



**THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF CONNECTICUT**

Protocol Guide

Purpose:

This Protocol Guide is intended to assist the Post and Districts within the Department of Connecticut with the planning and conducting American Legion Functions to achieve successful outcomes for those events. The following established protocol enables functions to proceed smoothly and predictably and serves to enhance the image of both the host organization and the American Legion. This is important, especially when there are visitors from outside the organization

Scope:

This Protocol Guide covers the planning and conduct of American Legion functions, including visitations by American Legion Dignitaries. It does not cover public events such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies.

This Protocol Guide was reviewed and accepted as suggested Department standard at Department Executive Committee meeting of January 13, 2006

GENERAL PLANNING GUIDELINES

Successful outcomes are usually determined by detailed planning and effective execution. The individuals responsible for an American Legion function must establish an appropriate team to handle the various details of the planning and execution phases. Team members should be familiar and conduct of American Legion functions.

Confirmation of Date: This is a critical issue, if a Department Officer is to be invited, make sure this is done months in advance and is cleared through the Department Headquarters. Some important information to give is: if the event is a dinner. Will it be a joint event with the Legion – Auxiliary? Will there be non-Legion guests there? What is the dress code?

Site Selection: The function site selection depends upon its purpose. Generally it should be in a central location, readily accessible to those attending. The facility should be able to support the size of the audience. Considerations: room layout, proper public address equipment. Adequate parking, etc. This is preferably an American Legion Post, but site selection should be based upon the suitability of the facility.

Event Chairman: This is key individual. The event chairman should have prior experience with planning and conducting the type of function in question.

Dinner Chairman: Must be able to manage all details of dinner planning with either the host Post or the facility management. Responsibilities can include tickets, ensuring proper room layout, head table arrangement, seating, menu planning, flowers and decorations, programs, etc.

Communications Chairman: This responsibility should include both internal American Legion communications (including the American Legion Auxiliary and The Sons of the American Legion) and public relations activities. This position requires someone with excellent communications skills and past history of working with the media.

Itinerary Chairman: This responsibility should include transportation, coordination of any tours to be conducted, rooming, special parking, etc.

Master of Ceremonies: Must be an effective public speaker and familiar with American Legion Protocol.

Color Guard: Posting of the colors enhances any American Legion function and should be included wherever possible.

GENERAL VISITATION PROTOCOL

The following protocol enables American Legion activities to proceed smoothly and predictably and serves to provide the courtesies that we should extend to one another. It enhances the image of the American Legion to the benefit of everyone associated or touched by its activities and functions.

Topic

Guidelines

Post Visitations

- 1.) The District Commander and District Vice-Commander should coordinate these visits well in advance.

Department Commander's Visitation

- 1.) Coordination for Department Commander's Visitations to Posts and Districts should start with a letter of invitation to the Department Adjutant.
- 2.) The organization that is the host for these visitations RSVP letters in invitation, with itinerary and complimentary ticket(s), if applicable, should be sent to: Department Commander, Adjutant,

SITE SELECTION GUIDE

Site selection should provide the maximum suitability and convenience for the attendees of the function with the goal of maximizing participation. This is especially important for the National Commander's Visitations and Department Commanders' Visitations.

- Geographic Location:**
- 1.) Central to applicable region
 - 2.) Accessible to transportation, airport for National Commander
 - 3.) Points of interest for tour, if applicable
 - 4.) Media presence, if applicable

- Facilities:**
- 1.) Large enough to handle anticipated audience
 - 2.) Parking (including reserved spots for Honored Guests)
 - 3.) Food preparation, serving capacity
 - 4.) Separate luncheon facility, if applicable
 - 5.) Press Conference area, if applicable

- Rooming:**
- 1.) Suitable hotel/motel accommodations.
 - 2.) Consider all potential guests in visiting party.

ITINERY PLANNING GUIDELINES

These are the essential support activities that will enable the overall function to run smoothly and problem free. Visitors from outside the area will experience the results of proper itinerary planning. Paying attention to the details pays off with satisfactory results.

