

**SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
CEREMONIES MANUAL
2006-2007**



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Chapter 1 REGULAR SQUADRON MEETING SCRIPT

The Squadron Commander gives one rap of the gavel and announces that the meeting is about to open, officers shall take their stations. American Legion Post members acting as Advisors will take their places among the membership. The doors of the meeting place are closed by the Sergeant-at-Arms and he then proceeds through those present, examining membership cards to be sure all are current.

The Commander gives three raps of the gavel and all present stand at attention.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The colors of our nation being in place, please render a hand salute. (pause two seconds) Two! The Chaplain will invoke the blessing of God." (Commander gives the order to "Uncover", members present remove their caps.)

SQUADRON CHAPLAIN: In place of the following prayer, the Chaplain may deliver one of his own in the same general tenors.

"Almighty God, Father of mankind and Judge over nations, we pray thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. Send thy peace of our Nation and 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 blessings 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. Especially do we ask thy blessing and comfort to those defenders of our Nation on sick beds in hospitals and elsewhere who are suffering mental and physical disabilities. Cheer them and bring back to them the blessings of health and happiness. Finally, O God of Mercy, we remember lovingly before Thee our departed comrades and those of our fathers who receive with Thee the reward of life everlasting. May their splendid example of patriotism and sacrifice guide us in our duty to our God and Country now and forevermore, AMEN."

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "In memory of our departed comrades and the comrades of our fathers, let us stand in silence."

(Squadron remains standing and stands in silence for a period of time determined by the Commander)

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, of The American Legion and Resolution N.C. 2-94, adopted at the 23rd National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of the Sons of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW / MIA's still unaccounted for, as 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.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: “The Sergeant-at-Arms (or another officer prearranged by the Commander) will place the POW / MIA, flag on the Empty Chair.”

(The Sergeant-At-Arms, or other designated individuals, approaches the Empty Chair carrying a folded POW / MIA flag. Upon reaching the Empty Chair, they reverently unfold and drape it over the Empty Chair with the crest facing the membership).

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Resolution NC 2-03, adopted at the 32nd National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, calls for the display of a Blue Star Banner at all meetings of the Sons of The American Legion as a symbol of our support of all the military personnel serving this great country. Let us never forget that every day these individuals are protecting our liberty. The Sergeant-at-Arms will place the Blue Star Service Banner."

(Note: Only the Corporate Blue Star Banner should be used. The regular Blue Star Banners are for families with active duty personnel.)

SQUADRON COMMANDER: “Please uncover as we recite the Pledge of Allegiance.”

“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.”

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Squadron Commander his designee leads the Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.

“Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great Wars, associate ourselves together as “Sons of The American Legion” 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 true spirit of Americanism; to preserve the memories of our former members and the associations of our members and our forefathers 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 friendship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness; to adopt in letter and spirit all of the great principles for which The American Legion stands and to assist in carrying on for God and Country.”

One rap of the gavel by the Commander will seat the members.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "I now declare this meeting of Squadron No. _____, Detachment of _____ regularly convened."

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

1. Reading of minutes of previous meeting.
2. Committee reports /Officers Reports
3. Sick call and relief
4. Unfinished business.
5. Balloting on applications.
- 6 Initiation of candidates.
7. New business and correspondence.
8. Good of the S.A.L. (The membership shall be permitted to make any suggestions of any kind, character or description, except for religion or partisan politics.)

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Is there any further business to come before the meeting? If not, the Squadron Chaplain will lead us in the closing prayer."

The Commander shall give three raps of the gavel, and membership shall arise, uncover, and stand in silence.

SQUADRON CHAPLAIN: "Our dear Heavenly Father, may we become better Sons of The American Legion, as we learn and teach by words and deeds, the principles of Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. Be with us until we meet again. AMEN."

The Commander instructs everyone to put their covers back on.

SQUADRON CHAPLAIN: The Sergeant-at-Arms (or another) will now remove the POW/MIA Flag"

(After the meeting is concluded the POW / MIA flag should be refolded and stored for future use).

