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## INSTITUTING NEW POST

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Prior to calling the meeting to order the instituting officer will personally inspect each application for membership. All applications not properly completed and investigated shall be rejected. This is assumed to be an open, public meeting. Instituting officer raps gavel once for order.

**Instituting Officer:** Comrades, I have been authorized by the Commander-in-Chief to institute this Post in accordance with the National Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Comrades and candidates, I am satisfied that all present are eligible for membership as provided by our National Bylaws. The acting Adjutant will call the roll. Each person will answer as their name is called and take their place facing the altar and the Commander's station.

(Following roll call.)

**Instituting Officer:** Comrades, you have expressed the desire to be enrolled in our ranks, but before being admitted to membership you will be required to take a solemn obligation, one which will not conflict with any duty you owe your country or your family. Knowing this, are you willing to become members of this order?

(Candidates respond.)

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, or touch the shoulder of the person in front of you, 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 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 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.)

**Instituting Officer:** As you were! Comrades, we are now privileged to decorate each of you with the Cross of Malta, which is recognized and protected by our government as the official emblem of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Cross of Malta is an ancient and honored symbol of loyalty and courage among those pledged to high ideals. It was first used nearly a thousand years ago as the emblem of noblemen and yeomen who united in a great military crusade to protect and aid others seeking freedom of life and worship. The Cross of Malta thus became the symbol of the Crusaders who waged battle and cared for the sick, the wounded and the needy.

That is why the Maltese Cross is the emblem of the Veterans of Foreign Wars today. It is the symbol of our pledge to honor the dead by helping the living.

(Each person is presented their insigne, and instructions regarding later ceremonial initiation.)

**Instituting Officer:** Comrades, I congratulate and welcome you as members of our organization. Have you decided on a name for the Post?

(Name of Post is given to instituting officer by the acting adjutant.)

**Instituting Officer:** Then, in compliance with your selection, and by authority of the Commander-in-Chief, I now declare this a Post to be known henceforth as \_\_\_\_\_  
Post No. \_\_\_\_\_, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and entitled to all the rights of our organization, so long as its members comply with our Bylaws.

Comrades, your success or failure will depend entirely upon the wisdom and energy with which you administer the affairs of your Post. Always remember that you will have in your Post comrades of all ages, persons who have had a great variety of military experiences in many theaters of war.

In conducting the affairs of your Post, give due consideration to the opinions of all comrades who, like yourselves, have served under the Flag of the United States.

Let the highest principles of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States guide all your decisions and actions.

Extend at all times the spirit of true comradeship to the

individuals who serve with you, to their families and to the memory of those who have passed to their final resting place.

(Seats new members.)

Comrades, have you elected the officers who shall serve you during the ensuing year?

(Comrades affirm or instituting officer will hold an election.)

**Instituting Officer:** Comrades, it now becomes my duty to install your officers in accordance with the Bylaws of our organization.

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Acting Adjutant, you will call the roll of officers. As each officer's name is called they will take their place at the altar, where I will administer the officers' obligation.

(Officers are assembled as directed. Instituting officer says to them):

**Instituting Officer:** You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand and repeat after me:

### **OFFICERS' OBLIGATION**

I do hereby solemnly promise—that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability—the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed—according to the Bylaws and Ritual—of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States—together with the Bylaws of this Post. I solemnly promise—that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed—or sooner if so ordered by proper authority—I will surrender immediately—to only the duly authorized person or persons—all records, money or other properties of this organization—in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise—upon my honor as a true comrade—and a member of our great republic. So help me God.

**Instituting Officer:** As you were! Parade rest.

## PRAYER

**Acting Chaplain:** Almighty God, our guidance and Divine Protector, give *Your* blessings upon these, our Comrades, who now become fellow officers. We *ask you*, O Lord, who *is* ever present among us, grant wisdom to them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor *you*, our glorious Country and to better our organization. May *Your* strength sustain them. May *Your* power preserve them. May *Your* hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

**Instituting Officer:** As you were! Comrades, I now declare you properly installed as officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you, so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake. (Instituting officer may instruct briefly, as follows):

**Instituting Officer:** The Bylaws of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you through your election or appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties.

(Or installing officer may elaborate by calling each newly installed officer individually and instructing them briefly as follows):

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Senior Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander in preserving order, to preside in the absence of the Commander and to perform such other duties as may be required by our laws and Ritual.

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Junior Vice Commander, it will be your duty to assist the Commander and Senior Vice Commander in preserving order; to preside in their absence, and perform such other duties as may be required of you by our laws and Ritual.

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Quartermaster, it will be your duty to take charge of and accurately account for the funds of this Post. The duties of your office are prescribed in detail in the VFW Bylaws.

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Judge Advocate, you are the legal assistant and adviser to the Commander and Post in all legal matters pertaining to this organization. You shall perform such other duties incident to your office as the laws may require.

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Chaplain, the members of this Post look to you for spiritual and inspirational guidance. You shall be chairman of the Post visiting committee. It will be your duty to visit and comfort the sick and disabled members of the Post and to perform such other duties as may be required of you by the laws and Ritual of this organization.

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Surgeon, you shall be chairman of the health committee. It will be your duty to promote and direct health programs for benefit of Post members and the community. You shall perform such other duties in the Post as are incident to your office.

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Post Trustees, it will be your duty to make correct audits and reports of the Post records as prescribed by the VFW Bylaws.

(Rapping gavel twice and addressing the newly-installed Commander, the instituting officer then says):

**Instituting Officer:** Comrade Commander, this Post is about to be placed in your charge, and much of its success will depend on you.

Guard well its interests, so that you may fill your high office acceptably.

It will be necessary that you study carefully and fully understand the principles of this organization, since it is your duty to enforce its laws, rules and Ritual.

I now place in your charge the Charter of this Post. You are personally responsible for its safety.

I present you with this gavel, the emblem of authority. Use it firmly, but with discretion. I now formally place this Post in your charge for the ensuing year. You will occupy this station which I now vacate.

Comrade Commander, officers and members of \_\_\_\_\_  
Post No. \_\_\_\_\_, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United  
States, I proclaim the officers duly installed, and this Post in  
working order for the ensuing year.

(Commander gives one gavel rap and proceeds with the regular  
business).

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## DEDICATING POST COLORS

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This ceremony is assumed to be in open, public meeting.  
The altar is dressed with the Flag of the United States and  
Bible as for a regular Post meeting. Dedicating officer should  
be Department, District or County Council officer.  
Post Commander and dedicating officer take stations before  
altar, flanked by Post officers.  
Color bearers and guards should be ready in anteroom with  
unfurled Flag of the United States and furled Post standard.

**Commander:** Comrades, we have the honor to dedicate our  
Post standard and rededicate ourselves to the Flag of the  
United States. On this occasion Comrade \_\_\_\_\_, the  
dedicating officer, who stands beside me, will direct the  
ceremony. Comrade \_\_\_\_\_, you will take command.

**Dedicating Officer:** Comrade Commander and comrades of  
\_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_, I bring you heartiest  
greetings from the Department of \_\_\_\_\_, (or from  
the council or district they represent.)

This is a very special moment in the history of your Post. We  
shall place officially the flag of our country and your new Post  
flag among the ever-growing number of standards in our  
organization.

Officer of the Day, you will advance the colors.

(With the officer of the day giving the appropriate commands, color  
bearers and color guards advance colors to the altar, halt and face  
the Commander's station. See Plate No. 2. Colors should be carried  
at order colors. The heel of the pike or staff, in line with the toe of the

right shoe, is raised two inches from the floor. The right hand clasps pike with the thumb at a convenient place for carrying and holding same in a vertical position.)

**Dedicating Officer:** Comrades and friends, we will first rededicate ourselves to the Flag of the United States, by saluting the national flag and repeating the pledge of allegiance.

(All present do so in unison, with proper salutes. Bearer of Post colors salutes by carrying their left hand across breast, grasping the pike forward. They hold the salute momentarily and then resumes the order position. The national flag remains at order. Military salute is held during recitation of pledge of allegiance):

**All:** 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.

**Dedicating Officer:** As you were! Officer of the Day, you will assist me further.

(Dedicating officer and officer of the day go to Post color bearer, who lowers their pike so dedicating officer may grasp upper corner and officer of the day the lower corner of Post standard. Color bearer then turns their pike while officers unroll Post standard and hold the completely unfurled banner taut so all may see.)

**Dedicating Officer:** There, comrades, are your Post colors. (They read slowly the words on the banner. Then they and officer of the day release their holds. Color bearer returns pike to order position.)

**Dedicating Officer:** Comrades, that flag is to be your official VFW emblem of authority. It is the emblem around which you shall build the character, strength and progress of your Post. It is the banner which shall fly proudly beside the flag of our country. It is to be the emblem of your own men and women who have fought and sacrificed under the Flag of the United States in many battles on land, on sea and in the air around the globe.

(Dedicating officer then salutes Post colors, holding salute and saying):



**Dedicating Officer:** Comrade Commander and comrades, by authority vested in me by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I hereby declare this flag to be the official banner of \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

**Post Commander:** Present Arms! (All members respond).

**Commander:** Order Arms! (Salute ends.)

**Commander:** Comrade Chaplain, you will ask blessings upon our new flags. Parade rest!

(Extemporaneously, or the following.)

**Chaplain:** O God, bless our nation's emblem. May it ever symbolize freedom and justice for all men and women. Bless, too, the banner of this Post. Help our comrades to always campaign vigorously for principles that are noble and right—for the high ideals represented by these two flags. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

**Commander:** Attention! Officers, take your stations.

(Post officers, including Commander, take their regular Post room stations. Stand at attention.)

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

(Officer of the day marches color detail to positions in front of Post room. 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 they face the audience. The Post standard is placed on the Commander's left and the audience's right. See Plate 2.

When the colors are placed officer of the day dismisses the detail and takes their station. Ceremony ends following appropriate remarks by Post Commander.)