
BALLOTING FOR CANDIDATES

Section 103 of the Manual of Procedure, provides that applications for membership may be grouped and accepted by viva voce vote. Upon request of any one member, any individual's application must be voted upon separately by written ballot; and upon the request of any three members, all applications must be voted upon separately by written ballot.

Regardless of the method of voting, acceptance or rejection of candidates is by majority of votes cast. Following is the procedure for written balloting. The Adjutant reads the name and brief service record of each candidate.

Commander: Comrades, you are about to ballot upon the applications of (give names) who desire to become comrades of this Post.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will prepare the ballot.

(Officer of the day distributes the ballots.)

Commander: Comrades, you will now cast your ballots. Vote for the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(After each member has marked their ballot, the ballots are collected by the officer of the day and counted by the Senior Vice Commander and Junior Vice Commander.)

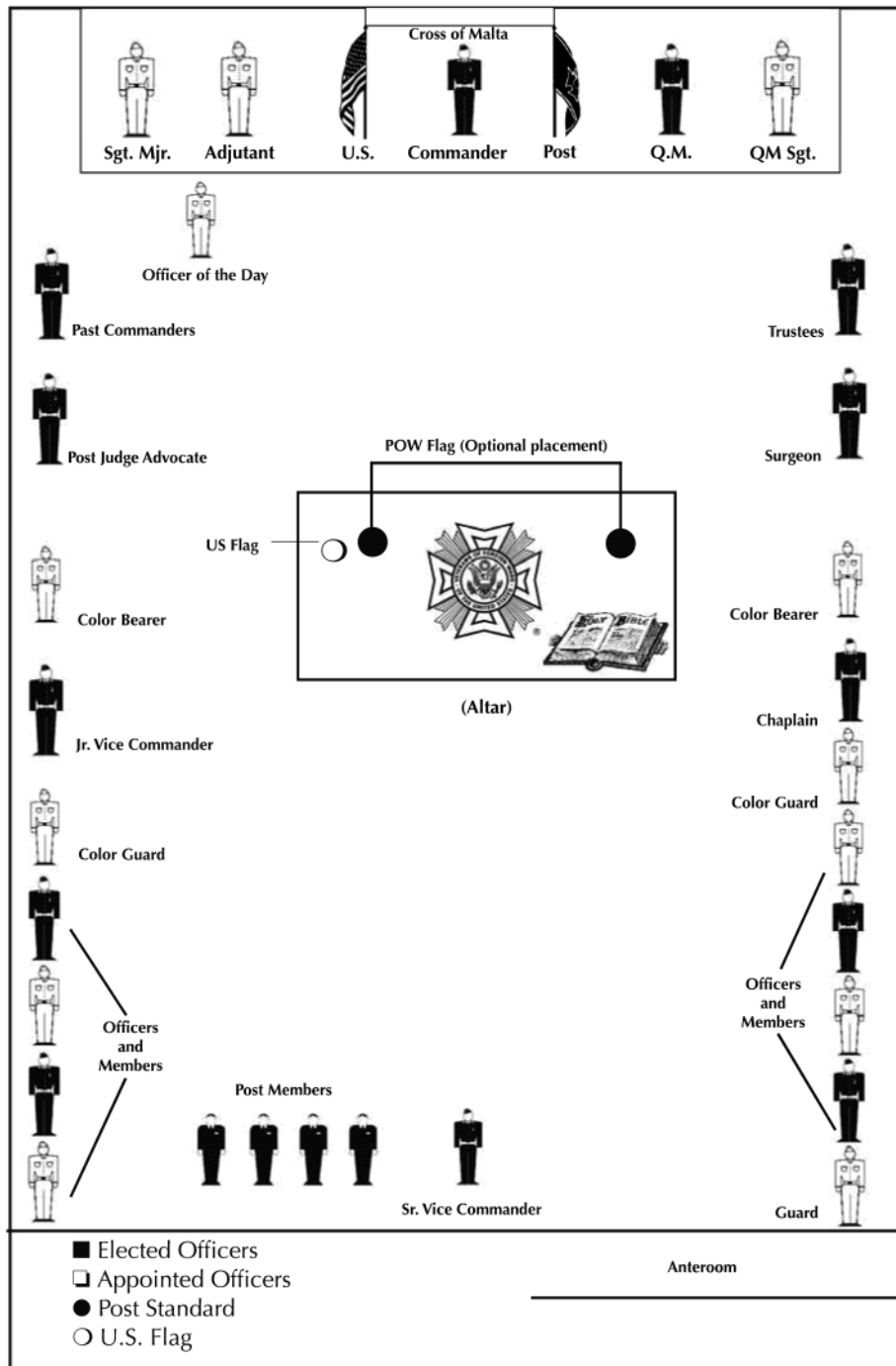
Commander: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, how do you find the ballot?

Senior Vice Commander: Comrade Commander, I find the ballot favorable (or unfavorable).

(A majority of the votes cast by ballot shall determine whether the applicant shall be admitted to membership. Less than a majority shall reject the applicant for one year, after which the applicant may again apply for membership.)

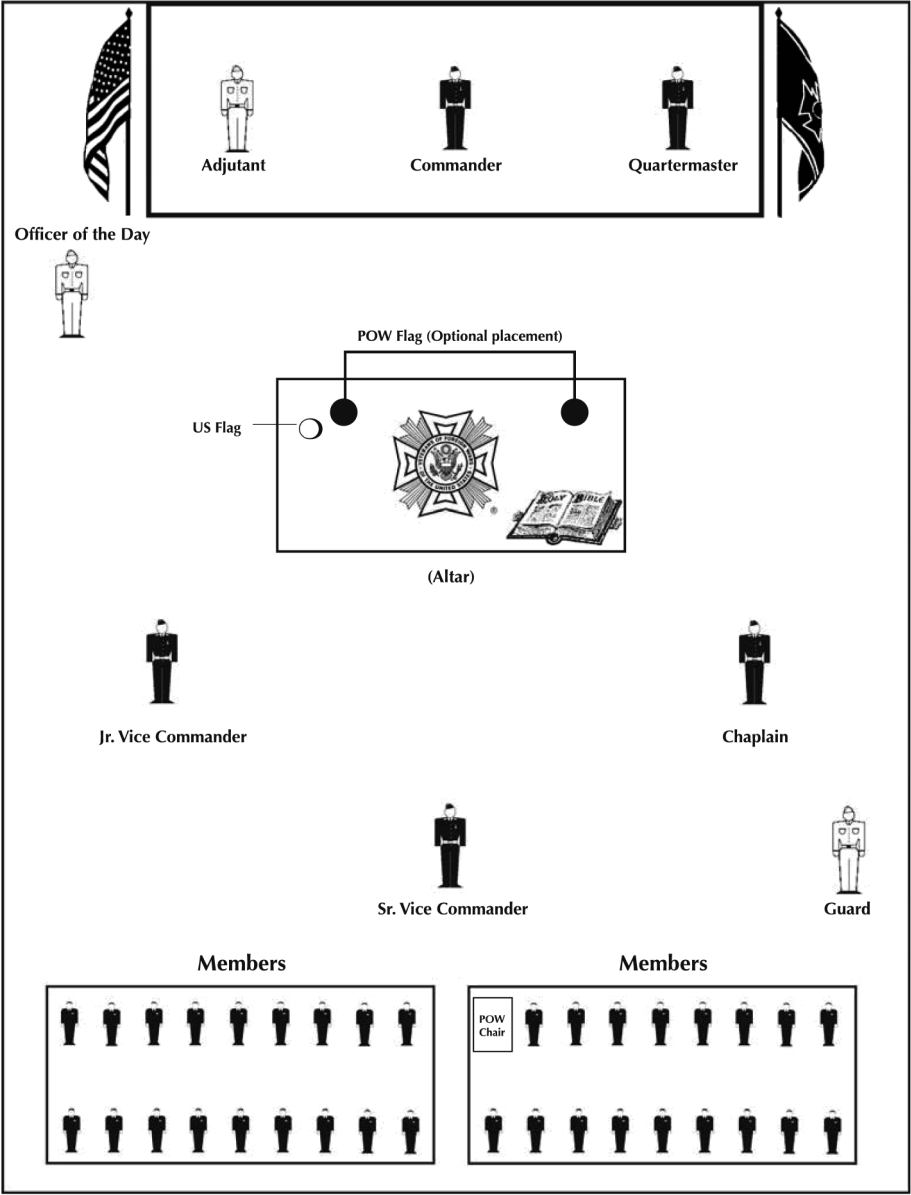
Commander: By your ballots you have (or have not) elected _____ to membership. Comrade Adjutant, you will notify the recruit(s) to present themselves for initiation at the proper time.