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Till we meet again let us remember that our obligation to our Country can only be fulfilled by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of the Son of The American Legion. Let us ever be watchful of the honor of our Country, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty and Democracy."

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The Colors of our nation being in place, please render a hand salute. (pause two seconds) Two!"

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "I now declare this meeting of _____ Squadron No. _____, the Sons of The American Legion, adjourned."

The Commander gives one rap of the gavel.

Chapter 2 INSTALLATION OF SQUADRON OFFICERS (LONG FORM)

All squadron officers should be installed at the earliest opportunity following their election: The installing officer, who should either be a Department officer of The American Legion, a member of the Department's Sons of The American Legion Committee, a Post officer of The American Legion, or a duly appointed representative. Following the opening ceremony, the presiding officer calls upon the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring before him the officers he is to install.

INSTALLING OFFICER: "The Sergeant-at-Arms will bring before me the newly-elected officers of Squadron No. _____."

All outgoing officers are to be in their respective places and each officer shall have memorized his "charge" to the newly elected officer. The Sergeant-at-Arms brings each newly elected officer to the front, facing the station of the installing officer in order of rank, with the new Commander to the right of the installing officer. After all are standing in place, the Sergeant-at-Arms salutes the flag and addresses the presiding officer.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: "Commander, I present to you the newly-elected officers of Squadron No. _____, Detachment of _____, whose eligibility records for membership in the Sons of The American Legion have been duly checked and approved."

INSTALLING OFFICER: "You have been chosen to fill the various offices of this squadron. You will, I know, vindicate the trust that has been reposed in you, and fulfill in every way the obligations that trust entails. You will at once familiarize yourselves with the duties of your particular offices and you will proceed upon those duties in the same spirit of devotion and endeavor that characterized your fathers' service in any of the Great Was, out of which came their basis for membership in The American Legion and your own in the Sons of The American Legion."

"You must know that the welfare and success of this squadron depends largely on you; and you must know also that upon your shoulders equally rests the burden of preserving the integrity of the Sons of The American Legion. You must protect and advance its good name before the people of this community, the state and the nation. You must exalt it in their eyes. You must make them know, as we know its purposes and its policies. Ever remember the tolerant spirit that animates its members. There is no rank among us, for each serves as the equal of his comrade; and all strive toward the same goal, which is the realization in the life of the Republic the ideals of Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. Ever remember that the cardinal purposes of the Sons of The American Legion are the care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call and of those who are now suffering from disease and want; rightful education of the children of our country, and devoted service to the community, state and nation."

"You will raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your names: "I, _____ do solemnly pledge myself to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office in the Sons of The American Legion I am about to assume, and I further pledge I am not a member of, and do not subscribe to, the principles of any groups opposed to our form of government."

After the obligation of the new officers, the installing officer will address the Sergeant-at-Arms.

INSTALLING OFFICER: "Sergeant-at-Arms, you will conduct the new officers to their respective stations."

The Acting or Retiring Sergeant-at Arms escorts each officer-elect to his respective station, starting with the elected Sergeant-at-Arms and ending with the Commander. The Sergeant-at-Arms will conduct the Sergeant-at-Arms-elect to the station of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and when arrived at that station will address the elected Sergeant-at-Arms as follows:

"You are the sentinel or outer guard of this, squadron. Be strict in demanding any stranger's passport or membership card. Be ready at all times to assist your Commander. You are the custodian of the Flag of our country and of the squadron's standards."

The retiring Sergeant-at-Arms escorts the Historian-elect to the station of the retiring Historian.

HISTORIAN: "Historian, to you is entrusted the recording of all current records of this squadron. The collection of records of your fathers' Post of The American Legion is of historical value, and the keeping of a record of squadron activities will, through you, become of priceless heritage to future generations."

Sergeant-at-Arms next conducts the Chaplain-elect to the station of retiring Chaplain who charges him.

