

THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS

“HOW TO CONDUCT A MEETING AND  
ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER”

BY

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## I. Introduction

The future success of your American Legion depends upon effective leadership. An important tool for an effective leader is the ability to conduct an orderly meeting.

This presentation will provide you an in depth guide on how to conduct Post's meetings. Good meetings will lead to better attendance, more participation, more effective programs, and a more democratic process.

You will also be given instructions regarding Robert's Rules of Order and useful tips on dealing with common problems that come up during Legion meetings.

### A. APPLYING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

In order for a Post to survive and grow, the democratic model has proven to be the best model of organization because it makes use of the talents and abilities of all the members.

1. The Post members rule through a decision making process that they have established by a vote.

- the members approve the Constitution and By-Laws and amendments thereto:

- the members approve house rules, club rules, standing operating procedures and other policy statements.

2. Ideas come from the Post members and are presented to the membership to decide upon.

- all members have a right to present ideas at the membership meetings.

- all members have a right to speak in favor or against all ideas.

- all members have a right to vote on all ideas.

3. Leaders come from the Post members through an election process.

- all members have a right to be considered for office.

- a hierarchy of power does not exist; it is shared equally.

4. Checks and Balances between the Post Officers and the Post Members are established in the Post Constitution and By-Laws.

- the Post Officers only have the powers given to them in the Constitution and By-Laws by the vote of the members.

-the Constitution and By-Laws also provide a method to remove ineffective or tyrannical officers.

-the Post members can vote to reverse any decision made by the officers or executive committee if the officers or executive committee have not been granted that specific power by the Constitution and By-Laws.

5. All members are equal—they have equal rights and responsibilities.

-there is only one class of membership.

-there is no rank.

6. The Post is run with impartiality and fairness.

-the Post should not be run based on the whims of the leadership.

-the rules should be applied equally, impartially and fairly.

7. There is equal justice under the law; members and officers have a right to a fair trial if accused.

-Post members can only be disciplined by members after a jury trial.

-Post members can only be disciplined for treason, dishonesty, neglect of duty and conduct unbecoming a member of the American Legion.

-Officers can be removed in accordance with the Post's Constitution and By-Laws.

8. The majority rules, but the rights of the minority and absent members are protected.

-members have the right to receive notice of important meetings.

-members in the minority should have a right to voice their concern, but must go along with the majority vote.

9. Everything is accomplished in the spirit of openness, not secrecy.

-closed meetings in very few situations.

-members have the right to know what is going on at the Post, including details about the finances.

-members have the right to inspect official records and to receive reports from committees and officers.

10. Members have the right to resign from office or the organization.

## B. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

1. Take up business one item at a time.

- each meeting follows an order of business called an agenda.

- only one main motion can be pending at a time.

- when a main motion is pending, members can make motions from a class of motions called secondary motions.

- only one member can be assigned the floor at a time.

- members take turns speaking.

No member speaks twice about a motion until all members have had the opportunity to speak.

2. Promote courtesy, justice, impartiality, and equality.

- the Commander calls the meeting to order on time.

- members take their seats promptly when the chair calls the meeting to order and conversation stops.

- those members giving reports during the meeting take seats in front to save time.

- members rise to be recognized by the commander and don't speak out of turn.

- members always refer to other members and officers in the third person.

- in debate, all remarks are made through and to the commander. Members do not cross talk or talk directly to each other when another is speaking.

- members keep discussion to the issues, not to personalities or other members' motives.

- when correcting a member, the presiding officer doesn't use a member's name.

- members speak clearly and loudly so all can hear.

- members listen when others are speaking.

-the commander doesn't take sides but allows all to be heard equally in debate.

-the commander and members should know the rules and raise them judiciously.

-the commander ensures that all sides of an issue are heard and the rules of debate are carefully followed.

-members have the right to make a motion to take a vote by ballot during a controversial issue.

-the commander has no power to discipline a member. Members have the right to a jury trial when they are accused of wrongdoing.

3. The majority rules, but the rights of the individual, the minority, and the absent members are protected.

-members have the right to have notice of all meetings.