Plate No. 1



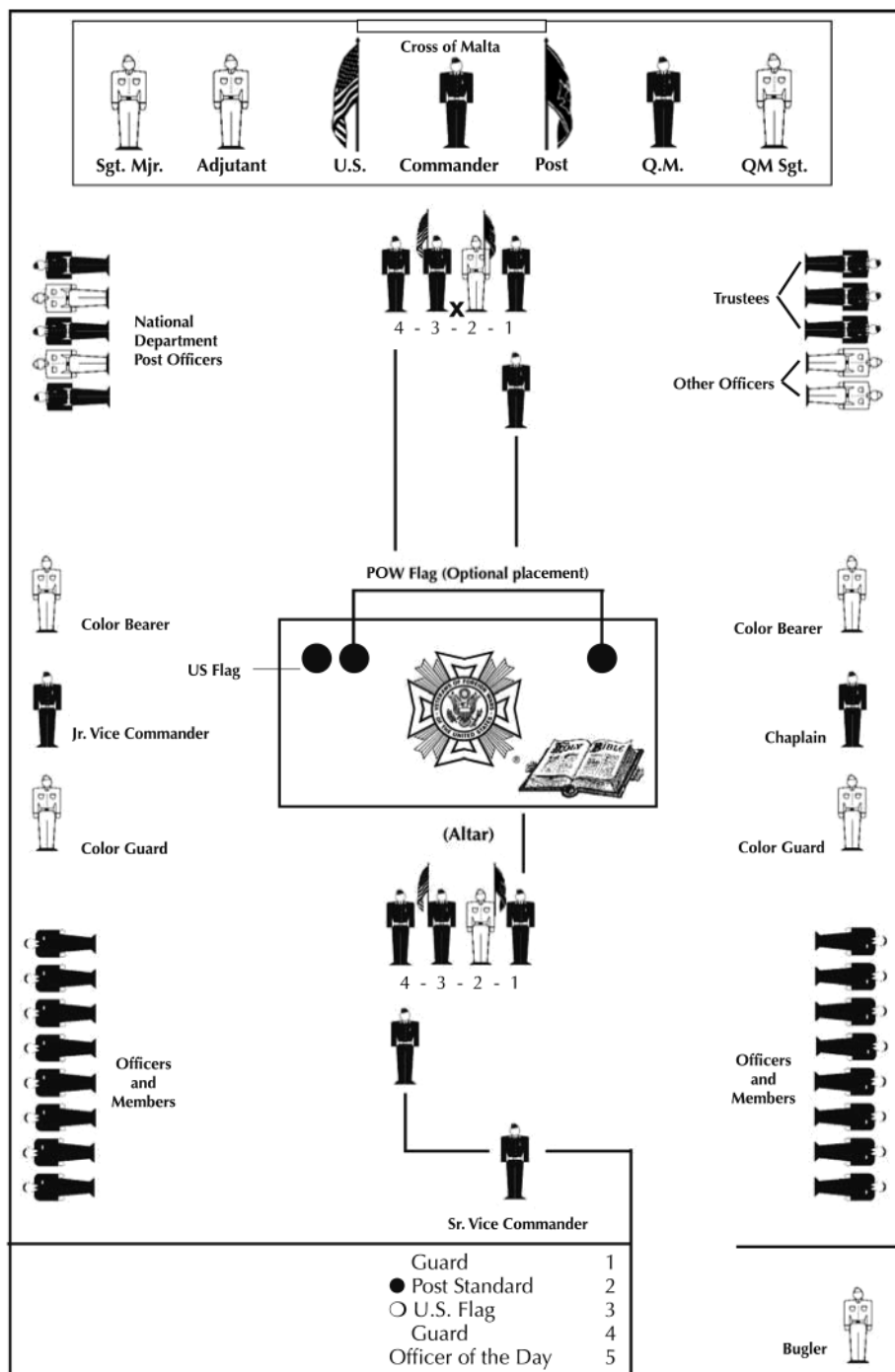
OFFICERS' STATIONS, in Post meeting, also showing staffed United States Flag and the Bible upon altar cloth; and position of U.S. Flag and Post colors.

Plate No. 1A



OPTIONAL OFFICERS' STATIONS FOR POST, COUNTY COUNCIL AND DISTRICT MEETINGS

Plate No. 2



ADVANCING THE COLORS, showing route of color bearers and guards to altar, placement of the Flag of the United States and Post colors, and color detail stations during ceremony.

OPENING POST CEREMONIES

The hour of opening having arrived, the officer of the day displays the Flag of the United States and Bible on the altar, leaving Bible closed, after which the Commander takes station and gives one rap for attention.

Commander: The officers will take their respective stations. Unauthorized guests will kindly retire, and the guard will close the doors.

(The Commander ascertains if unauthorized guests have retired.)

Commander: By the power and authority vested in me, I am about to open _____ Post No. _____ for the transaction of any business that may lawfully come before it (two gavel raps). Officer of the Day, satisfy yourself that all present are entitled to remain.

(The officer of the day will examine each comrade, assisted as directed by the Commander. Those found in possession of official VFW dues receipts for the current calendar year take seats. Officer of the day then advances to the altar, salutes the Commander and says):

Officer of Day: Comrade Commander, I find all, except those standing, in possession of official VFW dues receipts for the current calendar year.

(Commander instructs the Quartermaster to determine the status of members standing. Those who have not paid their current dues will be required to pay said dues or leave the meeting room. Quartermaster will report their findings to the Commander.)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will prepare the Post room for the salute to the colors. (Two gavel raps.)

Officer of Day: Color Bearers and Guard fall in!

(After bearers and guard if used fall in at altar.)

Officer of Day: Present Arms! Order Arms!

(Using appropriate commands Officer of the Day marches color guard from Post room. When ready to enter with colors Officer of the Day knocks on door and announces to guard.)

Officer of Day: Officer of the Day with the colors.

Guard: Comrade Commander, Officer of the Day with the colors.

