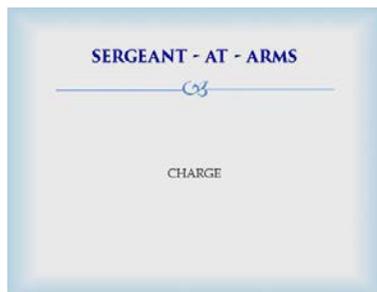


SERGEANT - AT - ARMS



SERGEANT-AT-ARMS



The sergeant-at-arms knows how to arrange the meeting hall and assists the post commander and adjutant in preliminary arrangements for meetings, including leading the color detail during presentation and retirement ceremonies. He or she is the expert on flag etiquette and should know proper flag display and procedures in operating a meeting. The sergeant-at-arms should also play a leading role in the post color guard, burial detail and other pageantry.

The sergeant-at-arms is the logical person to chair a welcome committee, which can have a tremendous influence on the post's image, membership and relationship with members. Every Legionnaire wants to feel part of the group, particularly the new Legionnaire attending his or her first few meetings. The sergeant-at-arms must make certain new members are welcomed, introduced and made to feel they are important to the post. The welcome committee also encourages present members to attend meetings and advises the commander on who should be acknowledged.

All officers should be in uniform, each wearing an official Legion cap and the official badge of office. The commander shall announce the meeting is about to open. Officers shall take their stations. The commander shall seat those present with one rap of the gavel, and the sergeant-at-arms shall close the doors of the meeting hall. The commander shall then give three raps of the gavel, and all who are present shall stand at attention.

Post commander: "Sergeant-at-arms, recover the POW/MIA flag."

The sergeant-at-arms steps forward, picks up the POW/MIA flag off the chair, folds the flag, steps back and places the POW/MIA flag on the table in front of the commander.

INITIATION OF NEW MEMBERS REGULAR FORM



Initiation of new members is an important post function. They need to be shown, officially and formally, that they're indeed a part of The American Legion. They deserve the courtesy of being introduced to the post that has accepted their membership applications and dues payments.

Whether conducted by the post officers or an established ritual team, an initiation ceremony should happen at least once a year. Each officer should learn his or her part of the ceremony to be able to deliver it without reference to the printed text. Each initiation officer should wear the regulation American Legion cap and badge of office.

The sergeant-at-arms is responsible for preparing the hall or meeting room for the initiation, and should see to it that the following items, which are presented to new members during the ceremony, are on hand in sufficient quantity: small U.S. flags, American Legion lapel pins and flag etiquette booklets. All are available through Emblem Sales online at emblem.legion.org. In addition, the sergeant-at-arms, depending on the format your post chooses for this ceremony, may set up the following items: poppies (real or imitation) in a neat arrangement in a vase at either the station of the second vice commander or near the podium identifying the station of the commander; a gavel bell at the station of the past commander or near the podium of the commander; and a miniature stand with the U.S. flag and the Legion colors at the station of the first vice commander or near the podium.

POST EVERLASTING



The American Legion service is nonsectarian. Therefore, it may vary in accordance with the religious beliefs of the deceased Legionnaire. The wishes of the family of the deceased, and of the officiating clergyman, should be respected. The casket is covered with a U.S. flag when closed or as it leaves the chapel or home. If the deceased served under an allied flag, that flag shall also be displayed near the casket.

The diagram above illustrates the proper position of flags, tables or stands used by officers participating in this ceremony. This equipment, with the exception of the brazier and stacked rifles, which are posted during the ceremony, should be put in place before the meeting opens.

Commander: "It is my sad duty to report that Comrade _____ has been called from

our midst, and gone to report to the Commander of all.”

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: “Before proceeding with other business of this meeting, we will conduct the Post Everlasting Ceremony for Comrade _____.” Sergeant-at- arms, allow no one to enter or leave this room until the conclusion of this ceremony. All present will remain silent until the conclusion of this ceremony.”

Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, you will place the brazier and stack the rifles before this rostrum, properly arranged for our Post Everlasting ceremony.”

The sergeant-at-arms salutes and gives the necessary commands to three rifle bearers and a comrade with the brazier. The commander returns the salute.

Sergeant-at-arms: “The equipment is properly arranged, comrade commander.”

Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, you will retire the detail.”

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: “This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before. We come to honor the memory of one who offered his (her) life in the service of our country and who has now enrolled in that great spirit army, whose footfalls cause no sound, but in the memory of mankind, their souls go marching on, sustained by the pride of service in time of war. Because of them our lives are free; because of them our nation lives; because of them the world is blessed. “May this service deepen our reverence for our departed comrades.”

