

125th NATIONAL CONVENTION VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

**LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
JULY 27 – AUGUST 1, 2024**



PROPOSED BYLAW, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL AMENDMENTS

SCHEDULE OF RESOLUTIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR COMMITTEES

MEET THE CHALLENGE



2023-2024

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

R-1

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Proposed by Department of Georgia

RITUAL

INITIATION CEREMONY (Brief Form)

Amend Chapter Title - Initiation Ceremony (Brief Form), Ritual, under **Junior Vice Commander**; in the first paragraph, first sentence, by replacing “marine or airman” with “marine, airman or guardian”.

R-2

(Page 64)

Proposed by Department of Wisconsin

RITUAL

INSTALLATION OF DISTRICT OFFICERS

Amend Chapter Title – Installation of District Officers, Ritual, in the second paragraph of **Installing Officer**; first sentence, by removing “and to assist Post Surgeons.”

R-3

(Page 106)

Proposed by Department of Massachusetts

RITUAL

FUNERAL CEREMONIES

Amend Chapter Title - Funeral Ceremonies, Ritual, by adding the following new subsection after subsection “CHAPEL SERVICE”:

“CHAPEL SERVICE FOR GOLD STAR MEMBERS

We, the members of _____ Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, are here assembled to pay a lasting tribute of respect to our departed comrade *and Gold Star mother/father; husband/wife*. When the call of our country was heard Comrade (deceased) answered; self was forgotten in the cause of the greater good. Bravely they marched away with the abiding faith in their God, their country and their flag.

The red of our country’s flag was made redder by their heroism; the white more stainlessly pure by the motives which impelled them; and, in the starry field of our nation’s glorious banner, the blue has been glorified by the service they have given for American ideals.

(Name of Comrade) further gave to the defense of our great nation the most precious and painful gift of all, that of their son/daughter; husband/wife, (announce name of the deceased child or spouse), who gave his/her life in the service and defense of the United States.

Parade rest. (Detail responds.) The Chaplain will invoke the divine blessing. (Detail hold caps

over heart with right hand.)

Chaplain: (May extemporize or repeat): "O God, Father of us all, we here extend these final earthly tributes to our beloved comrade. Accept our prayers on behalf of the soul of Thy servant departed. Welcome them to Thy house to rest in peace. Look with mercy upon the loved ones bereaved by their passing. Comfort and console them through Thine own tenderness. These things we ask humbly in Thy name. Amen

(All repeat Amen. Replace caps.)

(A choir, quartet or soloist may sing "Sleep, Soldier Boy" or other appropriate song.)

Commander: One by one, as the years roll on, we are called upon to fulfill these sad duties of respect to our departed comrades.

Attention! Officers of _____ Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

Junior Vice-Commander: (Faces the casket, approaches it, stands before the blue field of the casket flag in such position that their back is not toward the assembly. They fold back the blue corner of the flag to leave bare a portion of the casket. Then places the evergreen upon the casket and declares so all will hear):

"On behalf of _____ Post _____ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I present this evergreen tribute as a symbol of our undying love for our comrade.

(Junior Vice-Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in the line.)

Senior Vice-Commander: (Takes same position at the casket. Laying white flowers upon casket and says): "I place these white flowers as a symbol of purity upon this casket, and may each future generation emulate the unselfish devotion to duty even to the last of our comrades.

(Senior Vice-Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Officer of the Day: (Takes same position at the casket. Laying wreath upon casket and says):

"We place this wreath as a last token of affection from their comrades-in-arms upon the casket of our departed comrade and crown their mortal dust with this symbol of victory."

(Officer of the Day salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Chaplain: (Placing a gold or yellow flower upon the casket and says): I place this symbol upon you in honor of the glorious sacrifice you made in life; that of your son/daughter; husband/wife in defense of our nation. With all of the admiration and reverence that we possess for your life and for the life of your child/spouse. May this most precious of tokens serve as an emblem of your grace and perseverance.

Commander: (Takes same position at the casket. Placing small Flag of the United States upon casket and says):

“On behalf of our glorious republic, for whose integrity our comrades of the Veterans of Foreign Wars enlisted and served, we place upon their casket this emblem of our country, a country whose arms are always open to shelter the oppressed.”

(Commander then replaces folded corner of the casket flag, laying it over the evergreen, flowers, wreath, and flag symbols. Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Chaplain: (Delivers brief address extemporaneously or repeats the following):

We come today to honor the memory of one who offered their life as a service to our nation’s cause and to our God. Proudly we remember their service. Because of men and women like our comrade, we live in a land freedom, peace and justice. May our ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our honored comrade and friend.

We believe that our comrade is now in the hands of our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Commander and Judge of all. We lay our comrade’s body (ashes) to rest. Let us cherish their virtues and learn to imitate them. Let each of us be loyal and faithful to our remaining missions in life that we too will be able to join in that grand fraternity which is on earth and in heaven, and remains unbroken.

We realize how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy in our loss. May we be comforted by the assurance that our comrade, friend and loved one is at rest in God’s eternal peace, and abides in a place where all burdens are lifted and there is no more sickness and pain.

Comrades, let us now pledge ourselves anew to provide support and protection for those left behind; to pick up the banner laid down by our comrade, and continue their march to face the challenges that confronts us in this life, and may our God always be our companion and guide.

Commander: This concludes our service.”

R-4

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Proposed by Department of Massachusetts

RITUAL

FUNERAL CEREMONIES

Amend Chapter Title - Funeral Ceremonies, Ritual, by adding the following new subsection after subsection "CHAPEL SERVICE":

"CHAPEL SERVICE FOR THE GOLD STAR COMMUNITY

Commander: Parade Rest!

We are here assembled to pay a lasting tribute of respect to our departed Gold Star father/mother; husband/wife.

When the call of our country was heard, their son/daughter; husband/wife (announce name of the deceased child or spouse) answered. He/she bravely marched away as their mother/father; husband/wife too so greatly sacrificed in their absence, knowing that they may not return.

There is no purer form of sacrifice or duty than that of those who lost a child/spouse in the service of their country.

One by one, as the years roll on, we are called upon to fulfill these sad duties of respect and reverence. We shall miss (name of departed Gold Star) and their hard attained wisdom, words of counsel, and watchful care over the memory of their son/daughter; husband/wife and in so doing, care over the memory of our nation.

Attention!

Commander: Officers, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

Senior Vice-Commander: (Places a white flower upon the casket and says): As a symbol of purity, I place this flower upon you in remembrance of your departed life. For as much as it has pleased God to take out of this world the soul of (departed Gold Star) it shows how beautifully true is the comparison of life to this flower, which opens in the morning, but in the evening withers away. May each future generation emulate such unselfish devotion.

Chaplain: (Placing a gold or yellow flower upon the casket and says): I place this symbol upon you in honor of the glorious sacrifice you made in life; that of your son/daughter; husband/wife in defense of our nation. With all of the admiration and reverence that we possess for your life and for the life of your child/spouse, may this most precious of tokens serve as an emblem of your grace and perseverance.

Chaplain: We have come today to honor the memory of one who offered so much to God and to our Nation's cause, that of their child/spouse. Because of fathers/mothers; husbands/wives like (name of departed Gold Star) who were willing to give so greatly and who raised God's

children to love and honor Him and their country, we are therefore able to live in a land of freedom, peace, and justice. Let us cherish their virtues and learn to imitate them.

May our ceremonies today deepen our reverence for our departed friend, who we believe is now in the hands of our Heavenly Father.

We realize how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy in your loss. May we be comforted by the assurance that our friend is at rest in God's eternal peace, and abides in a place where all burdens are lifted, where there is no more sickness, and where there is no more pain.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, who art our refuge and strength in our time of trouble, enable us we pray, to put our trust in Thee. Amen.”

PROPOSED