Commander: Admit the Officer of the Day with the colors.

Present Arms! Order Arms!

Commander: Attention!

(Chaplain proceeds to altar, taking their station between it and Senior Vice Commander's station. Chaplain faces altar and opens Bible.)

Commander: Parade rest!

(Both colors execute parade rest with the heel of the pikes resting on the floor as in "Order Colors." Pikes are held with both hands front center of the body, left hand uppermost.)

PRAYER

Chaplain: Let us bow our heads. O, Sovereign Ruler of the Universe who art the Lord of Hosts and God of Peace, without Thee our efforts are vain. Continue Thy blessings upon us and our families, we pray Thee, and guide us during our deliberations. We beseech Thee, O God, to bless the dependents of our departed comrades, and to comfort all who gave their loved ones to our nation's cause. Bless and strengthen the sick, the needy and the afflicted. Bless, we ask Thee, the children, families and staff of our National Home and help us to fulfill our duty toward them. Continue Thy favor upon our order, and help us to practice the spirit of true comradeship, both in our councils and with the world at large. Enable us to better the community in which we live through our devotion to duty as citizens. We now have a moment of silent prayer for our departed comrades and for those missing in action and those held as prisoners of war.

(Short pause.)

These and all other necessary blessings we ask of Thee,
Mighty Ruler of the Universe. Amen.

(All respond—Amen. Chaplain takes their regular station.)

Commander: Attention. Comrades, you will join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Present Arms! "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Commander: Order Arms! (at attention) (Optional). We will now sing our opening song, "America."

("The Star Spangled Banner" may be sung as opening song. See page 21.)

AMERICA

My country, 'tis of Thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain side
Let Freedom ring.
Our father's God to Thee,
Author of Liberty,
To Thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light,
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will place the colors.

(Officer of the day marches color detail to positions.)

(In accordance with the Federal Flag Code (Public Law 94-344), the Flag of the United States should hold the position of superior prominence; in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor

at the Commander's right as the Commander faces the audience. The Post standard is placed on the Commander's left and the audience's right. See Plate 2.

When colors are placed, officer of the day returns color detail to altar, facing the Commander's station. The Officer of the Day then dismisses color detail as follows):

Officer of Day: Color Guards, Ground (or stack) arms!

Officer of Day: Color Detail, Present Arms! Order Arms!

Officer of Day: Color Detail, Face!

Officer of Day: Color Detail, Dismissed!

(Note: The national color guard and color bearer sit by Chaplain. Post color guard and color bearer sit by Junior Vice Commander. Color detail go to their respective seats. See Plate 1.)

Commander: Comrades, we are assembled again to transact business of mutual benefit. Do not let petty jealousies or trivial personalities influence our deliberations. Let us uphold always the obligations of unselfish comradeship and loyalty to our organization and to the government of the United States of America.

I now declare _____ Post No. _____ duly opened for the transaction of business. Guard, you will admit any in waiting who may be worthy.

(When the Commander gives the command of "Parade Rest," a member in uniform or wearing VFW cap shall remain at parade rest; shall not remove their cap during prayer (optional), and shall remain at parade rest until another command is given.)

(If distinguished guests enter, or are in the room, the Commander will accord them the proper honors, after which a brief recess may be granted to welcome them informally. If none is present, or, after the recess, the Commander raps for order. All present take stations and seats to resume business. See page 115 for "Honoring Visiting Officers".)

(Commander should note as one item of business the brief Eaton Rapids Home ceremony, item 15 in Order of Business, page 18.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS - Traditional

(Post)

1. Opening ceremonies.
2. Commander: (Leading all members in recitation of Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter.) The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.
3. Calling the roll of officers.
4. Reading, referring, membership applications.
5. Report of Investigating Committee.
6. Balloting for applicants. See page 9.
7. Mustering in of recruits.
8. Reading of minutes.
9. Quartermaster's report; disbursements.
10. Quartermaster's report; receipts.
11. Reading of bills.
12. Report of *Benefits Advisor*.
13. Is there a Comrade or the family of a Comrade in distress?
14. Report of all committees.
15. Remember our National Home.
(Interrupt business at 9:00 p.m. or as close to 9:00 p.m. as is practical for National Home Ceremony.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice.) All present will rise. Parade rest. Comrade Chaplain, you will ask Divine blessings upon our National Home.

Chaplain: Almighty God, we ask for your divine blessing on the children, families and staff of our National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

May Your Spirit dwell with them forever, giving them health and guiding their lives. Help us to always be faithful to our fallen comrades by providing (shelter and guidance) support for their families. We ask in Your Holy Name. Amen.

16. Unfinished business.
(Reading of communications associated with unfinished business. Read and vote.)
17. New business.
(Reading of communications associated with new business. Read and vote.)
18. Nominations, elections and installation of officers.
19. Good of the order.
(Reading of communications associated with good of the order. Read and vote.)
20. Closing ceremonies.

ORDER OF BUSINESS - Contemporary

(Post)

1. Call to order
2. Check dues cards
3. Roll call of officers
4. Read, refer membership applications
5. Read minutes
6. Quartermaster's report
7. Report of Service Officer
8. Report on Comrades or the families of Comrades in distress
9. Committee report(s)
10. Unfinished business
11. New business
12. Good of the Order
13. Close meeting

CLOSING CEREMONIES

(Post)

Commander: There being no further business, we will have our closing ceremony.

(Two raps, all rise).

Commander: Officer of the Day, prepare to retire the colors.
(The officer of day advances to the altar and salutes the Commander, then issues the orders to the color detail who are assumed to be in their proper seats.)

Officer of Day: Color Bearers!

(The color bearers rise and take two steps forward, placing themselves in front of color guards.)

Officer of Day: Color Guards!

(The color guards rise and take positions back of color bearers.)

Officer of Day: Post!

(Color detail marches to altar.)

Officer of Day: Face!

(Detail faces the Commander's station.)

Officer of Day: Present Arms! Order Arms!

Officer of Day: Take Arms!

Officer of Day: Right Face—At Trail—March!

(The officer of day remains at the altar, marching detail to position so that they will not have to make an about-face after taking colors.)

Commander: Comrade Chaplain, you will deliver the closing prayer.

(Chaplain takes position at altar.)

Commander: Parade rest!

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty God, the hour has come when we must part.

We commit ourselves to *Your* care. *You*, Who *are* our strong tower of defense and our protection, grant that in life's battles we may be strong and brave, living such lives of stainless integrity so *that we* reflect honor upon our country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and glorify *Your* great and Holy Name.

May *Your* good providence shield us from all harm, watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom, and bring us together again in true comradeship and peace. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

Commander: Attention!

(Chaplain closes Bible.)

(Officer of the day commands: "Colors, right face, at trail, forward march," or, "Forward march" if color guard is not armed.)

Commander: Bugler, sound "To the Colors."

(Post comes to salute at first note of bugler, or as flags are retired, resuming position of attention without command at conclusion of the call.)

Commander: (Optional) We will sing our national anthem.

STAR SPANGLED BANNER

Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous
fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, Gave
proof through the night that our Flag was still there.
Oh, say, does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave, O'er the
land of the free and the home of the brave?

Commander: Comrades, I now declare this business session of _____ Post No. _____ closed. Our next regular meeting will be _____.

(The officer of the day collects all Rituals, Bible, altar flag, etc.)