-members have the right to know by previous notice when there is a proposal to rescind or amend something previously adopted.

-in any situation where rights may be taken away from members, two-thirds of the membership must approve the motion.

-no one has the right to require a higher vote than a majority vote on issues unless the By-Laws or Robert's Rules of Order specifically state that more than a majority is required.

-members have a right to be informed of the work of the organization.

#### C. CREATE AN AGENDA

1. Ask members to submit agenda items to the adjutant prior to the executive committee meeting.

2. Consult the By-Laws to ascertain required items like nominations, election of officers, or election of delegates.

3. Consult with committee chairmen and officers.

4. Review the minutes for unfinished business.

5. Finalize the agenda at the executive committee meeting.

6. The commander has the right to add additional items to the agenda.

7. Members have the right to bring up new items not on the agenda as “new business” or during “the good of the Legion”

## II. HOW TO CONDUCT A MEETING

- A. Regular Post Membership Meeting. The American Legion Officer’s Guide is the principal handbook issued by the national headquarters to help officers fulfill their responsibilities. Annex A is a compilation of information from the Officer’s Guide that can be a handy script for the Commander on how to conduct the General Membership Meeting.
- B. A special meeting can only be called for a specific purpose consisting of one or more specific agenda items. Notice of the meeting must be disseminated in accordance with the Post’s Constitution and By-Laws.
- C. Executive Committee Meeting. The Post’s Constitution and By-Laws may give the Executive Committee (EC) authority to make decisions regarding the hiring of employees and the authorization to pay certain expenses. The Officers should prepare an agenda for the EC meeting.
  - 1. Agenda for Regular Meeting. By the conclusion of the EC meeting, the agenda items under Unfinished Business and New Business should be completed.
  - 2. Sponsor Motions. During the EC meeting, the EC members should discuss the alternatives to be discussed at the regular membership meeting and should prepare motions to be made and seconded during the regular membership meeting.

## III. ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER (Newly Revised, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition)

- A. MOTIONS. A motion is a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the group take certain action. (See Annex B)
  - 1. Making the Motion
    - a. Get recognized by Commander. You stand up immediately after the previous speaker has finished and call out “Comrade Commander.” The Commander designates you as the next speaker or recognizes you by calling you by name. You have the floor until you are finished; when you sit down, you yield the floor.
    - b. How to make a Motion. After obtaining the floor, you simply say, “I move that...”

- c. Seconding a Motion, if Necessary. To second a motion, you call out “Second!” You may remain seated and you do not have to be recognized by the chair.
2. Stating the Question. After a motion has been moved and seconded, the Commander then states the question by simply saying, “It is moved and seconded that...” and then repeats the exact words in which the motion was made.
  3. Debating the Motion. After stating the question, the Commander normally turns toward the maker of the motion to see if he or she wishes to be assigned the floor. Debate should alternate between those for and against the motion. No one may speak more than 2 times on a debatable motion. Someone who has not yet spoken has preference over someone who has already spoken. Each speaker is limited to 10 minutes each time unless other limits are set.
  4. Amending the Motion. A motion can be amended through a subsidiary motion by saying, “I move to insert the words...” or “I move to change...”
  5. Voting on the Motion. When no one else seeks recognition to debate or the debate has been limited, the Commander says, “Are you ready for the question?” (Or “Is there any further debate?”)

Putting the Question

Chair: The question is on the adoption of the motion (state the motion).  
Those in favor of the motion say Aye!

Some Members (Seated): Aye!

Chair: Those opposed, say no.

Other Members (Seated): No!

**B. SPECIAL PROBLEMS**

1. The Unruly Member at Meetings. One of the duties of a Post Commander is to serve as the presiding officer or chair of the meetings. It is the duty of the chair to run the meetings efficiently and to prevent unruly members from unduly prolonging the meeting or disrupting the meeting.
  - a. Agenda. Make an agenda that lists the order of business and stick to it.