CHAPLAIN: "Chaplain, to you is given the spiritual leadership of this squadron. You will, I know, lend dignity and respect to your office. You should be in close confidence with the Commander and the other officers of this squadron, and should attend all meetings of the squadron. You should be ready upon occasion to take your part in the initiation of new members, the dedication of halls, monuments or colors, and the funeral services for a comrade."

Sergeant-at-Arms next conducts the Finance Officer-elect to the station of the retiring Adjutant, where retiring Finance Officer gives the following charge:

FINANCE OFFICER: "Finance Officer, you are the keeper of the moneys and in you is reposed the financial policy of the squadron. To you is given charge of the year's budget, and to you is given the duty of the payment of all obligations when proper authorization has been presented for such payment. Your position is an important one,

demanding integrity and honesty; your election to this office signifies that comrades have implicit trust in you. Guard well that trust."

Sergeant-at-Arms next conducts the Adjutant-elect to the station of the Adjutant, who charges him as follows:

ADJUTANT: "Adjutant, you have been chosen to assist your Commander in the wise and effective administration of his office. You will find your duties many and varied; the successful accomplishment of a well-rounded program depends to a great extent upon you. Keep an intimate contact with the members of your squadron and maintain the principles of Democracy."

Sergeant-at-Arms next conducts the Second Vice Commander-elect to the station of the retiring Second Vice Commander where the Second Vice Commander charges him as follows:

SECOND VICE COMMANDER: "Vice Commander, into your helpful hands are placed the important responsibilities of assisting the Commander in all of his duties. Particularly should you be interested in patriotic observances of all kinds, in developing squadron activities and in the entertainment features, which mark all meetings. Help to observe strict tolerance among your members on all political, religious and industrial matters. You are the teacher of Freedom."

Sergeant-at-Arms next conducts the First Vice Commander-elect to the station of the retiring First Vice Commander, who charges as follows:

FIRST VICE COMMANDER: "Vice Commander, to you is given the responsibility of an active cooperation between yourself and the Commander. Particularly you should interest yourself in the membership of the squadron. The most active and devoted members should assist you. No single factor has so important an influence on the squadron's success as membership. You are the teacher of Justice."

Sergeant-at-Arms conducts the retiring Commander to the right of the installing officer, who in turn, charges the new Commander as follows:

INSTALLING OFFICER (to retiring Commander): "Your duties as Commander of this squadron have been completed; yours has been a year marked with earnest endeavor and success to a satisfying degree; yours has been a great privilege and a rich experience. The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion have observed your faithful and untiring efforts and extend to you their sincere appreciation of the services, which you have rendered. Sergeant-Arms, you will conduct the junior Past Commander to his place of honor and I call on members of the audience to join me in a well-deserved round of applause at this time."

Sergeant-at-Arms conducts the retiring Commander to an empty seat in the room, then returns to conduct the Commander-elect to the right side of the installing officer, who in turn,

brings the entire squadron to its feet by three raps of the gavel, then charges the new Commander as follows:

INSTALLING OFFICER: "Commander, to you is entrusted a very sacred duty - that of the teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of the Sons of The American Legion throughout your entire squadron. To you is entrusted supervision of the duties of all other officers of the squadron. To you will come the indigent and the distressed and it is your duty to see that no worthy comrade is turned away without justice. It is your duty to see that Freedom is ever the watchword of those with whom you may come in contact. Loyalty to your squadron, to its membership, to The American Legion, are requirements, which you now assume. You are more than the presiding officer for meetings. You are guided by our Constitution and by the decisions of the squadron as a body. Yet, the responsibility for failure or success of the year's program is largely on your shoulders. You must initiate and carry programs through to completion. You must thoroughly familiarize yourself with the policies and traditions of your squadron and of the Sons of The American Legion. To you I extend the congratulations of The American Legion, and I wish you well as you assume the responsibilities of your office."

