

OPENING POST CEREMONIES (no color guard) *Italic*=instructions; underline=action; [bracket]=additions

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

1. Commander: (One gavel rap) “The officers will take their respective stations. Unauthorized guests will kindly retire, and the guard will close the doors.” (Commander ascertains if unauthorized guests have retired).
2. Commander: “By the power and authority vested in me, I am about to open _____ Post No. _____ for the transaction of business that may lawfully come before it” (two gavel raps).
“Officer of the Day, satisfy yourself that all present are entitled to remain.”
3. (*The Officer of the Day will examine each comrade, assisted as directed by the Commander. Those found in possession of official VFW dues receipts for the current calendar year take seats. Officer of the Day then advances to the alter, salutes the Commander and says*):
4. Officer of the Day: “Comrade Commander, I find all, except those standing, in possession of official VFW dues receipts for the current calendar year.” (Ritual 14)
5. Commander: (Instructs the Quartermaster to determine the status of members standing.)
6. Commander [abridged for posted colors]: (Two gavel raps). [“The colors of our nation are posted.] Attention! Present Arms! Order Arms! Parade rest! [Optional nod to Chaplain] (Ritual 15).
7. Chaplain: (*Chaplain proceeds to altar, taking his station between it and Senior Vice Commander's station. Chaplain faces altar and opens Bible.* (Chaplain or presiding officer determines cover) (Ritual 3)
 - a. [“Uncover” (optional)] “Let us bow our heads. O, Sovereign Ruler of the Universe who art the Lord of Hosts and God of Peace, without Thee our efforts are vain. Continue Thy blessings upon us and our families, we pray Thee, and guide us during our deliberations. We beseech Thee, O God, to bless the dependents of our departed comrades, and to comfort all who gave their loved ones to our nation’s cause. Bless and strengthen the sick, the needy and the afflicted. Bless, we ask Thee, the children, families, and staff of our National Home and help us to fulfill our duty toward them. Continue Thy favor upon our order, and help us practice the spirit of true comradeship, both in our councils and with the world at large. Enable us to better the community in which we live through our devotion to duty as citizens. We now have a moment of silent prayer for our departed comrades and for those missing in action and those held as prisoners of war. (Short pause.)
 - b. These and all other necessary blessings we ask of Thee, Mighty Ruler of the Universe. Amen.
8. ALL: “Amen.”
9. Chaplain: [“Recover” (optional)].

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10. Commander: “[Post,] Attention. Comrades, you will join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Present Arms!”
11. ALL: “I, pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”
12. Commander [abridged for no color guard]: “Order Arms!” (One gavel rap).
13. Commander: “Comrades, we are assembled again to transact business of mutual benefit. Do not let petty jealousies or trivial personalities influence our deliberations. Let us uphold always the obligations of unselfish comradeship and loyalty to our organization and to the government of the United States of America.”
14. Commander: “I now declare _____ Post No. _____ duly opened for the transaction of business. Guard, you will admit any in waiting who may be worthy.”
15. Commander: VIP & GUESTS. (*If distinguished guests enter, or are in the room the Commander will accord them the proper honors...*).
16. [Optional Speaker: If there is no objection we will hear our speaker’s address at this time. (RONR 363)]

ORDER OF BUSINESS – Traditional (Post)

1. Opening ceremonies (detailed above)
2. Charter Recitation: Commander: [Please join me in reciting Section 230102 of our Congressional Charter.]
“The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies.”
3. Calling the roll of officers: [“Comrade Adjutant, roll call please.” (Titles | “here”)]
4. Reading, referring, membership applications. (Adjutant: Number, disposition)
[“I will now call for the reading or referring of membership applications. The reviewing committee chairman shall report.”]
5. Report of Investigating Committee (Jr. Vice/Review Committee Chair)
 - i. [“The committee reviewed the applications and proof of eligible service.”]
 - ii. “Upon review we believe each of these candidates are of good moral character and will be fine additions to our post (or not).”]
6. Balloting for applicants (viva voce, written; group, individual) (Ritual 9).