- b. Direct all Comments to the Chair. Do not allow cross talk between members. There should be no discussion between members. Everyone should address the chair.
- c. New Topics Should be Discussed Under New Business. During the meeting, new topics that are brought up should be debated during the “New Business” portion of the meeting.
- d. Call for a Motion. If the Commander allows a member to complain, ramble and consume time discussing a topic of business, it will solve nothing. Call for a motion to do something. After the motion is made, another member must second the motion.
- e. Focus Debate. If speakers “for” and “against” the motion get off topic, direct them to talk only about the pending motion.
- f. Alternate Debate. Do not allow endless debate on one side of the issue. If members only want to speak “for” or “against” the motion, the chair should call for the question.
- g. Discipline of Members During the Meeting
  - (1) Slight Breach – light rap of the gavel, point out the fault, and advise the member to avoid it (e.g., addressing another member instead of the chair in debate or failing to confine remarks to the merits of the pending question.)
  - (2) More Serious Breach – Warn the member or “call the member to order” by saying, “The member is out of order and will be seated.”
  - (3) Obstinate or Grave Breach of Order – After repeated warnings, the Commander should ask the Adjutant to take down the objectionable conduct of the member. The chair has no authority to impose a penalty or to remove the offending member from the hall. The Commander should ask, “What penalty shall be imposed on the member?” Only the majority of the members can vote to sanction the member by ordering an apology or removal from the meeting.

## 2. Reading and Approving Minutes

- a. Preferred Method. Distribute minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting and the last Regular Membership Meeting well in advance or post conspicuously on a bulletin board. Everyone will have an opportunity to thoroughly review the minutes and meeting time will not be wasted listening to the Adjutant mumble the minutes.

**COMMANDER:** “The minutes have been previously published. Are there any corrections?... Hearing none, the minutes are approved.” (Or, if there are corrections, “The minutes are approved as corrected.”)

- b. Alternate Method. The Adjutant reads the minutes and then the Commander gets the members to approve the minutes.
  - c. Executive Committee Minutes. The Executive Committee (EC) only has the power given it in the Constitution and By-Laws. The members have all other power; therefore, actions approved by the EC must be ratified by the membership through the approval of the minutes of the EC.
3. Limiting Debate. The general rule governing debate is that any member may speak up to twice a day on any debatable motion, and for up to ten minutes at a time. There is no other limit on the time taken for debate. If many members use their full right to speak under this rule, consideration of any motion can take a very long time.

It is possible to change these debate limits, but only by a two-thirds vote. A two-thirds vote is required as a compromise between the right of the individual to be heard and the right of the group not to be unduly delayed in conducting its business.

A motion to *Limit or Extend the Limits of Debate* might limit debate on the pending motion to one hour, or set a time when all debate will end and the question will be voted on. It might limit speeches to two minutes instead of ten. On the other hand, you could also use this motion to *increase* the number of times a member can speak from two to four, or the times allowed for each speech to 15 minutes.

A motion to *Limit or extend Limits of Debate* is itself undebatable.

Some examples of such motions are:

“I move that in debate on the pending amendment, each member be limited to one speech of three minutes.”

“I move that debate on the pending motion be limited to twenty minutes.”

4. Close Debate Immediately. Often you will want not just to limit debate, but to end it altogether. There is a specialized motion for this purpose. The adoption of this motion immediately closes debate and also prevents the making of a number of secondary motions.

The motion to close debate immediately is called the motion for the *Previous Question*, and requires a two-thirds vote, and is undebatable.

The proper wording to close debate on the immediately pending motion is to say, **“I move the previous question.”**

### C. CLASSES OF MOTIONS

1. Main Motions. A main motion is one whose introduction brings business before an assembly. Strictly speaking, there should be no debate on a matter before a motion regarding it has been made. Only one main motion may be before the assembly for action at a time.
2. Secondary Motions. Secondary motions can be made while a main motion is pending.
  - a. Subsidiary Motions. Subsidiary motions assist the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion.
    - (1) Postpone indefinitely. If an embarrassing main motion has been brought before the assembly, a member can propose to get rid of this question without bringing it to a direct vote, by moving to *Postpone indefinitely*. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 126-30.]
    - (2) Amend. If a main motion might be more suitable or acceptable in an altered form, a proposal to change its wording (either to clarify or, within limits, to modify the meaning) before the main motion is voted on can be introduced by moving to *Amend*. [RONR 11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 130-67.]
    - (3) Refer to a Committee. But it may be that much time would be required to amend the main motion properly, or that additional information is needed, so that it would be better to turn the motion or resolution over to a committee for study or redrafting before the assembly considers it further. Such action can be proposed by moving to *Commit* the main question-or *Refer* it to a committee. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 168-79.]