Installing officer instructs all newly-installed officers to turn and face the audience, then addresses the entire membership as follows:

INSTALLING OFFICER: "I present to you the officers of your choice. I congratulate you on the selections you have made. Now that you have chosen them to guide the destinies of this squadron, it is your duty to aid them in every way. Help them keep the Sons of The American Legion a free organization of free men, faithful to its principles and ideals."

Installing Officer hands the gavel to the new Commander and takes a seat. Commander- elect then seats the members by one rap of the gavel.

If there is no other business to be done, then a closing prayer from the new Chaplain will take place.

NEW COMMANDER: "Till we meet again let us remember that our obligation to our Country can only be fulfilled by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of the Son of The American Legion. Let us ever be watchful of the honor of our Country, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty and Democracy."

NEW COMMANDER: "The Colors of our nation being in place, please render a hand salute. (pause two seconds) Two!"

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "I now declare this meeting of _____ Squadron No. _____, the Sons of The American Legion, adjourned."

The newly installed Commander gives one rap of the gavel.

Chapter 3 INSTALLATION OF SQUADRON OFFICERS

(SHORT FORM)

INSTALLING OFFICER: "The Sergeant-at-Arms will bring before me the newly elected officers of Squadron No. _____."

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: "I present to you the newly-elected officers of Squadron No. _____, Detachment of _____, whose eligibility records for membership in the Sons of The American Legion have been duly checked and approved."

INSTALLING OFFICER: "You have been chosen to fill the various offices of this squadron. You will, I know, vindicate the trust that has been reposed in you, and fulfill in every way the obligations that trust entails. You will at once familiarize yourselves with the duties of your particular offices and you will proceed upon those duties in the same spirit of devotion and endeavor that characterized your fathers' service in any of the Great Was, out of which came their basis for membership in The American Legion and your own in the Sons of The American Legion. You must know that the welfare and success of this squadron depends largely on you; and you must know also that upon your shoulders equally rests the burden of preserving the integrity of the Sons of The American Legion. You must protect and advance its good name before the people of this community, the state and the nation. You must exalt it in their eyes. You must make them know, as we know its purposes and its policy. Ever remember the tolerant spirit that animates its members. There is no rank among us, for each serves as the equal of his comrade; and all strive toward the same goal, which is the realization in the life of the Republic of the ideals of Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. Ever remember that the cardinal purposes of the Sons of The American Legion are the care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call and of those who are now suffering from disease and want; rightful education of the children of our country, and devoted service to the community, state and nation."

"You will raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your names: "I, _____, do solemnly pledge myself to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office in the Sons of The American Legion I am about to assume." and "I further pledge I am not a member of, and do not subscribe to, the principles of any groups opposed to our form of government."

Sergeant-at-Arms conducts the new Commander to the installing officer, who in turn, brings the entire squadron to its feet by three raps of the gavel, then charges the new Commander as follows:

INSTALLING OFFICER: "Commander, to you is entrusted a very sacred duty - that of the teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of the Sons of The American Legion throughout your entire squadron. To you is entrusted supervision of the duties of all other officers of the squadron. To you will come the indigent and the distressed and it is your duty to see that no worthy comrade is turned away without

justice. It is your duty to see that Freedom is ever the watchword of those with whom you may come in contact. Loyalties to your squadron, to its membership, to The American Legion, are requirements, which you now assume. You are more than the presiding officer for meetings. You are guided by the constitution and by the decision of the squadron as a body, yet the responsibility for failure or success of the year's program is largely on your shoulders. You must initiate and carry programs through to completion. You must thoroughly familiarize yourself with the policies and traditions of your squadron and of the Sons of The American Legion. To you I extend the congratulations of The American Legion, and I wish you well as you assume the responsibilities of your office."

Installing Officer then addresses the entire membership as follows:

INSTALLING OFFICER: "I present to you the officers of your choice. I congratulate you on the selections you have made. Now that you have chosen them to guide the destinies of this squadron, it is your duty to aid them in every way. Help them keep the Sons of The American Legion a free organization of free men, faithful to its principles and ideals."