- General**
- 1.) Finalize list of visitors with arrival times, Departure times, rooming, requirements, and transportation requirements, if any.

- Agenda**
- 1.) Develop detailed activities plan to include arrivals of visitors, luncheon, tour, press conference, dinner, other related activities, breakfast next day, departures, etc.
 - 2.) Coordinate plans with Communications Chair and other event committee chairs.
 - 3.) Coordinate agenda with Department Commander/Adjutant and other Department level organizations (Auxiliary, S.A.L.) as applicable.

- Rooming**
- 1.) Consider spouses accompanying guests
 - 2.) Non-smoking rooms preferred by guests
 - 3.) Advise guests of financial arrangements for room charges
And other miscellaneous charges to room
 - 4.) Room charges for National Commander and Aide
Should be paid by host organization.
 - 5.) Other guests Room charges are absorbed at the discretion of the
Host organization.

- Transportation**
- 1.) Establish Welcoming Committee
 - 2.) Commander should greet Distinguished Guests upon arrival.
 - 3.) Coordinate airport pickup, if applicable
 - 4.) Use private autos/vans (arrange for drivers) or public transportation as applicable for all phases of the visitation.
 - 5.) Van transportation is often a convenience for tours, etc.
 - 6.) Arrange for reserved parking for visiting dignitaries.

DINNER PLANNING GUIDE

The following are guidelines, which may help in planning the dinner and associated activities.

- Facility Selection**
- 1.) Establish preliminary estimate of attendance, usually based upon past experience.
 - 2.) Adequate parking available? Reserved parking available?
 - 3.) Will it support room layout? See appendix "A"
 - 4.) Will non-smoking area(s) be available?
 - 5.) Public Address System available
 - 6.) Kitchen facilities, serving capability to handle anticipated attendance expeditiously
 - 7.) Note those Department Dinners and events involving special guests should have dinner served on china and metal utensils.

Menu & Refreshments

- 1.) Time: cocktail hour, dinner service, ceremonies
- 2.) Dinner selection
- 3.) Hors D'oeuvres
- 4.) Open bar Vs Cash bar
- 5.) Cost calculation, per person and total (consider cost of complimentary tickets and other non-food costs)

Tickets

- 1.) Develop a list of distinguished guests (free tickets). Note that if funds are available, suggest recipients of complimentary tickets
- 2.) Develop advertising strategy
- 3.) Design/Print Tickets
- 4.) Establish ticket sales team, distribute tickets, record numbered tickets, and develop sales records
- 5.) Distribute complimentary tickets

Room Layout

- 1.) Coordinate with the banquet facility for head table location, distinguished guests table(s), etc. Table tent cards; head table arrangement.

Programs

- 1.) Usually printed just prior to function to accommodate last minute changes.
- 2.) Should list guests and agenda
- 3.) If there is a food line, the Commander, President, Officers, Guests are served first.**

Decorations.

- 1.) Room decorations
- 2.) Flowers (at Head Table, other tables?)
- 3.) Corsages/boutonnieres for Head Table guests
- 4.) Banner(s)

COMMUNICATION PLANNING GUIDELINES

Getting the word out is essential. Most American Legion functions require communication both within the American Legion Family and to the general public

Notification & Coordination

- 1.) Coordinate with Department Commander if requested.
- 2.) National Commander's Visitation – date will be advised by Department Adjutant
- 3.) Coordinate with department Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion Detachment as applicable

Invitations

- 1.) Letters of invitation to distinguished guests, local dignitaries, news media, etc.
- 2.) List should include; Department Commander, Adjutant, NEC Alt NEC, Vice Commander, Sergeant at Arms, Auxiliary President and S.A.L. Detachment Commander
- 3.) Advise guests who will be seated at the head table that they will be seated there and whether or not they will be speaking
- 4.) For those who will be participating in an itinerary, describe what will be done
- 5.) Advise rooming arrangements as applicable

