

# **THE POST ADJUTANT**

No one ever reaches the point where they know all there is to know about the work of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and how it functions. The National Convention has the authority to revise the National By-Laws, resulting in new or revised duties and responsibilities for all of us. To do our jobs well, we must keep up with these changes and accept the responsibilities which they bring in their wake. This is particularly true of Post Adjutants.

We know, too, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States follows closely military tradition. In the service, the Adjutant is the person in charge of the personnel section of a command. He or she is responsible for all official correspondence, returns and records of personnel, strength reports, the preparation and distribution of orders. This, in general, corresponds to the duties of the Post Adjutant.

The Post Adjutant holds one of the most important positions in the post. Upon your shoulders rest many and varied duties which are not always spelled out in the printed word and must be learned through practice and custom. In this document, we are going to try, to the best of our ability, to help you to be a good Adjutant.

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF A POST ADJUTANT**

If you are going to be a good Adjutant, you first must have a genuine and sincere interest in the Organization and its programs. You must have a full knowledge of its aims and objectives, tact and diplomacy, as well as a fair degree of integrity and ability. It has been done by many other men and women and can be done by you.

There can be no doubt you do have a sincere dedication to the aims and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or you never would have given the time and energy which landed you in the job you now hold. You know, too, you must handle correspondence promptly and intelligently. You certainly know the importance of the records you keep and that good housekeeping, which is simply being neat and orderly, is fundamental in any business if it hopes to succeed at all. Organization, consistency and preservation are three paramount objectives and accomplishments for a legacy of success as an Adjutant.

It is necessary to be familiar with the history of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the eligibility regulations, the current program and services to our disabled comrades. To be efficient you constantly study, read and listen, as well as work, to keep yourself ready.

Always keep in mind that the Post Adjutant is the individual who is the buffer between the Post Commander and the members of the Post as well as between the post and the general public. You can serve all veterans by serving well the members of your Post. You can attract non-members through a pleasant personality and you surely can drive them and your own Post members away by being offensive.

Certainly, you have integrity and ability. Few people reach our position in life without having some measure of each. You will need to carry out effectively the many tasks which you are called upon to perform. You will become aware of the importance of distributing orders quickly and correctly, the necessity of courtesy, the power of suggestion and the everlasting value of records properly kept and immediately available.

## **DUTIES OF THE POST ADJUTANT**

Section 216, paragraph (c), of the National By-Laws provides that Post officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the Post Adjutant. Post officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the Commander, Adjutant and Quartermaster prior to installation of office. In the event of an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within sixty (60) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited and the office declared vacant.

Section 218 (6) of the Manual of Procedure provides that. Among the duties of the Post Adjutant, he shall:

- a) Be the official corresponding officer for the Post and shall sign all communications and reports.
- b) Under the direction of the Commander prepare all reports and returns required of him.
- c) Maintain the books and records and have them available for inspection by authorized officers and Post members. Unless authorized by the Post otherwise, all such books and records shall be kept at the Post facilities.
- d) The Post Adjutant maintains the following records:
  1. A copy of the original application of every member admitted to the Post.
  2. Minutes of each Post meeting after correction and approval.
  3. Current orders or circulars issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, the Department Commander, the District and/or County Council Commander (if applicable) or the Post Commander.
  4. A correspondence file.
  5. A file containing a copy of the proof of eligibility submitted by officers pursuant to Section 216.
- e) Maintain a current copy of By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and copies of the By-Laws of the Post, Department, District and County Council (if applicable).
- f) Transfer to his successor, without delay, all books, papers, records, monies and other records and property of the Post in his possession or under his control.
- g) Comply with and perform all duties required of him by the laws and usages of the organization.

In addition to these By-Law requirements, the Adjutant shall submit from time to time to the Circulation Department, 406 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111, a list of the changes of address and deaths which have occurred in the Post, and it is the responsibility of the Post Adjutant, and no one else, to keep the mailing list of his Post accurate at all times. If a Post member complains they are not receiving the VFW Magazine, it is the function of the Post Adjutant to see that the correct name and address are on file at Kansas City.

The Adjutant shall keep a roll of all Post Officers at each meeting and see that the following information is incorporated into the minutes of each Post meeting:

- (A) A list of all names of comrades accepted at each meeting for membership.
- (B) A list of names of all comrades rejected at each meeting for membership.
- (C) A brief recapitulation of the important items from committee reports and who made the report.
- (D) A record of all motions, the names of the makers and seconders, the resulting action of the Post and all other actions of the Post.
- (E) List all vouchers by number and the amount of disbursement.
- (F) List the Post Quartermaster's Detail of Receipts and Disbursements for each meeting.
- (G) The disposition of all correspondence as directed by proper authority.

If there is anything in the foregoing you do not understand or if you need advice, counsel or assistance of any kind, write to the Department Adjutant, Department Headquarters, and explain your problem. You can be sure of receiving a prompt answer.

## **TOOLS OF TRADE**

Your tools as Post Adjutant should include the latest copy of the "Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual." A Post Minute Book to cover your term of office, Post stationery and envelopes and a computer would be beneficial to you in carrying out the functions in your office. The Post seal should be available to you and used on official correspondence. You should consider additional office supplies that will aid you in carrying out all the duties of your office.

## **THE APPLICATION CARD**

The By-Laws place on the Post Commander the burden of reading the application card to the Post. It is hard to tell just whom the application card belongs to when it comes to handling it, however, the Post Adjutant definitely should see the application card before it is read to the post and should make sure that it is completely and correctly completed. It is the responsibility of the proposing member to have it done correctly and the responsibility of the Investigating Committee to verify it, but it is the responsibility of the Post Adjutant to place on his/her agenda this chore of rechecking all application cards before the Post acts on them.

## **THE MINUTES**

One of your most important functions as a Post Adjutant will be in keeping accurate minutes of the Post meeting. You should use the official Post Minute Book available through the National Emblem and Supply Department.

Your transcriptions and your minutes are the only authoritative records your Post has of past meetings and past transactions that make up your Post's history. You will need to keep these minutes faithfully and accurately. It is extremely important that you include everything possible in THE MINUTES. If a change is to be made, let such a change be made by proper authority, which includes by the direction of the Post Commander or a vote from the floor.

Final transcription into the official minutes book is necessary. Clarity, accuracy and completeness for this is paramount.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Much time and energy are consumed in getting to you facts which are of value to you. It is not necessary, of course, to read every word to the post membership, but you should give them the ideas contained in the orders. Some of them call for action by the Post and others are for file and information. You probably will have to work out your own system of separating the items and reading them to the members. This also holds true for correspondence. Review and evaluate all correspondence carefully. It will not be long before you will know what is of importance to the members of your Post and what is not. There will be times when you will receive mail between meetings that you could just stuff in a briefcase and forget for two weeks until the Post meets. A better plan would be to answer it at once on the basis of your own knowledge or what you know the wishes of the members would be in each case. You may be wary of answering something lest your reply not meet with approval. In that case, consult the Commander for direction. In any event, acknowledge the letter and tell the writer he will be advised further.

## **ACCURATE RECORDS AND GOOD HOUSEKEEPING**

The Post Adjutant is the person to whom we look to keep the Post's house in order. He or she is the Executive Officer of the Post, the primary advisor to the Commander; the person who maintains the records and is obligated at all times to advise other officers on the problems of the Post.