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- i. [Are there any questions, comments, or concerns? Hearing none, those accepting the applicants say ‘aye;’ those opposed say ‘no.’ The ayes have it and the applicants have been accepted into membership.]
7. Mustering in of recruits: (oath, pin, Initiation Ceremony) (Ritual 21)
8. Reading of minutes: [“In lieu of reading into the record, the minutes were distributed via email and were available on the correspondence before the meeting. Are there any corrections to the minutes? (Silent Consent) There being no corrections, the minutes are approved.” (approved | as amended | redrafted for future submission)] (RONR 355)
9. Quartermaster’s Report: Disbursements (outflow) [“The quartermaster shall read his report.”]
10. Quartermaster’s Report: Receipts (inflow). QM: [“That ends my report (salute).”]
 - a. Commander: [“Are there any objections to the Quartermaster’s Report? Hearing none, the Quartermaster’s Report is accepted, subject to audit.”] [OR motion and viva voce] (RONR 355)
11. Quartermaster, Reading of Bills (should be approved and voted on.)
[QM: “Commander I will now proceed to read the outstanding bills for this month.”
 - a. Member: “I move to accept the bills as presented.” Second, viva voce.]
12. Report of Service Officer.
13. Distress: Commander: “Is there a Comrade or the family of a Comrade in distress?” X 3
14. Report of all committees: [Charges: Study/Investigate; Recommend (adopt/accept, receive); Action]
 - a. *Community Service*: (“Commander, thank you for the appointment.”)
 - i. VA Hospital, Safety, Americanism, Youth Activities, Buddy Poppy
 - ii. Relief: Donations (VMS, Nat. Home Children, CMDR Project); Fundraisers
 - b. *Social/House*: (outings, food, fun, building)
 - c. *Youth & Education*: (PP, VOD, Teacher, Scouts)
 - i. “It is moved and seconded to adopt/accept/receive the committee’s recommendation. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor of the motion will say Aye. Opposed, No.”
15. Remember our National Home for Children
 - a. Commander: (Raps gavel twice). “All present will rise. [Post, Attention!] Parade, Rest! Comrade Chaplain, you will ask Divine blessings upon our National Home for Children.”
 - b. Chaplain: “[Uncover] Almighty God, we ask for your divine blessing on the children, families and staff of our National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.
 - c. May Your Spirit dwell with them forever, giving them health and guiding their lives. Help us to always be faithful to our fallen comrades by providing support for their families. We ask in Your Holy Name. Amen. [Recover]”

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- d. [Commander: “Post, Attention!” (Rap gavel once) [“Please be seated.”]]
- 16. Unfinished business (Reading of communications associated with unfinished business. Read and vote).
- 17. New business (Reading of communications associated with new business. Read and vote).
 - a. [Commander: “Is there any further new business?”]
- 18. (Optional) Nominations, elections and installation of officers. [See notes]
- 19. Good of the order. (Reading of communications associated with good of the order. Read and vote.)
- 20. Closing ceremonies. (Detailed below)

POST CLOSING CEREMONIES

- 1. Commander: There being no further business, we will have our closing ceremony. (Two raps).
- 2. Commander: (flag positioned, no color bearers) “Post, Attention! Comrade Chaplain, you will deliver the closing prayer. Parade rest!”
- 3. Chaplain: (Takes position at altar).
 - a. “[Uncover] Almighty God, the hour has come when we must part.
 - b. We commit ourselves to Thy care. Thou, Who are our strong tower of defense and our protection, grant that in life’s battles we may be strong and brave, living such lives of stainless integrity as shall reflect honor upon our country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and glorify Thy great and Holy Name.
 - c. May Thy good providence shield us from all harm, watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom, and bring us together again in true comradeship and peace. Amen. [Recover”]
- 4. All: “Amen” (Chaplain closes Bible).
- 5. Commander: “[Post,]Attention!”
- 6. Commander: (options)
 - a. [“The colors of our nation are posted.] Present, Arms!...Order, Arms!”;
 - b. OR “Bugler, sound ‘To the Colors.’”(Salute on first note, drop on last).
- 7. Commander: Comrades, I now declare this business session of _____ No. _____ closed. Our next regular meeting will be: _____. [One rap]

15. (Optional) Nominations, elections and elections of officers. (VFW MOP, Sec. 217)

NOTE: Prior to the opening of nominations, the Post shall decide form of election (open vote, written secret ballot, poll system). “...Any member can make a motion prescribing the method” (RONR 431).

[“I make a motion the post elections be an open vote from the floor.”]

NOTE: Consent letters for absentee nominations must be presented to the adjutant in writing “prior to the opening of nominations” (which are opened in March and are still open until the election in April).

Nominations:

Commander: “The _____ Post No. _____ officer nominations are now open and shall remain open until the Post is ready to vote. Nominations are now in order for the office of Commander.”

Comrade: “Comrade Commander (rise, salute), I nominate *Comrade A*.”

NOTE: No second is required but may be used to indicate endorsement (RONR 432).

Commander: “*Comrade A* is nominated. Are there any further nominations for the office of Commander?”

NOTE: The chair repeats each nomination in this way until all nominations for the office have been made (RONR 432). The order of nominations and elections are Commander, Sr. Vice, Jr. Vice, Quartermaster, Chaplain, and Trustee(s) (VFW 71).

Election: [sample forms/key phrases added from RONR]

NOTE: Adjutant determines majority (a number greater than half of the post comrades in good order in attendance) and has list of nominees. Absentee ballots and proxy votes are prohibited. Use viva voce if election is not strongly contested. Use rising vote or show of hands if close (RONR 442).

Commander*: “The _____ Post No. _____ officer nominations were opened during the March meeting and shall remain open until the Post is ready to vote.”

Commander: “The current officer nominees are (by office order and order nominated).”

Commander: “Do any of the nominees wish to decline the nomination?”

Commander: “Are there any further nominations for (office)?...(pause) If not... (pause), the post is ready to vote and nominations are closed.” (NOTE: RONR says it should be repeated for each office (436))

Commander: “The 2020 _____ Post No. _____ officer elections are now open.