Publicity

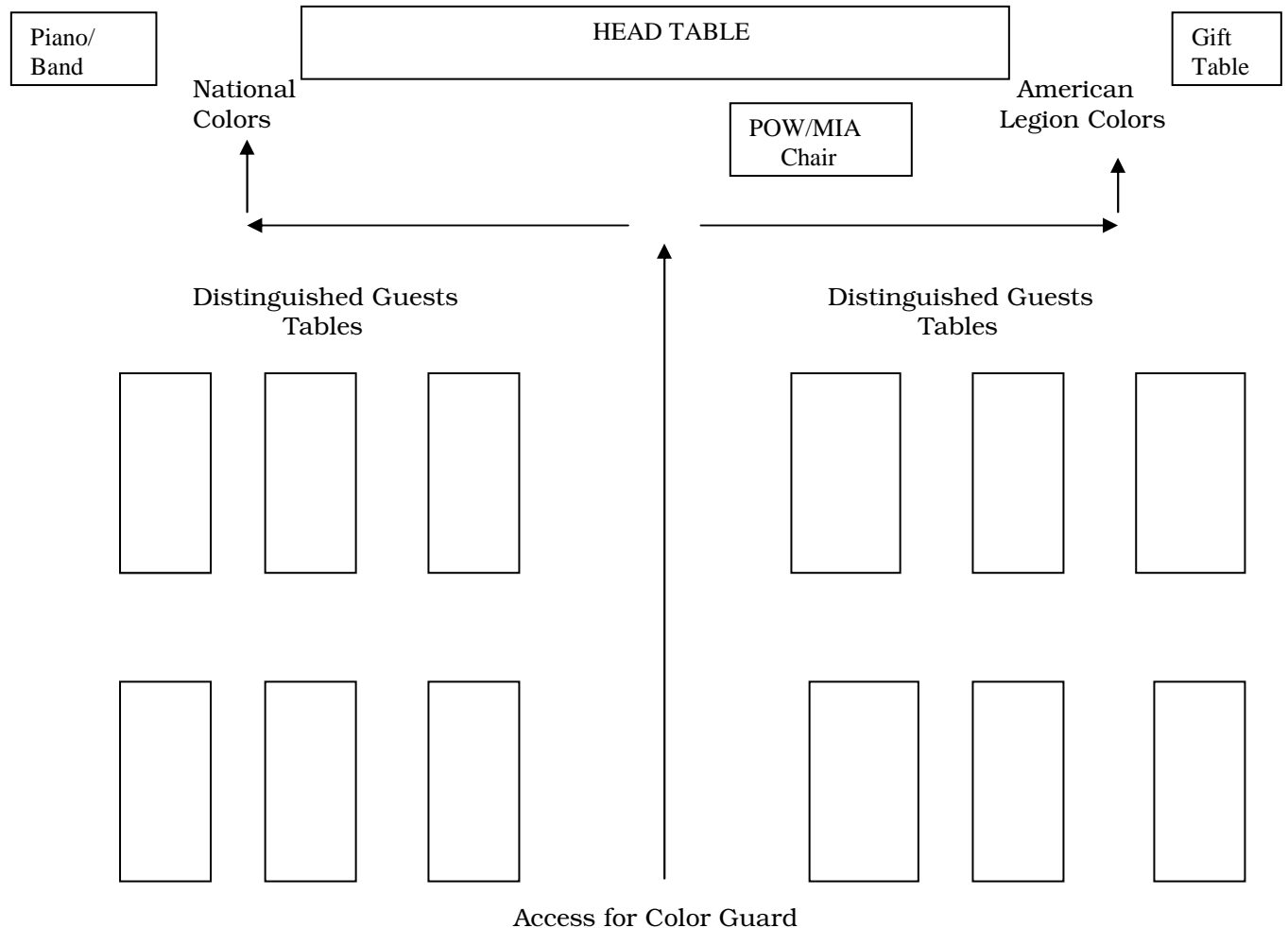
- 1.) New releases to local TV, Radio, Print Media (see appendix "G")
- 2.) Usually a National Commander's visit will include a press conference.
- 3.) Determine invitation list and suitable site
- 4.) Posters to advertise event
- 5.) American Legion Post Newsletter as applicable