INITIATION CEREMONY

(Brief Form)

This brief form of initiation is to be used only in case where not enough qualified comrades are present to give the regular ceremonial. When this ceremony is used the Commander, before giving the obligation, will make it clear to the recruits that while this ceremony admits them to full membership, they will, at some future time, take part in the full ceremonial.

Note: Plural is used, if only one recruit, use singular.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire and ascertain if there are any recruits in waiting.

(Note: Candidates are called recruits until obligated).

(Officer of the day retires to anteroom, ascertains names of any recruits, returns to altar, salutes and says):

Officer of Day: Comrade Commander, I find in waiting _____, who are desirous of becoming members of this Post.

Commander: Adjutant, have the recruits been duly proposed and elected?

Adjutant: They have.

(If not the Adjutant so states.)

Commander: Quartermaster, have all fees been paid?

(Quartermaster answers. If fees are not paid the Quartermaster will retire and collect them, return and report to the Commander.)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire to the ante room, where you will perform the duties of your office.

(The officer of the day will ask the recruits the following questions):

Officer of Day: You have been elected to membership in this

Post, but it is my duty to ask you the following questions:

Q: Have you ever been rejected, suspended or expelled from any Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States?

Q: Do you promise on your word of honor to abide by the Bylaws and Ritual of this order?

(The recruits having answered correctly, officer of the day returns to Post room and reports.)

Officer of Day: (Salutes) Comrade Commander, I have examined the recruits and believe them to be proper persons to become members of our order.

Commander: Officer of Day, you will escort the recruits to the Post room, and by way of the Chaplain's station to the altar.

(Officer of day follows instructions. Party halts at Chaplain's station for advice, then proceeds to altar.)

Chaplain: What you are about to experience has a purpose. Be on your guard at all times, for there are as many dangers in time of peace, and in private life, as there were in active service. When the danger seems greatest, or you feel discouraged, you will often find friends and receive assistance from unexpected quarters. Remember well your instructions, so that you may practice true comradeship which is the fundamental object of our order.

(At Altar.)

Officer of Day: Comrade Commander, the recruits are ready to take the obligation of our great order.

(Commander gives two raps - all rise and remain standing - absolutely no smoking. Commander advances to altar.)

(Chaplain takes position same as in ceremonial initiation, see page 31.)

Commander: Before you may become a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it will be necessary for you to take a solemn obligation in which I assure you there is nothing which will conflict with your religious or political belief, your freedom of civilian pursuits or

obligations to your family. Knowing this, are you willing to become members of this Post?

Recruits: (Answer.)

Commander: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, pronounce your name when I pronounce mine, and repeat after me:

MEMBER'S OBLIGATION

In the presence of Almighty God -- and the members of this order here assembled -- I, (name), do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare that:

I will bear true allegiance - to the Constitution of the United States of America - and I will always be loyal thereto.

I do further solemnly promise and declare - that I will comply with the Congressional Charter -- Bylaws and Ritual of this order -- and I will always be loyal thereto -- that I will never wrong or defraud this organization -- nor a member thereof --nor permit any wrong to be done to either -- if in my power to prevent it.

I will never propose for membership -- any person not eligible -- nor one whom I know to be unworthy.

I will never make known to anyone -- not authorized to receive it --- any of the work of this order.

Should my affiliation -- with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States -- cease in any way -- I will consider this pledge -- as binding outside of the order -- as though I had remained a member of same.

All this I promise and pledge -- upon the honor of a true comrade -- and a member of our great republic.

Commander: As you were. Parade, rest.

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty God, we ask *Your* blessing upon these our comrades who now become fellow members. May the tender ties formed amid the privations and dangers of war be drawn closer by our fellowship in this order. May our union foster among us an enduring comradeship and a spirit of mutual loyalty and support in every walk of life. May these comrades dedicate and devote their lives to *Your* service, and as *You spared* them during the perils of wars, grant that *hereafter* they may be spared for a useful life, to the honor and glory of *Your* Holy Name. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

Commander: Attention. (Pointing to the Holy Bible.) BEHOLD, the Great Guide of all good citizens, and especially of comrades of our order, regardless of creed or birth. In it you will find the precepts of true comradeship and citizenship to which we all aspire. (Pointing to the flag.) BEHOLD, the Flag of the United States, the Flag of our Country, for which you have fought and risked so much, for which many of our comrades have bled and died. It is your duty to uphold it at all times, in all places, in the conflicts of peace as well as of war, that its glorious folds and its traditions may not be sullied by enemies from within or from without.

(At the word "DARKNESS" all lights are turned on and all comrades stretch forth their right hand (palm up) toward their new comrades.)

BEHOLD, Out of the darkness, there are outstretched to you hands of true comradeship, backed by hearts that love you as a true comrade. See that you remain always worthy of their ready and willing service to you and yours, by remembering our motto, WE HONOR THE DEAD BY HELPING THE LIVING.

Commander: Officer of the Day, escort the comrades to the Senior Vice Commander for further instruction.

Officer of Day: (Salutes.) Comrade Senior Vice Commander, by order of the Commander I present these comrades for their

instruction.

Senior Vice Commander: I will now instruct you in the unwritten work of this order.

On approaching the door of the Post meeting room, you will give two knocks to attract the attention of the guard who will challenge, "Who knocks here?" You will answer giving your name and the number of the Post to which you belong.

The guard will then report you to the Senior Vice Commander, who will order to admit you if proper. The guard will then open the door. You will show your membership card. If you have an official dues receipt card for the current calendar year you will be admitted to the Post room, where you will advance to the altar and salute the Commander, thus (military salute). Should the Commander be busy you will face about and salute the Senior Vice Commander.

This will be answered by the Commander, or Senior Vice Commander, thus (military salute), after which you will be seated.

Never cross between the altar and the Commander's station during business sessions unless directed by an officer on duty. This space represents the sacred ground where our comrades who have answered the final roll call are at rest.

Wishing to retire while the Post is in session, you will advance to the altar and use the same sign as when entering, to the Commander or Senior Vice Commander and when answered you may retire.

This concludes the unwritten work of the order. With my best wishes for your future welfare, I now commend you to the care of the Junior Vice Commander.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades to the Junior Vice Commander for further instructions.

(Officer of the day salutes and guides recruits to Junior Vice Commander.)

Officer of Day: (Salutes.) Comrade Junior Vice Commander, by direction of the Senior Vice Commander, I present these comrades for further instruction.

Junior Vice Commander: (Salutes.) My comrades: Ours is a great work, lasting through life; for just as long as there is a soldier, sailor, marine, airman or guardian, so long must our work continue. As members of this Post we shall expect you to do your share. To care for comrades in distress, and those who depend upon them is part of the work of this order and when death shall lay its cold hand upon any of our number, it is our duty to see that they are laid in the bosom of Mother Earth with the honors of war, if possible.

We also owe a duty to our order and to our comrades at all times. Therefore, we caution you to be careful in your conduct, even when surrounded by those whom you may think to be your friends, for the friends of today may prove the enemy of tomorrow. Therefore, do or say nothing that may be used against you or our noble order. When the breath of scandal touches the character of a comrade, many are ready to condemn, and to accept a bare statement as proof of guilt. Be not too hasty in dealing with the weakness of a comrade. Neither think nor speak ill of any until you have exercised the prudence of a true soldier. The lives of many have been blasted by thoughtless and unkind words. Therefore, be very cautious in your conversation, prudent in your conduct and charitable in your judgment. And, remember always the obligation you have taken here at our altar. Remember every obligation of life; be true to yourself, your home and your loved ones, and these comrades will ever be your strong defenders. Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades to the altar in order that they may be decorated with the beautiful Cross of Malta.