Chapter 4 SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION INITIATION CEREMONY

(COMMANDER raps gavel once to draw everyone's attention)

(COMMANDER) This meeting is about to open. Will all officers and guests please take their stations?

(COMMANDER raps gavel three times and all rise)

(COMMANDER) The flag of our nation being in place, please join me in rendering a hand salute. *(pause)* Two!

The Chaplain will invoke the blessing of God. Please remove all covers.

(COMMANDER moves aside for CHAPLAIN)

(CHAPLAIN) Almighty God, Father of mankind and Judge over nations, we pray Thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. We ask you to be with us always. We know that in these troubled times when the world is in great turmoil the things we ask of You may seem insignificant, but we do pray to You to ask for a better world for all. We wish to keep the fires of freedom burning brightly in the skies over this great land of ours and we pray that we will always keep You in our hearts. Amen.

(CHAPLAIN returns to his station and all remain standing)

(COMMANDER) In memory of our departed comrades and the comrades of our forefathers, let us stand in silence.

(COMMANDER) Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention of The American Legion, and Resolution N.C. 2-94, adopted at the 23rd National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of the Sons of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW and MIAs still unaccounted for, as 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.

(SERGEANT-AT-ARMS places POW/MIA flag on empty chair and lights Candle of Vigilance, if available)

(COMMANDER) Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(COMMANDER leads reciting the Pledge)

(COMMANDER) You may now recover *(COMMANDER leads in replacing covers on heads)*

(COMMANDER) And now please join me as we recite the Preamble to the Constitution of The Sons of The American Legion. Copies of the Preamble were placed on your chairs before the ceremony.

(COMMANDER leads in reciting the Preamble)

(COMMANDER raps gavel once for all to be seated)

(COMMANDER) I now declare Squadron _____ of the Detachment of Indiana to be convened in special session.

(COMMANDER) The initiation of candidates for membership in The Sons of The American Legion is an important function for each Squadron. The new members need to be shown, officially and formally, that they are indeed a part of this great organization. They deserve the courtesy of being introduced to the organization that has accepted their membership application and dues payment.

We will now proceed with the initiation. In order that we may impress upon these candidates the serious import and sacred obligations of membership in the sons of The American Legion, all present will conduct themselves in a manner befitting such a ceremony. Sergeant-At-Arms, you will please escort the candidates into the meeting hall and place them properly before the flag.

(SERGEANT-AT-ARMS salutes the flag and, turning, proceeds to get the candidates and escorts them to the front of the room facing the flag)

(SERGEANT-AT-ARMS) Commander, I present these candidates for initiation into the Sons of The American Legion: *(SERGEANT-AT-ARMS reads names of those to be initiated)*

(COMMANDER) Gentlemen, your forefathers and mothers were privileged to serve their country during wartime. Because of their service, you are today privileged to join this great service organization, The Sons of The American Legion.

Unlike the armed forces in which your forefathers and mothers 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.

Like our parent organization, The American Legion, The Sons of 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 nation.

Are you now ready and willing to obligate yourself as expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution of The Sons of The American Legion? If so, say "I am."

(CANDIDATES) I am.

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

(COMMANDER steps to the right immediately next to the American Flag, raises his right hand and address the candidates)

(COMMANDER) You will raise your right hand and repeat after me:

I, *(state 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 true spirit of Americanism;

To preserve the memories

Of our former members

And the association of our members

And our forefathers

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 friendship

By our devotion to mutual helpfulness;

To adopt in letter and spirit

All the great principles

For which The American Legion stands;

To all of which I pledge myself

For God and Country.

I am not a member of and do not subscribe

To the principles of any group

Opposed to our form of government.

You may put your hands down

(COMMANDER resumes place at his station and seats membership with one rap of the gavel)

I now call on the Sergeant-At-Arms to display the emblem of the Sons of The American Legion while the Chaplain explains its meaning.

(SERGEANT-AT-ARMS produces the emblem or the Sons' flag while the CHAPLAIN rises and stands at a convenient location)

(CHAPLAIN) There shines the emblem of the Sons 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. The design of our emblem was taken from the emblem of our parent organization, The American Legion. But our emblem is oval in shape so as to be easily distinguished.

The star in the center represents our country, and the five points of the star represent the five-point program of The Sons of The American Legion

The sun in the background represents The Sons of The American Legion and the rays represent the loyalty of its membership.

The blue of the emblem, like the blue of our flag, stands for justice.

The two stars in the blue border stand for freedom and democracy.

The wreath below the star is in memory of our comrades; and those of our fathers who willingly gave their lives for their country.

The ten points of the emblem represent the ten ideals of every Legion son.

Wearing the emblem should always remind us of the sanctity of the home, our Country and its free institutions.

(CHAPLAIN returns to his station)

(COMMANDER) The emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion are emblems of Americanism. Americanism is unity of love, singleness of allegiance, practicality or purpose, all directed to a common good. It is that spirit of patriotism which shall ever preserve our land from the stagnation which is the death of peoples.

As members of the Sons of The American Legion we must preach and teach the religion of patriotism throughout our daily lives. We must not forget our obligations as citizens, and we must continually strive to strengthen and retain those obligations. In the emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion are great prophecies. They bespeak the fullest good for each in the betterment of all. They bespeak the promise of the defenders of the Republic. They exemplify the ideals for which they fought. We, as loyal members of the Sons of The American Legion, must assist in the carrying out of those ideals.

I now welcome you into the Sons of The American Legion as a member in good standing. May you, by your every act and deed, carry on the purposes set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution of this organization with credit to yourselves, your organization and The American Legion. Always, in all ways, be a man; always, in all ways, be an American!

Is there any further business to come before this meeting? If not, the CHAPLAIN will lead us in the closing prayer.

(CHAPLAIN) Our dear heavenly father, watch over us as we leave here today. And especially, watch over our newest members. Help us and help them to be better Sons of The American Legion as we learn and teach by words and deeds, the principles of Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. Be with us until we meet again. Amen.

(COMMANDER) 'Till we meet again let us remember that our obligation to our Country can only be fulfilled by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation ever be a main objective of the Sons of

The American Legion. Let us ever be watchful of the honor of our Country, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty and Democracy.

The Sergeant-At-Arms will now extinguish the POW/MIA Candle of Vigilance.

(SERGEANT-AT-ARMS steps forward, salutes, blows out the candle and salutes again)

(COMMANDER) The colors of our nation being in place please join me in rendering a hand salute. *(pause)* Two! I now declare this meeting of Squadron _____, the Sons of The American Legion, adjourned.

(COMMANDER raps gavel once)

Chapter 5 SQUADRON EVERLASTING (MEMORIAL) SERVICES

COMMANDER: "We will now enter into our Memorial Services to honor all SAL members who have departed from our midst and joined the SAL Squadron Everlasting."

CHAPLAIN: "Almighty God we beseech Thee to bless and grant everlasting Peace to our departed members. They have joined their Squadron Everlasting. Grant to their bereaved family Comfort, Love and Abiding Care. May the sands of time help to heal their wounds and ease their sorrowing souls. AMEN."

RITUAL: An interim, it is the Squadrons discretion to adopt a temporary ritual and follow the same ritual as outlined in the Post Officer's Guide.

COMMANDER: "The Memorial Services are now completed."

(Note: The Sons of The American Legion is nonsectarian. Therefore, the service may be varied in accordance with the religious belief of the deceased member, the wishes of the family of the deceased and of the officiating pastor.)

IN THE FUNERAL HOME

COMMANDER: "Death has entered our ranks, we members of, _____ will now pay final respects to _____ who has been called to the final command."