- (4) Postpone to a Certain Time. If the assembly might prefer to consider the main motion later in the same meeting or at another meeting, this can be proposed by moving to ***Postpone to a Certain Time***-also called the motion to ***Postpone Definitely***, or simply to ***Postpone***. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 179-91.]
  - (5) Limit or Extend Limits of Debate. If it is desired to continue consideration of a motion but debate is consuming too much time, a member can move to place a limit on debate. On the other hand, if special circumstances make it advisable to permit more or longer speeches than under the usual rules, a motion to do so can be made. Or, it may sometime be desirable to combine the elements of limitation and extension, as in limiting the length of speeches but allowing more speeches per member. All such modifications of the normal limits of debate on a pending motion are proposed by means of the motion to ***Limit or Extend Limits of Debate***. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 191-97.]
  - (6) Previous Questions. If it is desired to close debate and amendment of a pending motion so that it will come to an immediate vote, this can be proposed by moving the ***Previous Question***. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 197-209.]
  - (7) Lay on the Table. If there is reason for the assembly to lay the main motion aside temporarily without setting a time for resuming its consideration, but with the provision that it can be taken up again whenever a majority so decides, this can be proposed by the motion ***Lay on the Table***. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 209-18.]
- b. Privileged Motions. Privileged motions do not relate to the pending business, but have to do with special matters of immediate and overriding importance which, without debate, should be allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else.
- (1) Call for the Orders of the Day. If the adopted program or order of business is not being followed, or if consideration of a question has been set for the present time and is now in order but the matter is not being taken up, a single member by making a ***Call for the Orders of the Day*** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 219-24.], can require such a schedule to be enforced-unless the assembly decides by a two-thirds vote to set the orders of the day aside.

- (2) Raise a Question of Privilege. If a pressing situation is affecting a right or privilege of the assembly or of an individual member (for example, noise, inadequate ventilation, introduction of a confidential subject in the presence of guest, etc.), a member can **Raise a Question of Privilege** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 224-30.], which permits him or her to interrupt pending business to state an urgent request or motion. If the matter is not simple enough to be taken care of informally, the chair then makes a ruling as to whether it requires consideration before the pending business is resumed.
  - (3) Recess. A short intermission in a meeting, even while business is pending, can be proposed by moving to **Recess** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 230-33.] for a specified length of time.
  - (4) Adjourn. A member can propose to close the meeting entirely by moving to **Adjourn**. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 233-42.] This motion can be made and the assembly can adjourn even while business is pending, provided that the time for the next meeting is established by a rule of the society or has been set by the assembly.
  - (5) Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn. Under certain conditions while business is pending, the assembly-before adjourning or postponing the pending business-may wish to fix a date and hour, and sometimes a place, for another meeting, or (in an established society) for another meeting before the next regular meeting. In cases of this kind, the motion to **Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 242-46.] can be made-even while a matter is pending-unless another meeting is already scheduled for later within the same session.
- c. Incidental Motions. Incidental motions generally are related to the main question in such a way that they must be decided immediately, usually without debate.
- (1) Point of Order. Although the presiding officer has the responsibility of enforcing the rules, any member who believes he or she has noticed a case where the chair is failing to do so can call attention to it by making a **Point of Order** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 247-55.] at the time the breach occurs. The effect is to require the chair to make a ruling on the question involved.