Allow for a brief pause.

Commander: “The adjutant will place an American Legion cap on the rifles in remembrance of Comrade _____’s service to our country in the (Army/Marine Corps/ Navy/Air Force/Coast Guard) of the United States.”

The adjutant places a cap on top of the stacked rifles. The commander waits until the adjutant returns, then gives three raps of the gavel.

Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, lights out. Our comrade chaplain will offer prayer.”

Chaplain: “Our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom has transferred Comrade _____ to the jurisdiction of Post Everlasting of The American Legion. May your soul rest in peace.

Amen.”

Commander: “Comrade adjutant, enter the name of Comrade _____ in the record of members of (post name and number) who have transferred to Post Everlasting.”

The adjutant enters the name in a book provided for this purpose. The commander waits until the adjutant rises.

Commander: “Comrade adjutant, hand me the letter containing the service and Legion records of Comrade _____, which we will transmit to Post Everlasting of The American Legion.”

The commander then reads a letter.

Commander: “Comrade chaplain, transmit this letter containing the service and Legion records of Comrade _____ to the adjutant of Post Everlasting.”

The commander hands the letter to the chaplain, who places it in the brazier; the record burns. NOTE: The record burned by the chaplain can be either a blank piece of paper or a typed document. Do not burn the deceased member’s post records.

Commander: “Bugler, sound Taps in memory of Comrade _____ and in memory of all the comrades of Post Everlasting of The American Legion.”

The bugler sounds Taps.

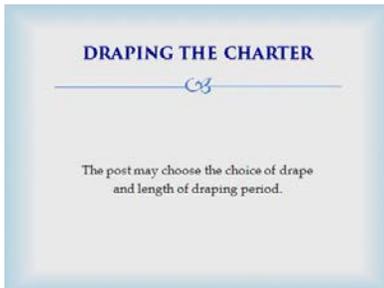
Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, turn on the lights.”

The commander raps the gavel once to seat members.

Commander: “Comrade adjutant, remove the hat. Sergeant-at-arms, remove the brazier and rifles.”

CEREMONY FOR DRAPING AMERICAN LEGION CHARTER

The post may choose the choice of drape and length of draping period.



Commander: “It is my sad duty to report that Comrade _____ (or Comrades) _____ has (have) been called from our midst. (He/she/they has/have) gone to the Commander of us all in Post Everlasting. Before proceeding with other business of this meeting, we will drape the charter in memory of Comrade (Comrades).

Sergeant-at-arms, obtain the drape in preparation for draping the charter.”

GOLD STAR BANNER CEREMONY



This suggested program may be performed as part of a regular meeting or other event sponsored by the post.

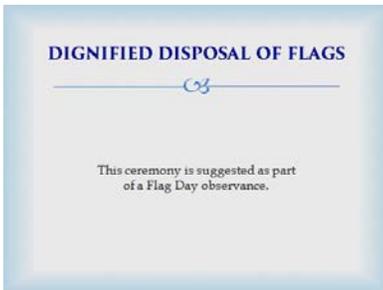
The program may be modified to fit the occasion. Notify the audience that applause is never given when a person is introduced as a Gold Star Mother or family member.

Commander: “We will now conduct a Gold Star Banner presentation to the family member(s) of a veteran killed in combat (or one who was wounded and died of his/her wounds or disease during wartime). This is a solemn ceremony during which due reverence is requested. Please do not applaud during or after the presentation. The Gold Star replaces the Blue Star, signifying that a family member who was serving during wartime is now deceased. Please stand.”

The commander makes three raps with the gavel.

Commander: “Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the recipient(s) to the position of honor.”

DIGNIFIED DISPOSAL OF UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS



This ceremony is suggested as part of a Flag Day observance. The post assembles outdoors at night. Members form two parallel rows about 20 feet apart, facing each other. Officers take up stations as shown in the graphic on page 89. A small fire is burning opposite the commander and beyond the rows of members.

Sergeant-at-arms: “Comrade commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable flags of our country for inspection and disposal.”

Commander: “Comrade sergeant-at-arms, advance with your detail and present the flags for disposal and inspection.”

Reemphasize the importance of the Sergeant - at - Arms as an active member of the Post.



The sergeant-at-arms shall preserve order at meetings and shall perform such other duties as may be from time to time assigned by the Post Executive Committee.