CHAPLAIN: "LET US PRAY: "Almighty Father please accept into Thy divine care the soul of _____. We are strangers with Thee and sojourners as our fathers were. Grant us, Oh Father, that the sorrow we feel today may bring us closer to you. Help us to understand that death is not the end but only the beginning of the glories of a new life. Let us be reminded that our loved ones are enjoying Thy grace and love more than we are here on earth. Until the daybreaks and the shadows flee away, grant that we live so our lives may honor the members who have gone before us. Thus, together may we come to that place Thou has prepared for them that love Thee and keep Thy commandments. For Thine own name's sake we pray. AMEN."

COMMANDER: "This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before. Let us not enshroud his memory with mournful tears, but let us remember him with solemn pride for his services to God and Country. We know how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy to those who are left behind. May they now feel he is at least at rest and never ending peace."

FOOTNOTES: SAL Honor Guard, if available, should line aisle before ceremony. Colors should be placed at head and foot of casket. At end of ceremony, Commander and

Chaplain salute (Farewell my Friend) turn and leave. Members may file forward to pay last respects, place poppies inside the casket, salute and leave. After last member passes, taps is played and Honor Guard salutes, turns and leaves.

FUNERAL SERVICE AT THE GRAVESITE

Here the body will be lowered into the grave.

CHAPLAIN: "Man, who is born of woman, is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not. For as much as God hath taken out of the world the soul of our departed comrade, we therefore, commit his body to the ground to sleep and his soul to endless peace and rest. The dust returneth to earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it."

Benediction, if desired.

BUGLER: Taps. (With two bugle echoes from different positions of the cemetery if possible).

If uniformed musical organizations of the Sons of The American Legion are used in connection; with the funeral ceremonies, white gloves should be worn, and the American Flag and the squadron banner should be displayed at the head of the marching column. Mourning is indicated by attaching two streamers of black crepe to the spearhead of the Sons of The American Legion standard.

(Squadron Adjutant begins procedure to put S.A.L. Emblem on Headstone Marker)

The proper procedure for having the Emblem of the Sons of The American Legion placed on the headstone grave marker of a deceased Son of The American Legion member begins with the Post Adjutant. It is the responsibility of the Post Adjutant to obtain the proper information from the relatives of the deceased. That information consists of:

- 1) Full name and membership verification; and
- 2) Name and address of manufacturer of grave marker.

This information should then be transmitted to your Department Adjutant who will verify the information and request approval of the National Adjutant for the use of the Emblem.

The National Adjutant then authorizes the manufacturer onetime use of the name and Emblem of the Sons of The American Legion on the specific grave maker.

Permission also may be obtained to use the Emblem of the Sons of The American Legion on grave markers on a pre-need basis. All requests are handled individually, but only through the Department Adjutant's office and to the Sons of The American Legion members with at least 20 years consecutive membership, only on a pre-need basis.

Post Adjutants can save a lot of time, confusion and needless correspondence by making sure these procedures are followed.

Chapter 6 DISPOSAL OF UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS

This is a very desirable ceremony to present as part of a Flag Day observance. The Squadron assembles in meeting, out-of-doors, at night. Members are aligned in two parallel rows about twenty feet apart, facing each other. Officers at their stations as shown. A small fire is burning opposite the Commander and beyond the rows of members. Diagram of arrangements appears below.

Sergeant-at-Arms: **"Comrade Commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable flags of our Country for inspection and disposal."**

Commander: **"Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, advance with your detail and present the Flags for disposal and inspection."**

Sergeant-at-Arms calls his detail to attention. They form at the Post of the Sergeant-at-Arms, take the Flags which are to be inspected, march abreast down center until opposite the Second Vice-Commander, turn right and halt two paces in front of the Second Vice-Commander. The Sergeant-at-Arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

Sergeant-at-Arms: **"Comrade Vice Commander, we present these unserviceable Flags for your inspection."**

The Sergeant-at-Arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail, **"About Face,"** crosses behind the detail and takes his post at its left, commands **"Forward March."** The detail marches to within two paces of the First Vice-Commander, halts and proceeds as before