- (2) Division of the Assembly. If a member doubts the accuracy of the chair's announcement of the result of a voice vote (or even a vote by show of hands) -or doubts that a representative number of persons voted -he can demand a ***Division of the Assembly*** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 280-82.]; a single member thus has the power to require a standing vote - but not to order a count, which only the chair or the assembly can do.
- (3) Requests and Inquiries. There are several other types of ***Requests and Inquiries*** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 292-99.], which a member can make in connection with business that someone desires to introduce, or that is pending or has just been pending. These include:
  - a) ***Parliamentary Inquiry*** - a request for the chair's opinion on a matter of parliamentary procedure as it relates to the business at hand - not involving a ruling [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 293-94.]
  - b) ***Point of Information*** - an inquiry as to facts affecting the business at hand - direct to the chair or, through the chair, to a member. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 294-95.]
  - c) ***Request for Permission (or Leave) to Withdraw or Modify a Motion*** after it has been stated by the chair. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 295-98.]
  - e) ***Request for Any Other Privilege.*** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 299.]

The first two types of inquiry are responded to by the chair, or by a member at the direction of the chair; the other requests can be granted only by the assembly.

4. Suspend the Rules. When it is desired that the assembly take up a question or do something that would be in violation of a rule that applies, it can be proposed in some cases to ***Suspend the Rules*** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 260-67], to permit accomplishment of the desired purpose.
5. Division of a Question. If a pending main motion (or an amendment to it) contains two or more parts capable of standing as separate questions, the assembly can vote to treat each part individually in succession. Such a course is proposed by the motion for ***Division of a Question.*** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 270-76.]

3. Motions that Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly. This type of motion, either by its adoption or by introduction, enables the assembly for good reason to reopen a completed question during the same session, or to take up one that has been temporarily disposed of, or the change something previously adopted and still in force.
  - a. Take from the Table. If it is desired to resume consideration of a main motion which lies on the table, it can be proposed by means of the motion to **Take from the Table** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 300-04.] that the motion or series become pending again.
  - b. Reconsider the Vote. If, in the same session that a motion has been voted on, but no later than the same day or the next day on which a business meeting is held, new information or a changed situation makes it appear that a different result might reflect the true will of the assembly, a member who voted with the prevailing side can, by moving to **Reconsider** [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 315-35.] the vote, propose that the question shall come before the assembly again as if it had not previously been considered.
  - c. Rescind; Amend Something Previously Adopted. If it is desired to nullify something that has been adopted, such action can be proposed by means of the motion to **Rescind** (or **Repeal**, or **Annul**); and by another form of the same parliamentary motion – that is, the motion to **Amend Something Previously Adopted** – it can be proposed to modify only a part of the wording or text previously adopted, or to substitute a different version. [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 305-10.]
4. Previous Notice of Motions. A requirement of previous notice means that announcement that the motion will be introduced, indicating its exact content, must be included in the call of the meeting or must be announced at the preceding meeting. Motions that require previous notice include.
  - a. Amendment of the Constitution and By-Laws, unless the existing By-Laws call for a different procedure.
  - b. Motion to Rescind or Change a Previously Adopted Motion.
  - c. Motion to Sell Real Estate.
  - d. Motion to Spend Large Amounts of Money.

ANNEX A

A. Opening. All officers should wear the official American Legion cap and the official badge of office.

**COMMANDER:** “The meeting is about to open. Officers shall take their stations.”

ONE RAP OF GAVEL (Sergeant-at-Arms closes the meeting hall door.)

THREE RAPS OF GAVEL

**COMMANDER:** “The Color Bearers will advance the colors”

or

“Post the Colors”

**COMMANDER:** “Hand Salute.”

**COMMANDER:** “Two”

**COMMANDER:** “The chaplain will offer prayer. Everyone shall remain standing with their cap removed and placed over their heart from the opening prayer through the POW/MIA ceremony, and concluding with the Pledge of Allegiance.”

**CHAPLAIN:** “Almighty God, Father of all mankind and Judge over nations, we pray Thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. Send Thy peace to our nation and to all nations. Hasten the fulfillment of Thy promise of peace that shall have no end.