General

- 1.) Obtain biographical data for honored guest (s) for use in news releases and program. Edit as appropriate.
- 2.) Obtain pictures if they're available for news releases and/or programs
- 3.) Gift (s) for honored guest (s)

ROOM LAYOUT GUIDE

Proper room layout enables the audience to participate fully and serves to establish an appropriate atmosphere for the occasion.



Reserved Tables

Department Officers:

Past Department Commander (s)

Past Department President (s)

Spouses of guests at Head Table

Host Post Commander/Spouse

Host Unit President/Spouse

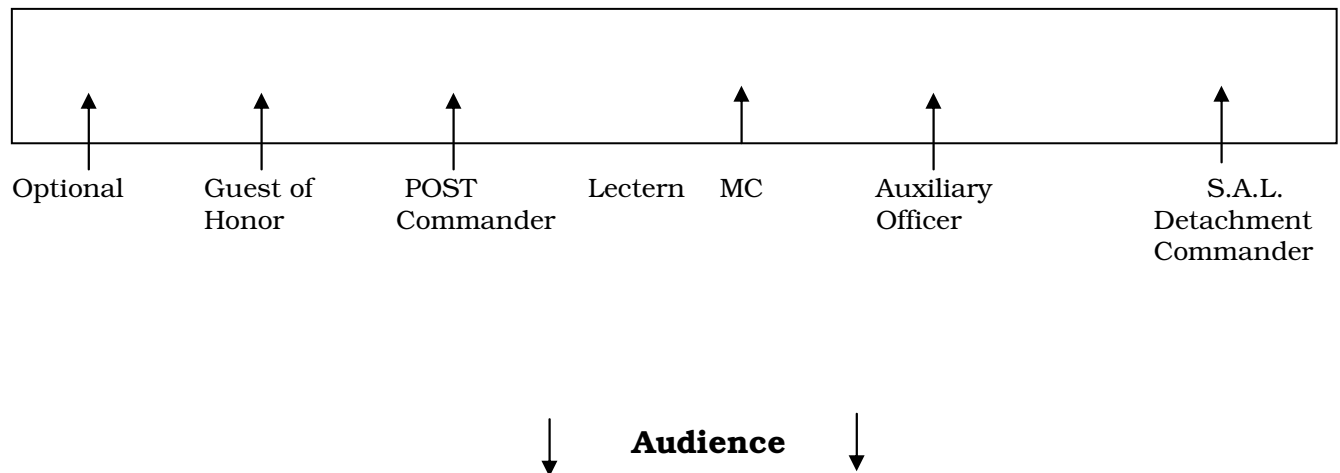
Other honored guest at discretion of committee

Notes:

The Head Table will have a skirt or drape. The Reception/registration table to collect tickets/money should be located outside of main function room. Reserved tables should be indicated with tent cards.

Head Table Configuration Guidelines

The Head Table is a place of distinction. Placement of guests at the Head Table is indicative of their rank within the American Legion and protocol should be followed explicitly.



Notes:

Place cards indicating guest's name should be at each place on the Head Table.

Other Distinguished Guests may be located at reserved tables at the discretion of the committee.

SPEAKING PROTOCOL

Protocol helps to make American Legion functions proceed smoothly and expeditiously. Generally, all speeches should be brief with a simple and clear message. This will help to keep the interest of the audience.

Topic

Guideline

Speaking Order 1.) The main speaker/guest of honor speaks last, as he/she will receive the longest speech of introduction and their address will conclude the speaking portion of the program.