(Junior Vice Commander and officer of the day exchange salutes. Officer of day aligns recruits before the altar. Then the Officer of the Day addresses Commander.)

Officer of Day: (Salutes.) Comrade Commander, by direction of the Junior Vice Commander, I present these comrades for presentation of insigne.

PRESENTATION OF INSIGNE

Commander: (Two raps, then advances to the altar and says): My comrades, I shall now decorate each of you with the Cross of Malta. It is a real foreign service decoration and the official insigne of our beloved order, recognized and protected by the United States Government as such. It is a time honored cross and has been worn with dignity from the days of the Crusades, and is especially fitting for its present purpose. I trust you will wear it with credit to yourself and honor to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Comrades, you are admonished to cherish this your latest decoration, to live up to high ideals that have won it for you, to serve honorably in the new and greater war of American citizenship.

I now give you the hand of comradeship, assuring you that in this great organization you will find help and comradeship, just as you will give the same to others who have proved worthy.

This, comrades, concludes your instructions. With my best wishes for your future, I commend you to the care of the members of the Post who will now extend to you a hearty and cordial welcome. The Post is at rest for three minutes.

(Business resumed afterward.)

CEREMONIAL INITIATION

At the discretion of a Post the ceremonial initiation may be exemplified in public. The ceremony should be used at least quarterly and every time there are two or more recruits, if it is at all possible to do so. Every quarter a large class should be arranged for, and during the ceremonial all officers should be in uniform, if possible.

Officers shall make every effort to memorize their parts.

Officers take stations as shown on chart.

There shall be absolutely no smoking, and quiet must be observed during the entire ceremony.

A comrade should be stationed and ready to turn on all lights and all comrades shall stretch forth their right hand (palm up) in token of comradeship at the proper time. See page 37

Candidates are called recruits until obligated, then called comrades.

Senior and Junior Vice Commanders carry swords and take positions as indicated on chart, Presentation of Insigne, page 45. They will hold their swords with the tips resting on the floor, the officers facing each other. When the Commander makes an about-face and commands "Form the arch of chivalry," the swords are brought up, the tips touching, thus forming an arch.

When addressing the Commander all officers salute in a military manner. The Commander will return the salute. All officers exchange salutes when addressing each other.

PREPARATION OF ROOM

Small tent should be erected to right and in front of the Adjutant's station, artificial campfire in front of tent, on right side, stack of arms on left side, as you face it.

Replica of VFW insignie outlined on transparency with light back of it is placed at or above the Commander's station; if this does not give light enough a very dim light may be used at or over altar. All other lights out.

Sentry in uniform, with cartridge belt, rifle and bayonet, marching post between the Adjutant's and Junior Vice Commander's stations.

In path between the Quartermaster's and Chaplain's stations, a comrade dressed in military uniform, with bandage about the head and with ghastly countenance, is concealed behind a grave. The grave shall be of green matting with sprinkling of poppies and wreaths. At the head shall be a canvas with the image or painting of a battleground scene, and behind this the departed comrade conceals themselves. At the foot of the grave shall be a cross with overseas helmet hung on it. Spot or floodlights out in front of cross, operated by departed comrade; spotlight comes on as officer of the day approaches.

As officer of the day approaches with the new comrades, the departed comrade slowly rises from their position behind the canvas, exhibiting their ghastly form.

In the path between the Chaplain's and Senior Vice Commander's stations, a comrade in civilian clothes and with arm in sling and head bandaged will be seeking alms. Musicians as on chart -- VFW members.

CEREMONIAL

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire and ascertain if there are any recruits in waiting.

(Officer of the day retires and ascertains the names of the recruits, returns to the Post room, advancing to the altar, salutes and says - plural or singular. See page 22).

Officer of Day: Comrade Commander, I find in waiting the following recruits who desire to become members of this Post.

(Here gives names of recruits.)

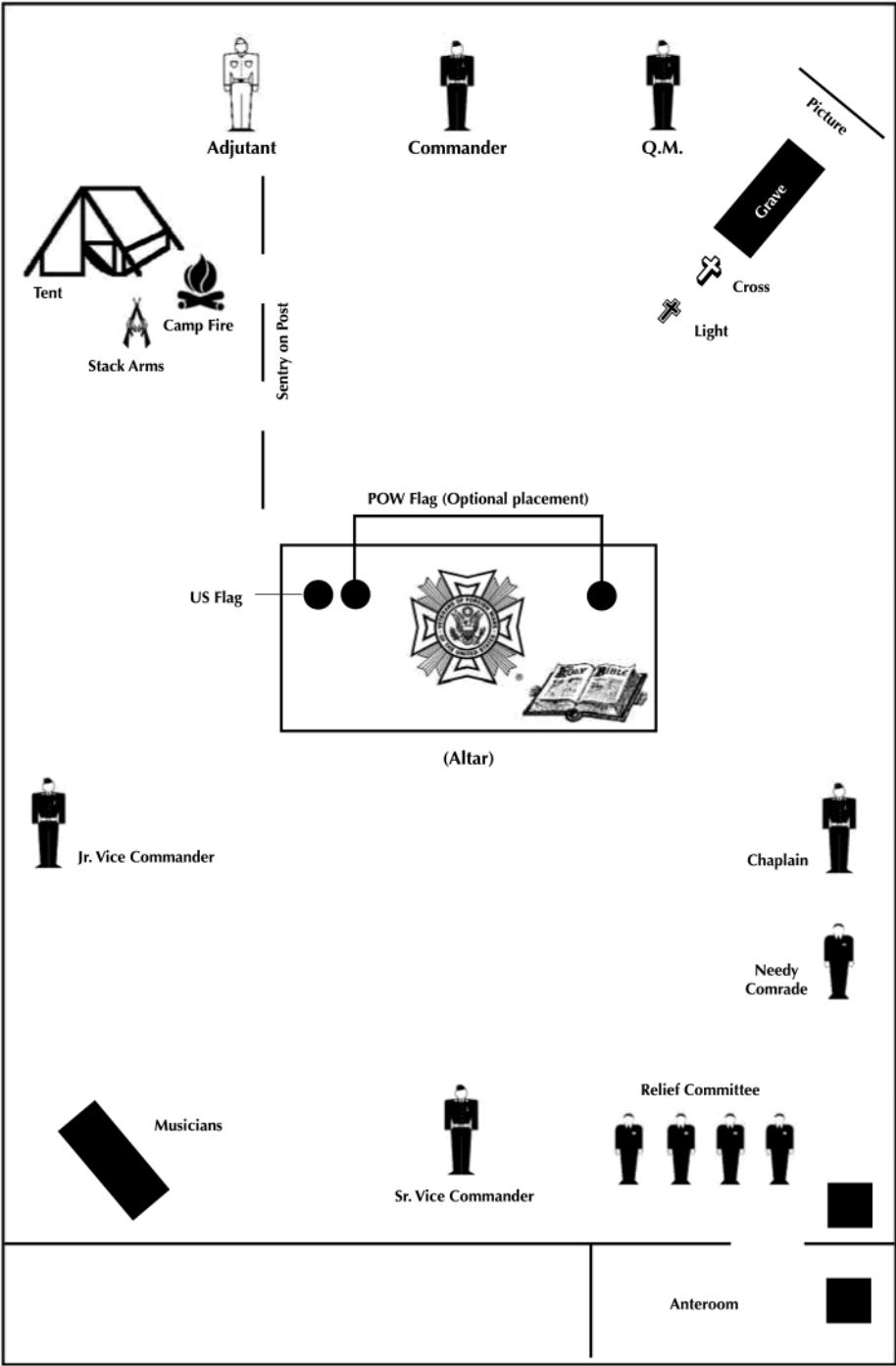
Commander: Adjutant, have the recruits been duly proposed and elected?

(Adjutant answers. If answer is favorable, says: "They have".)

Commander: Quartermaster, have all fees been paid?

(Quartermaster answers. If answer is favorable, says: "They have." If not, Quartermaster will retire and collect the fees, return and report to the Commander. Only those recruits from whom all answers are favorable and who have paid their fees in full shall be admitted.)

Plate No. 3



CEREMONIAL INITIATION. All other officers at their regular stations.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire to the ante room, perform the duties of your office and if the answers are favorable, prepare the recruits and escort them to the Post room by gaining admittance in the proper manner, halting them at the Senior Vice Commander's station.

(Officer of the day retires and asks the recruits the following questions):

Q: Have you ever been rejected, suspended, or expelled from any Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States?

Q: Do you promise, on your word of honor, to abide by the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Ritual of this order?

(If the answers are correct officer of the day places recruits in column of twos and notifies guard.)

Guard: Comrade Commander! Officer of the day with recruits.

Commander: Senior Vice Commander, it is your duty to see that the recruits are properly guided during their initiation and aided while receiving instructions. You will instruct the guard to admit the officer of the day with recruits.

Senior Vice Commander: (To guard) Admit officer of the day with recruits.

(Commander, upon the entrance of the officer of the day, with recruits, gives two raps at which all rise and stand at attention.)

(Lights out.)

Senior Vice Commander: Officer of the Day, it is the order of the Commander that you guide these recruits during their initiation, and guide them in their instructions until such time as the Commander may commend them to the members of this Post for the practice of true comradeship, such as only those who have seen foreign service may truly know.

Guard well your charge so that none may falter by the wayside.

(Recruits are marched to the Chaplain's station via Junior Vice Commander's and Commander's stations. They face the Chaplain.)

Officer of Day: Comrade Chaplain, I present these recruits so that they may benefit by your counsel.

Chaplain: What you are about to experience has a purpose. Be on your guard at all times, for there are as many dangers in time of peace, and in private life, as there were in active service.

When the danger seems greatest, or you feel most discouraged, you will often find friends and receive assistance from unexpected quarters.

Remember well your instructions, so that you may practice true comradeship which is the fundamental object of our order.

Officer of the Day, guide the recruits further during their instruction.

(Commander seats the members—one rap.)

(Officer of the day guides the recruits past the Senior Vice Commander's station, and when they have arrived at the Junior Vice Commander's station, the sentry, still walking their post, challenges sharply):

Sentry: Halt! Who is there?

Officer of Day: Officer of the day with recruits who wish to become members of this Post.

Sentry: Junior Vice Commander, the officer of the day, with recruits who wish to become members of this Post.

Junior Vice Commander: What credentials have these recruits that gained them admittance to our outer lines?

Officer of Day: An honorable discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States (or still in active service, as the case may be) with a record of foreign service which has been found valid by our investigating committee.

Junior Vice Commander: Recruits, each of you in turn, with what organization, in what wars and where did you see foreign service?

(Officer of the day prompts each recruit in turn. The recruits make their own replies, being questioned a second time if necessary.)

Junior Vice Commander: All is well at this station.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the recruits to the Senior Vice Commander.

(Sentry resumes post. Officer of the day guides recruits around the room by way of the Commander's station and halts before Senior Vice Commander's station. After exchange of salutes officer of day says):

Officer of Day: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, by direction of the Junior Vice Commander, I present these recruits whose records have been approved and who now desire to enter our inner lines, for instructions in the fundamental principles of our beloved organization.

Senior Vice Commander: Recruits, your desire to enter this Post is a worthy one.

Neither wealth, rank nor social distinction can gain you entrance.

Only your loyal service under the Flag of the United States, during time of war, on foreign soil, or in hostile waters, or in the unfriendly skies over them will admit you to our fraternal circle.

The objects of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational.

To preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members.

To assist worthy comrades.

To perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and children.

To maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws.

To foster true patriotism.

To maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom.

And to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies whomsoever.

Before proceeding it will be necessary for you to take a solemn obligation, in which I assure you there is nothing which will conflict with your religious or political belief, your freedom of civilian pursuits or obligations to your family.

Knowing all this, are you still willing to become members of this Post?

Recruits: (Answer.)

Senior Vice Commander: Officer of the Day, you will guide the recruits to the altar and prepare them to assume the obligation of a comrade of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Salutes.)

(Officer of the day guides recruits to the altar and places them in proper position.)

Officer of Day: (Salutes) Comrade Commander, the recruits are prepared to take the solemn obligation of this great order.

(Commander calls Post to attention—two raps. Then advances to altar ready to give obligation. Meanwhile, Chaplain advances to station two paces to rear and left of Commander. Sentry advances to station two paces to the rear and right of the Commander, comes to "Present Arms" and remains in that position until the command "as you were." All three face recruits who are at altar.)

Commander: You will raise your right hand and touch the flag of our country with your left hand.

OBLIGATION

When instituting a new Post the instituting officer will say: "You will raise your right hand and place your left hand upon the flag of our country." Then continues as below.

Commander: You will pronounce your name when I pronounce mine, and repeat after me:

In the presence of Almighty God -- and the members of this order here assembled -- I _____ (name) _____, do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare that:

I will bear true allegiance -- to the Constitution of the United States -- and I will always be loyal thereto.

I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will comply with the Congressional Charter -- Bylaws and Ritual of this order -- and I will always be loyal thereto -- that I will never wrong nor defraud this organization -- nor a member thereof -- nor permit any wrong to be done to either -- if in my power to prevent it.

I will never propose for membership -- any person not eligible nor one whom I know to be unworthy.

I will never make known to anyone -- not authorized to receive it -- any of the work of this order.

Should my affiliation -- with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States -- cease in any way -- I will consider this pledge -- as binding outside of the order -- as though I had remained a member of same.

All this I promise and pledge -- upon the honor of a true comrade -- and a *member* of our great republic.

Commander: As you were. Parade, rest.

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty God, we ask *Your* blessing upon these our comrades who now become fellow members.

May the tender ties formed amid the privations and dangers of war be drawn closer by our fellowship in this order.

May our union foster among us an enduring comradeship and a spirit of mutual loyalty and support in every walk of life.

May these comrades dedicate and devote their lives to *Your* service, and as *You spared* them during the perils of war. Grant that *hereafter* they may be spared for a useful life, to the honor and glory of *Your Holy Name*. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

Commander: Attention!