“We pray for those who serve the people and guard the public welfare that by Thy blessing they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We pray for our comrades that by Thy help they may observe the strictest Justice, keep alight the fires of Freedom, strive earnestly for the spirit of Democracy; and preserve untarnished our loyalty to our Country and to Thee. Finally, O God of mercy, we ask Thy blessing and comfort for those comrades who are suffering mental and physical disability. Cheer them and bring them the blessings of health and happiness. Amen.”

## **POW/MIA Empty Chair**

This ceremony is a suggested outline that can be followed when an American Legion organizations wants to call attention to Americans still unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and other conflicts.

Resolution 288, adopted at the 67<sup>th</sup> National Convention, encourages all American Legion organizations to implement the Empty Chair Program at all meetings. As a continual physical symbol of the POW/MIAs and the cause for which we stand, namely their return or full accounting.

**COMMANDER:** “A POW/MIA Empty Chair is placed at all official meetings of the American Legion, as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. This is a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor!”

**COMMANDER:** “Place the POW/MIA flag on the Empty Chair.”

*The first and second vice commanders, or other designated individuals, approach the Empty Chair carrying a folded POW/MIA flag or chair cover. Upon reaching the Empty Chair, they reverently unfold the flag and drape it over the Empty Chair with the crest facing the membership. After the meeting is concluded the POW/MIA flag should be refolded and stored for future use.*

*The commander (or appropriate official) will lead the Pledge of Allegiance (Legionnaires will remove their caps) and may direct the singing of the Star Spangled Banner.*

**COMMANDER:** “Please join me in honoring our nation’s flag.”

“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.”

*Regular meeting opening resumes after the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**COMMANDER:** “Everyone will recover”

**The commander and membership shall recite the preamble of the Constitution of the American Legion slowly and in unison, as follows:**

“For God and Country,  
We associate ourselves together  
For the following purposes:  
To uphold and defend  
The Constitution of the United States of America;  
To maintain law and order;  
To foster and perpetuate  
A one hundred percent Americanism;  
To preserve the memories and incidents  
Of our associations in the Great Wars;  
To inculcate a sense of individual obligation  
To the community, state and nation;  
To combat the autocracy  
Of both the classes and the masses;  
To make right the master of might;  
To promote peace and good will on earth;  
To safeguard and transmit to posterity  
The principles of Justice, Freedom and Democracy;  
To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship  
By our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”

#### ONE RAP OF GAVEL

**COMMANDER:** “I now declare \_\_\_\_\_ Post  
Number \_\_\_\_\_, Department of Texas regularly  
convened.”

B. Meeting.

#### **Ceremony for Draping American Legion Charter**

*Post has option on 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 has (they have) gone to the Commander of us all in  
post everlasting.

**COMMANDER:** “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 Charter.”

**COMMANDER:** (Rap gavel three (3) times) “Members rise and face the Charter at the position of attention.”

**COMMANDER:** “Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now Drape our Charter in memory of our beloved Comrade (Comrades) \_\_\_\_\_ who has (have) passed on:

**COMMANDER:** (While Sergeant-at-Arms is Draping the Charter) “By this act we, as members of (post name and #), (State), proclaim solemn tribute to our departed Comrade (Comrades) Hand salute! Two!”

**CHAPLAIN:** “Almighty God and Heavenly Father, who has dominion over life and death, grant to us the grace to remember with love and reverence our valiant and honored departed Comrade (Comrades). Grant peace and eternal rest to those who have gone before us, and make us ready for that last hour. Strengthen and console those in sorrow and bestow upon us thy everlasting blessing...Amen.”

**COMMANDER:** (Rap gavel once) “We will continue with the regular meeting.”

1. Roll Call/Quorum

a. Roll Call

**COMMANDER:** “A quorum is present.”

or

“No quorum is present; no official business may be conducted.”

b. Roll Call of Officers and Executive Committee by the Adjutant.

**COMMANDER:** “The adjutant will call the roll of officers.”

2. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting.