Speeches of Introductions

- 1.) Should be brief, and to the point
- 2.) Refrain from reciting biographical data, use anecdotes when appropriate

Introduction of Head Table

- 1.) Done by the Master of Ceremonies
- 2.) Order of introduction starts with speaker's extreme left, Working toward the center. Then with speaker's extreme right, working toward the center.
- 3.) Introductions should be just names and titles/functions.
- 4.) Refrain from lengthy introductions of any particular individual.

Order of Introductions

This is the single most important aspect of any meeting. The order in which individuals get introduced will make or break any event. The below sequence should be used for all meetings and events.

Is done in order of rank within the organization, from low to high.

Local dignitaries, non-American Legion guests
S.A.L Officers - Local, District, Department, National
Auxiliary Officers - Local, District, Department, National
American Legion Officers - Local, District, Department, National

American Legion Officers are introduced in the order by which they're installed into office:

Executive Committeemen
Sergeant-at-Arms
Service Officer
Historian
Chaplain
Judge Advocate
Finance Officer
Adjutant
Vice Commanders

If NEC or Alternate NEC is present, this officer should be introduced just prior to the Department Commander.

If it is an Auxiliary Function, it should be Commander then the President.

If it is a Legion Function, it should be President then the Commander.

If it is a joint function, it should be President then Commander.

GUIDE FOR MASTER of CEREMONIES

Program Activity	Comment (s) /Suggested Wording
Call to order	May I have your attention please? (...Pause...)
Entrance of Distinguished Guests	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.) Distinguished Guests may be escorted into the function room2.) As a minimum, the single Honored Guest should be escorted into the hall at the beginning of the event.3.) Three wraps of the gavel, please rise for the entrance of (name, title), escorted by (name, title).4.) Announce each escorted guest this way, and/or then introduce the Guest of Honor. Let us welcome our Honored Guest for this evening (name, title), escorted by (name, title).
Salute Colors	Stay standing to salute the Colors of Our Nation. Hand Salute! (pause) Ready, Two!
Posting Colors	Stay standing for the posting of our Nation's Colors. As Colors approach Right Hand Salute! Color Guard Commander will ask for permission to post colors response. Sergeant, post the colors! Hold salute until Colors are posted, then Ready, two! Allow Color Guard time to leave.
Invocation	We will have the Invocation delivered by (name), Chaplain of (_____) Please uncover and remain uncovered until after the Pledge of Allegiance. After Invocation is delivered Thank you, (_____).
POW/MIA Service	The MC will conduct POW/MIA Service or another may conduct it.
Pledge of Allegiance	With your hat over your heart, please recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag. Cover.
Seat the Audience	One wrap of the Gavel
Welcome	Appropriate brief welcoming remarks by the MC
Introduction of Head Table	Brief introduction of Head Table, names and title/positions only. We are pleased to have with us tonight several distinguished guests seated at our head table. Begin at far left of speaker At my far left we have (1,2,3,4). Then introduce head table from speaker's right.
Dinner	Thank you. Please enjoy your dinner
Introduction of Distinguished Guests	Brief introductions of those seated at Distinguished Guests Table(s), such as spouses not seated at Head Table; May I have your attention please? We have several Distinguished Guests with us tonight. I ask that you please stand when I announce your name. Please hold your applause until all of our Distinguished Guests have been introduced.
Welcoming Remarks by Post Commander	MC will introduce the Post Commander. We are pleased to have with us tonight (name and title).

S.A.L. Detachment Remarks

MC will introduce S.A.L. Detachment Commander if remarks are to be delivered. After S.A.L. Commander's remarks, Thank you (name)

Post/District Auxiliary President

Introduces Department Officers

Post/District Commander

Introduces Department Officers

Department Commander

1.) If this is a Department Commanders visitation, Department Commander will make his address here.

Presentation of Gifts

If gifts are presented during the function, the order of presentation is: S.A.L. Detachment Commander, Department. Auxiliary President, Department Commander.

