customary, formal gift provided to the National Commander. Additionally, there is an event such as a dinner, or dinner-cruise hosted by AMVETS, and there can be a second hosted by the Taiwanese. Attendees come from the AMVETS Families.

Protocols: In the presence of the Taiwanese delegation AMVETS Families and their members are expected to treat the delegation representatives with honor and courteous respect. If you do not know the Chinese based languages well, please refrain and speak English instead.

31. Specific Section: Annual Leadership Banquet (August)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, NSF, Sons, Sad Sacks, Sackettes, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: This event occurs during the National Convention. It is a time for the National Commander to thank those who assisted during the term and for others to show their support of the job well done.

Protocols: This is an event that requires purchased tickets due to meal service and available seating capacity. Evening attire is the custom. After the general attendees are seated, selected officials with their escorts are led onto the floor to their seats by the AMVETS Provost Marshal and deputies, and it is customary to applaud each as they enter. After all are seated, the Colors are posted either by a local military honor guard or the AMVETS Provost Marshals, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem; all military veterans are to salute during the Flag's entry, the Pledge, the Anthem, and the Flag's retirement, and additionally recite the Pledge, while non-veterans should place their right hand over their heart during these events. All will stand during the Chaplain's address. There is a section involving the honoring of our POW's and MIA's starting with the entry of the bagpipes, during which all attendees remain seated and **silent**. After dining, it is bad form to exit the meeting prior to its closure. At the end of this banquet, all will stand and join hands to sing "God Bless America" and render honors to the Flag upon voice command by the Provost Marshal.

32. Specific Section: Joint Installation Ceremony (August)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons, Juniors, Riders

Tradition: Newly elected Officers of most AMVETS Families are sworn-in at a special ceremony at the end of the annual convention, after the elections and the conclusion of all business sessions, the post-NEC meeting, and the post-NSF/Charities' meetings. The master of ceremonies is designated by the AMVETS National Commander. The installing officers are chosen by the newly elected head of each organization. The administrative head of each group is responsible for ensuring all accoutrements (pins, hats, gavel, etc.) for their installation are present at the dais. Besides the master of ceremonies, the following people are seated at the head table:

- a. The incoming AMVETS National Commander and spouse/SO, the outgoing AMVETS National Commander and the AMVETS Installing Officer.
- b. The incoming AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary National President and spouse/SO, the outgoing AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary National President and the AMVETS Ladies Installing Officer.
- c. The incoming Sons of AMVETS National Commander and spouse/SO, the outgoing Sons of AMVETS National Commander and the Sons of AMVETS Installing Officer.
- d. The incoming Junior AMVETS National President, the outgoing Junior AMVETS National President and the Junior AMVETS Installing Officer.
- e. The incoming Riders National President and spouse/SO, the outgoing Riders National President and the Riders Installing Officer.

Officers for each organization to have the oath of office administered are seated in the front rows of the room. They are brought forth by the Provost Marshal or Sergeant at Arms at the proper time.

The AMVETS Riders begin the process, followed by the Juniors, the Sons, the Ladies Auxiliary, and ends with the AMVETS National officers, with the exception of the newly elected Family National Commander. The National Commander of each Family is sworn-in separately, and afterwards, there is an exchange of the Badge of Office (i.e., the AMVETS National Commander's Gold Cap and Star) between the incoming and outgoing National Commanders.

Protocols: After the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, the new officers are installed. This is also meant to be a cheerful event. Nonparticipating members and non-AMVETS can be present. Business casual attire is customary. If possible, wear proper AMVETS cover.

33. Specific Section: Joint Committees (August)

Primary Families Involved: HQ, Auxiliary, Sons, Riders

General Traditions: The traditions that are generally used for permanent and special AMVETS committees as listed in the Special Section 11 for Committee appointments. Some chairs provide direction to the committee members prior to meetings, so that the committee can focus more on their inputs when called upon to do so. Typically, committee chairs give reports to the convention floor, and as such, that reports appear verbatim in the transcribed Minutes. The report should establish progress of the committee towards the completion of the task it was given when formed a year ago. Besides asking that the report be accepted, the chair also states and Recommendations that are customary. Some chairs also give reports that are asked during the floor approval of CBL amendments and policy resolutions.

Special Traditions: There are some committees that might go into executive session. Special confidential reports or information might be used by the committee in an effort to complete the tasks. The chair may present the result in their report.

During the NFC and budget meetings, committee members including the NSF member should obtain the financial and other related reports such as audits and contracts prior to the meeting. The committee members shall study the reports so they can take part in those meetings, financial and possibly contracts and the like.

General Protocols: In cases where committee members are assigned a task, they should work on that task and report their findings at the next regularly called meeting.

Special Protocols: The rules for confidentiality apply and members may not discuss what happened in executive session. During financial meetings, the committee members involved shall study the reports so they can take part in those meetings.

34. Concluding Remarks

There are some things left undone. One is the question of how long or what does it take for an event or project to be considered as a tradition. Perhaps a new activity or event needs time to debug their agenda and formalize a template for use in future times.

As time and events change, these protocols may be amended. This becomes the ongoing job of future AMVETS Family Traditions and Protocols Committee members. Their protocols must involve a motion to approve the changes by the committee at Convention, and to recommend a Resolution be adopted by each of the Family Members. The current Committee Chair shall produce an initial version of a Resolution and have that issued by HQ to the Families at the

customary time during the annual cycle, in time for consideration by the individual Families' delegation on their Convention Floors.

35. Expenses to AMVETS subordinate organizations

Mandatory attendance is not required at some functions. However, if a subordinate organization attends, they are responsible for expenses incurred.

36. POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony

TABLE SET UP

1. A small, round bistro table
2. White tablecloth
3. Single place setting, preferably all white
4. Wine glass - inverted
5. Saltshaker
6. Slice of lemon on bread plate with a pile of spilled salt
7. Small bud vase with a single stem red rose
8. Yellow ribbon tied around the vase
9. Candle - lit
10. Empty chair
11. POW-MIA cover for back of chair

PREPARATION

A table should be prepared by hotel staff when they set up dining arrangements. National Provost Marshall or a designated member of the Headquarters Staff should verify that the table is properly set (and light the candle).

If a bar, cash or complementary, is present in the room all business at the bar should cease during this ceremony. Food serving should be halted during this ceremony.

The presenter (and bagpiper if used) should be stationed either just outside the room or at the rear of the room. At the end of the reading the script the bagpiper or canned music should begin to play "Amazing Grace" and the presenter marches at a funeral pace to the table and presents the flag for the honored guest.

If a live bagpiper is used, he should be instructed to begin playing as the presenter enters the room. He should then follow the presenter about 7 to 10 feet behind him and in the center of the aisle. Playing should pause while the flag is being presented and then resume as the presenter turns to leave. Bagpipes will continue until the presenter has exited the room.

SCRIPT

This ceremony is our way of remembering and saluting those comrades who are missing in action or prisoners of war and have not yet returned home. This ceremony is carried out throughout our military at formal dinners and is part of our AMVETS protocol. Please remain seated throughout the ceremony so that those who are seated behind you will be able to see.

As you entered the banquet hall this evening, you may have noticed a small table in a place of honor. It is set for one.

This table is our way of symbolizing the fact that members of our profession of arms are missing from our midst. They are commonly called POWs or MIAs, we call them "Brothers."

They are unable to be with us this evening and so we remember them.

This Table set for one is small -- Symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner alone against his oppressors.

The Tablecloth is white -- Symbolizing the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.

The single Red Rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades-in-arms who keep the faith awaiting their return.

The Yellow Ribbon tied so prominently on the vase is reminiscent of the yellow ribbon worn upon the lapel and breasts of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting of our missing.

The Candle, the candle is lit -- Symbolizing the upward reach of their unconquerable spirit.

A Slice of Lemon is on the bread plate to remind us of their bitter fate.

There is Salt upon the bread plate -- Symbolic of the families' tears as they wait.

The Glass is inverted -- They cannot toast with us this night.

The Chair – The chair is empty. They are not here.

All of you who served with them and called them comrades, who depended upon their might and aid, and relied upon them, for surely, they have not forsaken you.

Until the day they come home, Remember!

Please seat the honored guest.

37. References

- a. AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws, and Bylaws of the Affiliate AMVETS Families (current versions).
- b. The Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation, George Washington, Mount Vernon Ladies Association, (1982).
- c. Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, (most recent edition), H. M. Robert, Da Capo Press.
- d. AMVETS Officers Manual, (current version).
- e. (a) "United Nations Command", Wikipedia, (Oct 2019); (b) "Jointness", Wikipedia, (Oct 2019); (c) "The color PURPLE: Jointness in Action", NDTAGram, (Feb 2010).