**COMMANDER:** “The Adjutant will read the minutes of the previous meeting.”

*(After the reading)*

**COMMANDER:** “Are there any corrections to the minutes?”

[If there are no corrections:]

**COMMANDER:** “Hearing none, the minutes are approved as read.”

[If there are corrections:]

**COMMANDER:** “The minutes are approved as corrected.”

3. Introduction of guests and prospective new members.

4. Committee Reports, including the finance officers report.

5. Balloting on applications.

**COMMANDER:** “The following individual(s) has (have) applied for membership to this Post. Each applicant must be approved, rejected or referred for further investigation. The applicants are: (Read the name(s))”

“Is there any discussion?”

*(After discussion ends.)*

“All those in favor of accepting the new members say Aye! Those opposed say No. The Ayes have it. The new members are approved.”

6. Sick call, relief and employment.

7. Post Service Officers Report

8. Unfinished Business.

9. Initiation of Candidates.

### **Short Form Initiation**

In order that every new member may receive some form of initiation, where it is not practical to conduct the full initiation ceremonies, the following short form has been authorized so all new members may take the obligation and receive proper introduction to The American Legion.

The post commander, or an appointed member, assisted by the post chaplain, who shall be seated at the right of the commander, shall conduct this ceremony.

Small flags, copies of the Legion pamphlet, Legion emblems, and other appropriate items used in the regular initiation ceremony shall be presented by the officiating officers.

**COMMANDER:** “We will now proceed with the initiation. The Sergeant-at-Arms will escort the following candidates into the meeting hall and place them properly before the Flag.”

*(Give names of all those who are waiting)*

*Sergeant-at-Arms salutes the flag and, turning proceeds to get the candidates whose names shall be read.*

**COMMANDER:** “You were privileged to serve your country during Wartime. Because of this service, you are today privileged to join the great service organization, The American Legion.

“Unlike the armed forces in which you served, there is no distinction of rank among us. We are composed of members of every race, religion, occupation and political conviction. We maintain also, strict neutrality on all questions concerning religion, politics and industrial strife.

“The American Legion cherishes four great principles: Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. We are pledged to serve the disabled, the distressed, the widowed and the orphaned. We are devoted to the cause of service to the community, state and the nation.

“Are you now ready and willing to obligate yourself as expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion?”

**CANDIDATES:** “I am.”

**COMMANDER:** “The members will stand at attention while the candidates are being obligated.” (Gives three raps of the gavel.)

*(The Commander steps to the right immediately next to the American flag and will raise the right hand and address the candidates.)*

**COMMANDER:** “You will raise your right hand and repeat after me:

“I (here give your name)

“Do Solemnly pledge

“To uphold and defend

“The Constitution of the United States of America;

“To maintain law and order;

“To foster and perpetuate

“A one hundred percent Americanism;

“To preserve the memories and incidents

“Of our associations in the Great Wars;

“To inculcate a sense of individual obligation

“To the community, state and nation;

“To combat the autocracy

“Of both the classes and the masses;

“To make right the master of might;

“To promote peace and good will on Earth;

“To safeguard and transmit to posterity

“The principles of Justice, Freedom and Democracy;

“To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship  
“By our devotion to mutual helpfulness;  
“To all of which I pledge myself  
“For God and Country.  
“I am not a member and do not subscribe  
“To the principles of any group  
“Opposed to our form of government.  
“Hands down.”

*(At the conclusion of the obligation, the commander will resume the designated station and seat the membership with one rap of the gavel. The chaplain arises and stands at some convenient location close to the emblem and calls the attention of the candidates to the emblem of The American Legion.)*

**CHAPLAIN:**

“There shines the emblem of The American Legion. It is your badge of distinction, honor and service. It stands for God and Country, and the highest rights of men and women. Of its several parts, each part has a meaning. The rays of the sun that form the background, are emblematic of the principles of The American Legion – for Loyalty, Justice, Freedom and Democracy will dispel the darkness of violence, strife and evil.

“The two gold rings around the field of blue bearing our name, typify two of our four main objectives; rehabilitation of our sick and disabled comrades, and care for the children and youth of America. Within the rings is placed a wreath for remembrance of those who died that liberty might live. Upon the wreath is set a star reflecting the glory of victory and promising to the world perpetuation of those cardinal principles of our organization. Set upon the star are two bronze rings which typify the other two of our main objectives; a better and more loyal Americanism, and service to the community, state and nation.