Everyone Stand

Three wraps of the Gavel

Benediction

Please stand and uncover for the Benediction to be delivered by (name). Benediction thank you, (name).

Retiring of Colors

Please cover and remain standing as we retire our Nation's Colors. Color Guard Commander will ask permission to retire the Colors. Sergeant, retire the Colors of our Nation. Hand salute! Remain at hand salute until Colors leave the room. Ready, two!

PRESS RELEASE

American Legion Post #54
Gary Harris, Commander
PO Box 421
Colchester, Ct. 06415

For Immediate Release

Contact: Gary Harris
Phone: (860) 537-0000

American Legion Department of Connecticut and Auxiliary President Visit New London County

The Colchester American Legion Organization will host a joint visitation by state Commander Mitch Meccico and Auxiliary President Irene Morris on Friday, February 25, 1999.

During the visitation, Mitch Meccico and Irene Morris will tour the Waldens Hall of Fame in Fairfield at 1:30 PM where they will participate in the decoration of a Memorial Plaque for Ruth Zona, a Fairfield resident who had supported Community and Veteran's activities for over thirty years. At 7:00 PM a dinner will be held at Donald A. Bigelow Post #54, 127 Norwich Ave. Colchester. Tickets

are \$13.00 and are available at Colchester Legion Posts or by calling Gary Harris New London County American Legion Commander, at 860-537-0000.

State Commander Meccico, a resident of Norwalk, is a life member of XXXXXX Post 366, and has the office of Commander of the State of Connecticut since July 1998. Auxiliary President Morris hails from Branford and has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary for over forty years. During their one-year term in office, the State Commander and the Auxiliary President visit each of the seven districts in Connecticut to coordinate Legion activities within the state.

The American Legion is an organization formed in 1919 to represent Veterans and to promote patriotism and citizenship in America. Membership is open to men and women who have served in the armed forces during a time of conflict. It is the largest Veteran's organization, having over 3.1 million members nationally. In New York State there are over 220,000 Legionnaires in 1,100 local posts. The Legion Auxiliary membership consists of mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and granddaughters of Veterans who are Legionnaires or if deceased, would have qualified for Legion membership. Nationally, The Auxiliary has over 2.5 million members.

INSTALLATION PROCEDURE

One thing to remember is that the retiring Commander, once the meeting is opened must never leave his station until the gavel has been surrendered to the Installing Officer. The fact that the Installation may be joint and that the floor and chair have been given to the Auxiliary does not alter the rules. The Auxiliary Installation is part of your meeting. Technically you are in the chair and remain so until formally relieved by the Installing Officer

Seats of honor should be provided for Department Officers. They should be offered this privilege at all functions. Other guests present should be introduced before the regular officers.

The installation of Officers into The American Legion, Unit or Detachment, whether it be a Post, District or Department is taken very seriously because of the responsibilities those individuals are assuming. Post bars should be closed during the ceremony. There should be no drinks on the table and no smoking during the ceremony. At joint installations the American Auxiliary is installed FIRST. If guests are introduced as members of the installing Team it is not necessary to introduce them again. REMEMBER the party is held after the Ceremony of Installation.

IMPORTANT

The Installing Officer, if other than Department Commander, Sr. Vice Commander, District Commander, MUST be authorized by the Department.

Note

If not installing a Detachment or Unit, then you can omit that portion of this guide. All Legion Officers will be in the prescribed uniform, each wearing the Official American Legion Cap and the Official Badge of the Office to which they are being installed.

Seat Those Present	The Retiring Commander shall seat those present with one rap of the gavel and announce the meeting is about to commence.
Posting Colors	Commander gives three raps of the gavel. Please rise for the posting of our Nation's Colors. As Colors approach; Right Hand Salute! Color Guard Commander will ask for permission to post colors response. Sergeant, post the colors! Hold salute until Colors are posted, then Ready, two! Allow Color Guard time to leave.
Invocation	We will have the Invocation delivered by (name), Chaplain of (_____) Please uncover and remain uncovered until after the Pledge of Allegiance. After Invocation is delivered Thank you, (_____).
POW/MIA Service	The POW/MIA Service may be conducted by another person.
Pledge of Allegiance	With your hat over your heart, please recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag. Cover.
Welcome	Appropriate brief welcoming remarks by the MC
Entrance of Distinguished Guests	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.) Distinguished Guests may be escorted into the function room2.) As a minimum, the Installing Officer should be escorted into the hall at the beginning of the event.4.) Three wraps of the Gavel, Please rise for the entrance of (name, title), escorted by (name, title).

NOTE: The only time the audience SHOULD STAND for guests **IS WHEN THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT/DEPARTMENT COMMANDER IS BEING PRESENTED.**

- 5.) Announce each escorted guest this way, and/or then introduce the Installing Officer. Three Wraps of the Gavel. Let us welcome our Installing Officer/s for this evening (name, title), escorted by (name, title)

6.) After the Installing Officer/s are at the head table seat the audience with one wrap of the gavel.

Introduction of the Head Table

Brief introduction of Head Table, names and title/positions only. **We are pleased to have with us tonight several distinguished guests seated at our head table.** Begin at far left of speaker. At my far left we have (1,2,3,4). Then introduce head table from the speaker's right.

Seat the Audience

One wrap of the Gavel

Dinner

Thank you. Please enjoy your dinner.

Introduction of Distinguished Guests

Brief introductions of those seated at Distinguished Guests Table(s), such as spouses not seated at Head Table, May I have your attention please? We have several Distinguished Guests with us tonight. I ask that you please stand when I announce your name. Please hold your applause until all of our Distinguished Guests have been introduced.

NOTE:

For installation of the Sons of the American Legion. This is meant to be a guide only

S.A.L. Detachment Remarks

(If the S.A.L is to be installed) MC will introduce S.A.L. Detachment Installing Officer.

Installation of S.A.L.

In accordance with S.A.L. Manual of ceremonies

Introduction of Outgoing President

Master Of Ceremonies

NOTE:

For installation of the American Legion Auxiliary. This is meant to be a guide only

Entrance of Auxiliary Team

Installing Officer requests the Sgt. at Arms to advance the installing team and the installing Officer introduces the installing team.

Entrance of New Officers

Installing President requests the Sgt. at Arms to advance the installing team and the installing President introduces the installing team

Installation Of Unit

In accordance with American Legion Auxiliary Manual Of Ceremonies

Retirement of Installing Team

The installing Officer retires her team.

Introduction of new Officers

- 1.) The new President introduces her new officers.
- 2.) The new president gives any gifts at this time.
- 3.) Gives her acceptance speech.

NOTE:

For installation of The American Legion. This is meant to be a guide only

Introduction of Installing Officer

The Retiring Commander. (NOTE: He has just completed his last official act).

Installation of The American Legion

In accordance with American Legion Manual of Ceremonies

Entrance of Team

Installing Officer requests the Sgt. at Arms to advance the installing team and the installing Officer introduces the installing team.

Entrance of New Officers

Installing Officer requests the Sgt. at Arms to advance the newly elected officers.

Retirement of Installing Team

The installing Officer retires the installing team.

Introduction of new Officers

- 1.) The new Commander introduces the new officers.
- 2.) The Post Officers are retired.

The new Commander

- 1.) Recognizes any visiting Posts
- 2.) Gives any gifts at this time.
- 3.) Gives any remarks.

Benediction

The MC gives three raps of the gavel. Please stand and uncover for the Benediction to be delivered by (name). *Benediction* thank you, (name).

Retiring of Colors

Please cover and remain standing as we retire our Nation's Colors. Color Guard Commander will ask permission to retire the Colors. Sergeant, retire the Colors of our Nation.

Hand salute! Remain at hand salute until Colors leave the room.
Ready, two!