Sergeant-at-Arms: **"Comrade Vice Commander, we present these Flags which have been inspected by the Second Vice Commander, for your further inspection."**

First Vice-Commander: **"Have any of these Flags served any other purpose"**

Sergeant-at-Arms: **"Some of these Flags have been displayed in various public places."**

First Vice-Commander, **"Present them to the Commander for final inspection and fitting disposal."**

The Sergeant-at-Arms salutes, about faces, command the detail "About Face," crosses behind the detail and takes position on its left, commands "Forward March." The detail marches to center, turns left, halts within two paces of the Commander, Sergeant-at-Arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

Sergeant-at-Arms: **"Comrade Commander, we have the honor to present for final inspection and proper disposal these Flags of our Country."**

Commander: **"Have these Flags been inspected by the First and Second Vice Commanders?"**

Sergeant-at-Arms: **"They have."**

Commander: **"Comrade Second Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"**

Second Vice-Commander: **"Comrade Commander, since Flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend that they be honorably retired from further service."**

Commander: **"Comrade First Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"**

First Vice-Commander: **"Comrade Commander, since Flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend that they be honorably retired from further service."**

Commander: **"Comrades, we have presented here these Flags of our Country which have been inspected and condemned as unserviceable. They have reached their present state in a proper service of tribute, memory and love."**

"A Flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze, or a beautiful banner of finest silk. Its intrinsic value may be trifling or great; but its real value is beyond price, for it is a previous symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked for and lived for, and died for - a free nation of free men, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of Justice, Freedom and Democracy.

"Let these faded Flags of our Country be retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites and their places be taken by bright new Flags of the same size and kind, and let no grave of our soldier or sailor dead be unhonored and unmarked. Sergeant-at-Arms, assemble the Color Guard, escort the detail bearing the Flags and destroy these Flags by burning. The members shall stand at attention."

Color Guard forms. The detail about faces. Preceded by the Color Guard, the detail marches down center to the fire. National Colors cross over and take position on the right of the fire, facing the Commander. Post Standard takes position on left of fire. The detail lines up behind the fire, which is burning low.

Commander: **"The Chaplain will offer prayer."**

Chaplain: **"Almighty God, Captain of all hosts and Commander over all, bless and consecrate this present hour. "We thank Thee for our Country and its Flag, and the liberty for which it stands.**

"To clean and purging flames we commit these Flags, worn out in worthy service. As they yield their substance to the fire, may Thy Holy Light spread over and bring to our hearts renewed devotion to God and Country. Amen."

Commander: **"Hand salute."**

Color Guards present arms. Post Standard is dipped. All officers and members, except those on the Flag detail, salute. Member of the Flag detail dip the condemned Flags in kerosene and place them on a rack over the fire.

Commander: "**Two**".

Color Guard advances down center and places Colors. Members of the detail resume their places among the members.

Chapter 7 POW/MIA EMPTY CHAIR CEREMONY

POW / MIA EMPTY CHAIR CEREMONY

SQUADRON COMMANDER: “Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, of The American Legion and Resolution N.C. 2-94, adopted at the 23rd National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, calls for designating a POWIMIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of the Sons of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW / MIA’s still unaccounted for, as 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.

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

(The Sergeant-At-Arms, or other designated individuals, approaches the Empty Chair carrying a folded POW / MIA flag. Upon reaching the Empty Chair, they reverently unfold and drape it over the Empty Chair with the crest facing the membership).

Chapter 8 BLUE STAR BANNER CEREMONY

BLUE STAR BANNER CEREMONY

COMMANDER: "Resolution NC 2-03, adopted at the 32nd National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, calls for the display of a Blue Star Banner at all meetings of the Sons of The American Legion as a symbol of our support of all the military personnel serving this great country. Let us never forget that every day these individuals are protecting our liberty. The Sergeant-at-Arms will place the Blue Star Service Banner."

(Note: Only the Corporate Blue Star Banner should be used. The regular Blue Star Banners are for families with active duty personnel.)