“The inscription demands the wearer shall ever guard the sanctity of home and country and free institutions.”

*(The commander steps down from the designated station and advances to the newly obligated members.)*

**COMMANDER:** “I welcome you to The American Legion. It is my privilege to present to you the American Flag which is the emblem of freedom; a flag etiquette booklet; and the emblem of The American Legion, which you may wear as a badge of democracy and a symbol of your devotion to further service.”

*(The commander returns to his station and introduces each newly obligated member to the membership and requests the Sergeant-at-Arms to seat them with their comrades.)*

(Attractive Certificates of Initiation suitable for presentation to new members of The American Legion after their initiation are available from the Department Headquarters. The Trophies, Awards and Ceremonial Committee strongly recommends such evidence of initiation be presented.)

10. Correspondence
11. New Business
12. Memorial to a departed post member
13. The good of The American Legion
14. Closing Ceremony

**COMMANDER:** “Is there any further business to come before the meeting? If not, the Chaplain will lead us in the memorial service.

THREE RAPS OF GAVEL

**COMMANDER:** “Rise and Uncover.”

**CHAPLAIN:** “Our Heavenly Father, we deem this a fitting time to pay our respects to our departed comrades. As we stand with bowed heads in reverence to them, let us remember the good deeds they accomplished. Let us revere them, as good soldiers who fought the good fight in a just cause, let us silently pray for peace, the peace that passes all understanding. And let us in mind and soul consecrate our hearts and lives to the real America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, the America worth fighting for. As we stand in silence to our departed comrades, may we sincerely say, “May their souls rest in peace.” Let us also remember the POWs and the MIAs still unaccounted for from the Wars and Conflicts. Amen.”

**COMMANDER:** “Cover. Till we meet again, let us remember, our obligations to our Country can be fulfilled only by faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of the American Legion and its members. Let us be ever watchful of the honor of our Country, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom and Democracy.”

**COMMANDER:** “Resolution 33, adopted at the May 2011 National Executive Committee Meeting calls for the retiring of the POW/MIA flag at the end of every meeting; at this time the Sergeant-at-Arms will retire the POW/MIA flag.

**COMMANDER:** “Hand Salute”

**COMMANDER:** “The Color Bearers (Sergeant-at-Arms) will retire the Flag of our Country.”

**COMMANDER:** “Hand Salute”

After the color bearer reaches the rear of the hall,

**COMMANDER:** “Two”

**COMMANDER:** “I now declare this meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ post, Number \_\_\_\_\_, The American Legion, Department of Texas adjourned.”

ONE RAP OF THE GAVEL

ANNEX B

**Robert's Rules of Order Motions Chart**

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11<sup>th</sup> Edition)

<b>Part 1, Main Motions.</b> These motions are listed in order of precedence. A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion. § indicates the section from Robert's Rules							
§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§20	Take break	I move to recess for...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19	Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18	Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17	Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16	Close debate (see RPT rule 16a)	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15	Limit or extend debate (see RPT rule 17d)	I move that debate be limited to...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14	Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13	Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12	Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11	Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10	Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"]...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

<b>Part 2, Incidental Motions.</b> No order of precedence. These motions arise incidentally and are decided immediately.							
§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§23	Enforce rules	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24	Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§59	Suspend convention	I move to suspend the rules and take up...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§25	Change order of business (see RPT Rule 30)	I move to suspend the rules to take up....	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26	Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27	Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29	Demand a rising vote	I move for division of the assembly	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33	Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33	Request for information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None
<b>Part 3, Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly.</b> No order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else is pending.							
§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§34	Take matter from table	I move to take from the table...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35	Cancel previous action	I move to rescind...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3
§37	Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
<b>Part 4, Main Motions.</b> Introduce according to Order of Business or when nothing else is pending.							
§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21	Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§51	Adopt committee report	On behalf of the committee, I move the adoption of the...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority