



The American Legion 5th District



Sergeant At Arms GUIDE

For God and Country

We associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; To maintain law and order; To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; To make right the master of might; To promote peace and goodwill on earth; To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

Pledge of Allegiance

“I pledge allegiance”

(I promise to be true)

“to the flag”

(to the symbol of our country)

“of the United States of America”

(each state that has joined to make our country)

“and to the Republic”

(a republic is a country where the people choose others to make laws for them ~ the government is for the people)

“for which it stands,”

(the flag means the country)

“one Nation”

(a single country)

“under God,”

(the people believe in a supreme being)

“indivisible,”

(the country cannot be split into parts)

“with liberty and justice”

(with freedom and fairness)

“for all.”

(for each person in the country...you and me!)

The pledge says you are promising to be true to the United States of America!

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District Level

District General Meeting

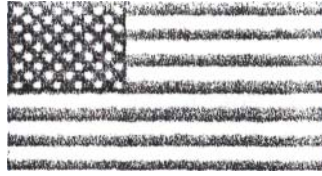
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Flag Etiquette

When setting up any meeting, the American flag should be posted on the Speaker's right. All other flags (i.e., Post flags, Auxiliary flags, S.A.L. flags, etc.) should be placed on the Speaker's left.

The Eagle on the American flag is to be facing to the rear until posted, when it will be turned to the front. The Eagle on the other flags will be facing the front at all times.

Flag standards (poles) should be adjusted as to not let the flag touch the floor/ground at anytime. Also, that the Eagle is not touching the ceiling and can be easily turned when posting. Also, adjust the flags so that they show a neat appearance, and if any emblems are on them such as Legion emblems, then the whole emblem should be seen.

The American flag should never touch the floor/ground for any reason, nor should it be soiled for any reason. When storing the American flag on a standard, it should be placed in a position in the Post as to not allow it to be soiled, but still displayed proudly. When storing the flag when not in use such as transporting for a parade or special ceremony or just packed away for another meeting, a plastic covering should be placed over the entire flag as to prevent it from being soiled.

When the American flag is properly posted during a meeting or ceremony, anyone approaching or passing by or near the flag should render a salute when wearing an authorized Legion cap (e.g., Legion, Auxiliary, S.A.L. only). If a person is not wearing an authorized Legion cap, then that person should place their hand over their heart instead.

Note: Baseball caps are not authorized Legion covers.

When the flags are in place and posted correctly, no person is to reach between the flags to hand or receive items from the speaker or table. The person needs to approach the American flag, stop and render a salute if properly covered, or hand over heart if not properly covered, then proceed around the left side of the flag and behind the speaker.

When business is complete, the person will walk around to the left of the speaker and once clearing the Post flag, stop and render a salute if properly covered or place hand over heart if not. And then return to their seat.

It is the function of the Sergeant At Arms to watch over flag etiquette. If someone is not rendering honors, the Sergeant At Arms should politely instruct the member or guest in the proper procedure.

Caps

There are a few things about the Legion caps that are sometimes forgotten. Some of these are: Never eat with a Legion cap on.

Exception: When only snacking on hors d'oeuvres, it is permissible to leave the cover on.

The cap is to be placed on a table with the Legion emblem pointing up at all times.

Nothing is to be placed on top of the cap at anytime.

When wearing a belt clip, the Legion emblem will be placed outward at all times.

When not wearing the cap, the cap should be placed in clear plastic as to prevent it from being soiled.

When in prayer or saying the Pledge of Allegiance, the cap should be placed over your heart with the Legion emblem at the top and facing outward with your hand inside for support.

Never wear the cap backwards.

Never put anything in the cap such as notes, voting slips, etc.

Pins are to be worn on the right side of the Legion cap only. Never install a pin on the emblem side of the Legion cap.

Pins illustrating rank of service shall never be worn on the Legion cap.

Pins of an offensive nature shall not be worn on the Legion cap.

Legion caps should be kept clean at all times:

The blue caps should be dry cleaned. Spot cleaning is preferred for other covers.

Legion caps should be worn at all official meetings, ceremonies and community functions sponsored by the Post.

In a District meeting, the only cap that is authorized is a Legion cap. Baseball caps, cowboy hats, etc. are not authorized.

Different Types of Caps

National is an all Red cap. Department is an all White cap. Division is an all White cap. District is a Blue with White crown cap. Post is an all Blue cap.

If you hold or have held a position in The American Legion, then that position can be an authorized patch obtained from Emblem Sales, sewn on or the position embroidered on the right side of the cap.

Examples:

Commander
1st Vice Commander
Adjutant
Chaplain
Sgt At Arms
Judge Advocate

Note: If you wear a Legion name tag, this shall be worn over the left breast of shirt, blouse or jacket.

POST LEVEL

General Meeting

Setup

Speaker table is to be placed in a position for all to see. Lectern is to be placed in the center of the speaker table (when available).

American flag to the right of the speaker as speaker faces members with the eagle facing backwards.

Post Colors to be placed to the speaker's left and eagle facing forward.

Place 3 chairs behind table:
Chaplain – Commander – Adjutant

Ensure there is enough room behind the table for persons to walk comfortably.

Chairs or tables should be placed in a position for all to see the speaker.

Posting of Colors

Approach the American flag, turn the eagle to face forward, take one step back and salute upon request from the Commander, then walk around the flag and behind the speaker's table. Upon coming out the other side of the table, stop and render a salute, and then proceed to your appointed position near the doors of the meeting.

Duties During a Meeting

Follow any request from the Commander or speaker.

Obtain a list of all guests and their positions in the Legion or organization for introductions (e.g., District Commander, Past Commander, etc.).

Maintain order during the meeting, such as controlling disruptive talking and/or noises.

Ensure all members and guests render proper honors to the Colors.

Escort members and guests to the lectern at the request of the speaker or Commander. When escorting someone to the lectern, you should approach the Colors, stop and render a salute and then escort the guest around the flag and then to the lectern, then position yourself to the speaker's left and wait until the guest is finished, then escort the guest off to the speaker's left around the table and stop and render a salute to the Colors again, and then escort the guest back to their seat. Escort the member or guest with your left arm or at your left side so your right arm is free to salute.

Retiring the Colors

Upon request to retire the Colors, you should approach the Colors, render a salute on the Commander's command of "Hand Salute", and then turn the eagle backwards, take one step back, render a salute to the Colors again, and wait for the Commander's command of "To" to finish the salute. Step to the side and wait for the Commander to adjourn the meeting.

Disassembly of Meeting

Take down and store properly all flags and equipment. If the American flag is not stored on a pole and base, then a plastic bag should be placed over the flag to prevent it from being soiled. The same goes for any other flag used during the meeting.

General Post Functions

Greet all guests that enter the Post and offer any assistance they might need. Promote camaraderie amongst the members of the Post. Assist any member or officer of the Post upon request. Ensure proper display of Colors in front of the Post. Perform any other request from the Commander or other officers as needed. Maintain order in the Post and on Post premises, amongst members and guests.

Special Meetings

Set up and dismantle as per instructions from the Commander. Follow guidelines as per Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies as provided by The American Legion.

DISTRICT LEVEL

District General Meeting

Setup

A District Membership meeting is setup the same as a Post level meeting, with the exception of five chairs being placed behind the table instead of three chairs.

Chaplain – First Vice Commander – Commander – Adjutant – Finance Officer

Posting of Colors

Same as Post meeting.

Major Duties During a Meeting

Same as a Post meeting.

Exception: In some special ceremonies the Colors will enter from the rear of the room, the flags will enter in Color Guard fashion with the Legion Colors to the left of the American flag. When coming to the front of the room, the American flag will cross in front of the Legion flag and be placed in the stand. The Legion flag will be placed in the stand a moment after the American flag. Then both flag bearers will step back and render a salute as directed by the Commander.

Honoring Colors

Same as a Post meeting.

Retiring Colors

Same as a Post meeting.

Dismantling of Meeting

Same as a Post meeting.

District Convention Ceremonial

The main duty of the District Sgt-at-Arms during a convention is to keep the Commander on time for all functions and duties. Take care of any invited dignitaries and their needs. Make sure the meeting room is setup and all details have been taken care of. The Commander will not have time to deal with these problems.

When arriving at a District Convention, first find the person from the hotel that is in charge of setting up the meeting room and in charge of catering. This is usually the same person. Find out where all meetings will take place and what time they have been scheduled, then verify with the Legion schedule. Find out where it is safe to put all District property (e.g., Colors, lectern, rifles, etc.). Get a floor plan from either the Commander or person in charge. Find out what time you can start putting the meeting room together. Set the meeting room up according to the floor plan with Colors being placed the same as any other meeting. As you are viewing the lectern from the front of the table, the District flag is placed to the right and the Auxiliary flag is placed to the right of that and then the SAL flag is placed to the right of that.

The order from left to right: District flag, Auxiliary flag and S.A.L. flag. Put up any banners or decorations as necessary. The Commander will let you know what he wants put up. Set up the POW table or have a POW flag available, whichever you choose to use. Keep in constant contact with caterers to know when food will be ready and meeting rooms are available so you know when to set up. While you are taking care of these issues, always keep an eye on the Commander and Dignitaries to take care of any of their needs or instructions.

Post Everlasting Ceremony

On Sunday morning, or whatever day the ceremony is to be held, get to the meeting room early enough to set up Colors, rifles and music for the Post Everlasting Ceremony. Rifles are set up in front of the lectern as the picture below shows. The Sgt-at-Arms has only one thing to say during this ceremony, which is listed in the Officers Guide. The Commander will ask if the equipment is in place and the Sgt-at-Arms will visually check it and confirm to the Commander that the equipment is in place. The Sgt-at-Arms will turn down the lights when requested by the Commander and start Taps

when prompted. When cleaning up after the ceremony and stowing equipment, be very careful of the helmet because it may still be hot.

District Special Ceremonies

Post Elections and Installations Performed by the District Commander

The major duty during Post elections is to check all membership cards and rosters to make sure non-eligible members are not admitted, to maintain law and order, to help collect and count votes when necessary. There will usually be a Post Sgt-at-Arms available to post the Colors, but in the event there is not one available, be prepared to step up and take care of that duty. Before a Post Installation, get a list of all incoming officers from the Post Commander and find out how to pronounce them during the meeting. Find out from the Post Commander if a Post Sgt-at-Arms is available to post Colors and take care of Post duties. If there is not one, offer to fill that spot for them. The Post Sgt-at-Arms is in charge of the floor until the District Commander takes the lectern to conduct the installation. When the District Commander takes the lectern, you should be on your feet and ready to perform any duties the Commander asks. This ceremony is also listed in the Officers Guide, but basically the Commander will ask the Sgt-at-Arms to line up all the incoming officers by title and name. After they are lined up, you will tell the Commander “I present to you the newly elected officers of Post ____”. At which time, you will salute the Commander.

Stand to the side and let the Commander finish the ceremony. After the officers are installed, you will be asked to take them back to their seats and escort the new Commander to the lectern. The new Commander will stay at the lectern, so there is no need to wait. Usually during installation, most Posts also have an awards ceremony. If there is not a Post Sgt-at-Arms available, you will need to escort persons to the lectern as the Commander requests.

Proper Way to Salute





CREDITS

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