Commander: (Pointing to the Holy Bible) Comrades, BEHOLD the Great Guide of all good citizens, and especially of comrades of this order, regardless of creed or birth. In it you

will find the precepts of true comradeship and citizenship to which we all aspire.

(Pointing to the flag.) BEHOLD the Flag of the United States, the flag of our country, for which you have fought and risked so much, for which many of our comrades have bled and died. It is your duty to uphold it at all times, in all places, in the conflicts of peace as well as of war, that its glorious folds and its traditions may not be sullied by enemies from within or from without.

(In the following, at the word "darkness" all lights are turned on and all comrades stretch forth their right hand (palm up) toward their new comrades and keep them extended until Commander turns to resume their station.)

Commander: BEHOLD, out of the darkness there are out stretched to you hands of true comradeship, backed by hearts that love you as a true comrade. See that you remain always worthy of their ready and willing service to you and yours by remembering our motto, WE HONOR THE DEAD BY HELPING THE LIVING.

(Commander and Chaplain resume stations. Sentry resumes their post. Commander seats the Post.)

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades further along the path of comradeship, assisting them if need be in whatever trials may be encountered.

(At this point, all lights out except insigne.)

(Officer of the day gives commands necessary to march new comrades from altar by way of Junior Vice Commander's station.)

(In the path between the Quartermaster's and Chaplain's stations, a comrade dressed in military uniform, with bandage about the head and with ghastly countenance, is concealed behind a grave. Spotlight comes on as officer of the day approaches. As officer of the day approaches with new comrades, the departed comrade slowly rises from their position behind the canvas, exhibiting their ghastly form.)

Officer of Day: (Suddenly met with the apparition when in front of the Commander's station calls in sharp tones) Halt!

(After a pause the Commander gives two raps to bring Post to attention. All officers and members face toward the "departed comrade".)

Officer of Day: Behold! The spirit of a departed comrade!

Departed Comrade:

(Recites "In Flanders Fields" with great feeling.)

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

Junior Vice Commander: (Responding after a hushing pause.)

Sleep on, brave soldiers, sleep,
sleep where the poppies grow,
Sleep on, brave soldiers,
in your places, row on row.
The lark's still soaring in the sky,
Still bravely singing, soaring high
Away above the cannon's roar,
Scarce heard amid the guns as yore,
Before you slept in Flanders Fields.

The faith with you we've kept and battled with the foe
On crimson fields by you we've slept where poppies blow.
The torch you flung to us we caught;
With blistering hands we've bravely fought to hold it high
To guard you thru the Night,
And at the dawn to guide you to the light,
When you awake from Flanders Fields.

(A pause—Officer of the day then commands: "Present Arms!" Everybody in room comes to snappy salute as bugler sounds taps.)

Officer of Day: Comrade in the silent land, in death as in life, we salute you.

(Spotlight off at this point.)

(Departed comrade fades away behind grave. Salute holds a few seconds, then officer of the day commands, "Order Arms!")

(Another pause and then officer of the day in subdued tones orders new comrades: "Forward March".)

(Lights turned on. Commander seats Post with one rap of gavel.)

(In path between the Chaplain and the Senior Vice Commander's station, a comrade with arm in sling and head bandaged will be seeking alms. The officer of the day will not notice the needy comrade until the comrades have passed.)

Officer of Day: Halt! Comrades, we have already forgotten our obligation. Yonder lies a needy comrade. Let us return and see what assistance we may render.

(Faces recruits so they can see disabled comrade.)

Officer of Day: My good comrade, what seek you?

Wounded Comrade: Comrade, even as you, I have served well my country and flag, but I have been left alone to die by the wayside, because unsympathetic and untried men and women can make no use of me, I being sick and wounded, and unable to help them in their selfish pursuits.

Officer of Day: Where and with what organization did you serve?

Wounded Comrade: In (name country) with the (name unit). I am a VFW member.

Officer of Day: A veteran and in want! This is outrageous!

Officer of Day: Arise, comrade, come with us and we will serve your needs, for that is our prime duty. Let us proceed.

(Gives necessary commands.)

Officer of Day: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, I present to you these worthy new comrades, whom I have escorted along the emblematic path of comradeship. They have a needy comrade for your care.

Senior Vice Commander: (Extends right hand (palm up) of comradeship to needy comrade.) Be seated at my right and I will see that you are taken care of by our relief committee.

(Senior Vice Commander then addresses candidates.)

Senior Vice Commander: Comrades, you have indeed proved yourselves worthy, and I shall take pleasure in instructing you in the unwritten work of this order.

On approaching the door of the Post meeting room, you will give two knocks to attract the attention of the guard who will challenge, "Who knocks here?" You will answer giving your name and the number of the Post to which you belong.

The guard will then report you to the Senior Vice Commander, who will order to admit you if proper. The guard will then open the door. You will show your membership card. If you have an official dues receipt card for the current calendar year you will be admitted to the Post room, where you will advance to the altar and salute the Commander, thus (military salute). Should the Commander be busy you will face about and salute the Senior Vice Commander.

This will be answered by the Commander or Senior Vice Commander, thus (military salute), after which you will be seated.

Never cross between the altar and the Commander's station during business sessions unless directed by an officer on duty. This space represents the sacred ground where our comrades who have answered the final roll call are at rest.

Wishing to retire while the Post is in session, you will advance to the altar and use the same sign as when entering, to the Commander or Senior Vice Commander and when answered you may retire.

This concludes the unwritten work of the order. With my best wishes for your future welfare, I now commend you to the care of the Junior Vice Commander.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades to the Junior Vice Commander for further instructions.

Officer of Day: (Salutes.) Comrade Junior Vice Commander, by direction of the Senior Vice Commander, I present these comrades for further instruction.

Junior Vice Commander: (Returns salute.) My comrades: Ours is a great work, lasting through life; for just as long as there is a soldier, sailor, *marine, airman or guardian* so long must our work continue. As members of this Post we shall expect you to do your share.

To care for comrades in distress, and those who depend upon them, is part of the work of this order; and when death shall lay its cold hand upon any one of our number, it is our duty to see that they are laid in the bosom of Mother Earth with the honors of war, if possible.

We also owe a duty to our order and our comrades at all times. Therefore, we caution you to be careful in your conduct, even when surrounded by those you may believe to be your friends. For the friend of today may prove the enemy of tomorrow.

Therefore, do or say nothing that may be used against you, or our noble order.

When the breath of scandal touches the character of a comrade, many are ready to condemn, and to accept a bare statement as proof of guilt.

Be not too hasty in dealing with the weakness of a comrade. Neither think nor speak ill of any until you have exercised the prudence of a true soldier. The lives of many have been blasted by thoughtless and unkind words.

Therefore, be very cautious in your conversation, prudent in your conduct and charitable in your judgment, remembering

always, the obligation you have taken here at our altar.

Remember every obligation of life; be true to yourself, your home and your loved ones, and these comrades will ever be your strong defenders.

Officer of the Day, you will guide the comrades to the altar in order that they may be decorated with the beautiful Cross of Malta.

(Immediately after the officer of the day gives the order "Right- face, Forward-march," then sentry will challenge.)

Sentry: Halt! Who is here?

Officer of Day: Officer of the day, with comrades.

Sentry: Advance.

(Officer of the day advances comrades to the altar by way of Commander and Chaplain stations.)

(At altar.)

Officer of Day: Comrade Commander, by direction of the Junior Vice Commander, I present these comrades for presentation of insigne.

(Commander calls up entire Post. Two raps.)

Officer of Day: Comrades, you will salute the Commander.

(Officer of the day and new comrades only salute. Commander returns salute.)

Commander: Officers, take your stations for presentation of insigne. (Plate 4.)

(Officers take their stations as shown on chart.)

PRESENTATION OF INSIGNE

Commander: (Takes station slightly in advance of Senior and Junior Vice Commanders, facing the altar.)

My comrade(s), I shall now decorate (each of) you with the Cross of Malta.

It is a real foreign service decoration and the official insigne of our beloved order, recognized and protected by the United States Government as such.

The Cross of Malta is a time honored emblem whose foundation comes down to us from the days of the Crusades a thousand years ago. History tells no more fascinating tale than that of the Knights of the Crusades who were inspired purely by unselfish motives to drive the barbarian from the land they had defiled. The Cross of Malta was one of their emblems. And, while they failed after generations of warfare the feat was finally accomplished by our comrades of the World Wars.

Such is the origin of the beautiful emblem selected by the founders of our organization, symbolic of the justice and rectitude which has sent us as crusaders in modern times to foreign shores.

(Commander pointing to insigne continues.)

Radiating out from this cross are the rays of light symbolizing the spread of democracy among the countries of the earth, led by our own great nation.

Over all is superimposed the eagle shield, signifying that we served under the starry banner of the land of liberty. The bald eagle is an American bird and has been our nation's emblem from the days of the Revolution.

As the circle which contains our name is continuous, so also, is the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(Commander faces recruits.) For so long as there are unjust governments, so long must we maintain our rights. If new wars come, other comrades will carry on where we leave off.

My comrades, the Cross of Malta glorifies the tattered shirt of the poorest working man and beautifies the coat worn by those highest in the land, binding all with that same spirit of comradeship which existed among the veterans of the old crusades.

I trust you will wear it with credit to yourself and honor to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Commander holding small Flag of the United States.) My comrades, you are also admonished to remember that you and we have a mutual tie which binds us together and that the Flag of the United States is that bond. This flag with its alternating stripes of red and white; this flag with its stars on the field of blue, is your flag, our flag. May brave hearts ever defend it! May it continue to fly in the free air of heaven, the emblem of liberty—the flag of all loyal Americans! In the name of this great order and on behalf of this Post, I shall now present each of you with this our flag.

(Commander faces about and gives command, "form the arch of chivalry." The Senior and Junior Vice Commanders bring up their swords, tips touching and forming the arch. Commander again faces the altar standing as nearly under the arch as may be feasible.)

Commander: The Adjutant will call the roll and as each comrade's name is called they will advance, receive their decoration and return to their place in line. (See Plate 4.)

(As each new comrade approaches and takes their place before the Commander they will receive from the Commander the VFW lapel insignia and the Commander will present each new member with a small Flag of the United States.)

(After all have received their decorations, the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders will break the arch and take stations at the right and left of the new comrades. All other officers return to their regular Post stations. Sentry dismissed.)

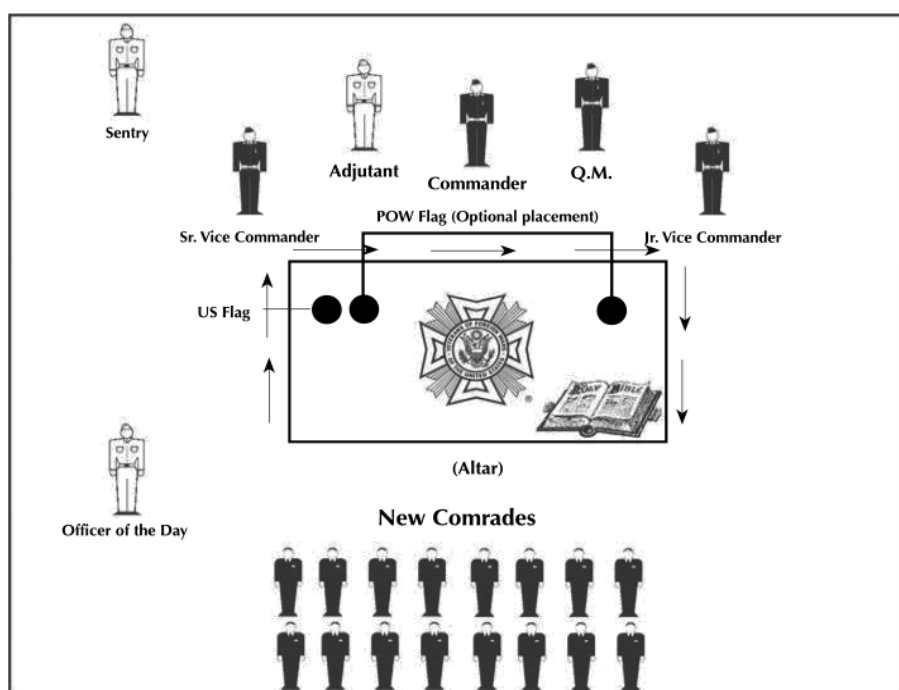
Commander: (Seats Post with one rap. Speaks from their station to new comrades who remain in line back of altar facing the Commander.)

My comrades: You have been admitted to this great order because you have served our country in the face of hazard

and danger. But our country deserves your highest devotion at all times, in peace as well as in war.

In this organization you are now privileged to mingle with comrades who have gone to the far lands of the earth when duty called. They, better than anyone else, can understand your language as a veteran.

Plate No. 4



PRESENTATION OF INSIGNE

Officers' Stations

Senior and Junior Vice Commanders stand facing each other, tips of swords touching on floor. Adjutant calls each name, mentioning any history regarding the comrade that is of special note. Quartermaster gives commander the insignie as each name is called.

Henceforth you are privileged to wear the beautiful Cross of Malta which will distinguish you as a member of America's true knighthood, bound together by ties of comradeship formed through a century of campaigning in foreign lands and waters -- the golden age of American chivalry.

Into this great fraternity we now welcome you. Here you will find true comradeship. And so, as you go about your daily duties, I admonish you to cherish the beautiful emblem you are now privileged to wear. Look upon it as an inspiration to noble citizenship. Treasure it as a symbol of all that is best in our national life, resting assured that if you will practice the principles for which it stands comrades will come to you in the hour of need even as you will go to them when duty calls.

We trust that what you have experienced here will not soon pass from your mind, but that its impression will remain with you through a long and prosperous life.

Comrade, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.

May you find pleasure in the comradeship of this great order and help perpetuate the hallowed memories of service so dear to all of us. And now, with my best wishes for your future success, I commend you to your new comrades. Comrades, extend to our new comrade a hearty welcome.

(Commander gives two raps of gavel and officers and members file past the new members, giving each one a hearty handshake. If feasible there may be music during this greeting. Such songs as "Over There," "Long, Long Trail," and "Hot Time in the Old Town," are appropriate. During this recess period, the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders relinquish their posts at the right and left of the new comrades and are prepared to resume their stations at the close of the period. It will be their duty to see that places are available for the new comrades to be seated when the Post is called to order. After sufficient time has elapsed, the Commander will call the Post to order and regular business will be resumed.

Candidates should retire from the room in company of the officer of the day and work their way into the meeting, as a lesson, being prompted by the officer of the day if necessary.)