(Unopposed) “With one nomination, I declare that *Comrade A* is elected Commander by unanimous consent.

(Viva-Voce) “*Comrade A* has been nominated for Commander. As many as are in favor of *Comrade A* for Commander say *aye*... Those opposed say *no*... The ayes have it and *Comrade A* is elected Commander (442).

NOTE: If the noes are the majority the wording is:

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(Viva-Voce) “The noes have it and *Comrade A* is not elected. Those in favor of *Comrade B* (the next nominee) say *aye*...Those opposed say *no*... The ayes have it and *Comrade B* is elected Commander.

(Rising or raise hands) *Comrade A* has been nominated for Commander. As many as are in favor of *Comrade A* for Commander please rise. Comrade A has received the majority vote and is elected Commander. (Stop process if first candidate receives the majority.)

NOTE: If the nominee does not receive a majority vote the wording is:

Commander: *Comrade A* has not received a majority of votes. *Comrade B* has been nominated for Commander. As many as are in favor of *Comrade B* for Commander please rise. *Comrade B* has not received a majority of votes. *Comrade C* has been nominated for Commander. As many as are in favor of *Comrade C* for Commander please rise. *Comrade C* has not received a majority of votes.

Commander: “Because no candidate received the majority vote, the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped until the election is made.”

Commander: (When Done) “Within 30 days, elected officers shall submit proof of eligibility to the Post Adjutant otherwise the office shall be forfeited. This concludes the elections.”

1. Current Commander asks the Commander-elect for appointments (from floor).
2. Commander-elect shall appoint the Adjutant, Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Officer of the Day, Service Officer, and Guard. Additionally, the Commander-elect may appoint the chairmen of the Community Service, Social, and Youth & Education committees. The Commander-elect may address the post.

17. Good of the order.

Plate No.	<i>National Colors</i>	Adj.	Cmdr.	Qrtm.	<i>Post Colors</i>
1A					
O DAY		Altar			
JR. V			Chaplain		
		SR. V			Guard
Members	Members	POW	Members	Members	
Members	Members	Members	Members	Members	
Members	Members	Members	Members	Members	

ADDITIONAL KEY PHRASES & NOTES

1. PRE-MEETING: Commander: “The meeting will start in two minutes. The dispensation and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of smoking/vaping products in VFW meeting rooms during VFW meetings are prohibited. Please silence cell phones and remove unofficial caps. (Bylaws 111)
2. ALTERNATIVE QM REPORT ACCEPT:
 - a. Member: “Comrade Commander, I move to accept the Quartermaster’s Report, subject to audit (or as presented).” Member 2: “Comrade Commander, I second the motion.” Commander: “A motion has been properly made and seconded to accept the Quartermaster’s Report subject to audit” (viva voce).
3. UNCOVER COMMAND: [“Uncover” (optional)] [“Recover”]: Having the Chaplain execute a “command” to remove and restore headgear fixes an issue of parade rest (Remain silent and do not move unless otherwise directed).
 - a. All members who are able will stand during the offering of the prayers; (b) members will follow the action of the Chaplain or presiding officer relative to removal of caps during prayers; if uncovering, the hat shall be placed on the extended closed fingers of the right hand in such a way that the Cross of Malta is exposed and held over the heart; (c) official caps will not be worn during luncheons, banquets or other meals; (d) Official caps will be the only head covering allowed to be worn at regular meetings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Ritual 3)
 - b. (When the Commander gives the command of “Parade Rest,” a member in uniform or wearing VFW cap shall remain at parade rest; shall not remove their cap during prayer (optional), and shall remain at parade rest until another command is given.) (Ritual 17)
 - c. In the Army, you watch the officiating chaplain at a funeral; if he uncovers, you uncover and bow your head at the words ‘Let us pray.’ But the mourners aren’t at parade rest (active pallbearers don’t move) (TC 3-21.5 14-4c).
4. OPTIONS: New business (Reading of communications associated with new business. Read and vote).
 - a. [Refer the question; make a Motion (passed, defeated, tabled (take from table), postponed, placed in committee); motion restated by the chair (repeat & clarify); substitute motion. Viva voce or standing vote.]
 - b. [EXAMPLE: “Comrade Commander, I make a motion to donate \$1 from the general fund to VMS.” Member 2: “Comrade Commander, I second the motion.” Commander: “A motion has been properly made and seconded to donate \$1 from the general fund to VMS. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor of the motion will say Aye. Opposed, No.” (viva voce).]

ORDER OF BUSINESS – Contemporary

1. Call to order: “By the power and authority vested in me, I am about to open _____ Post No. _____ for the transaction of business that may lawfully come before it. Officer of the Day, satisfy yourself that all present are entitled to remain.”
2. Check dues cards: (*The Officer of the Day will examine each comrade.*)
 - a. Officer of the Day: “Comrade Commander, I find all, except _____, in possession of official VFW dues receipts for the current calendar year.”
3. Roll call of officers: [“Comrade Adjutant, roll call please.” (Titles | “here”)]
4. Reading, referring, membership applications.
5. Read minutes: [“In lieu of reading into the record, the minutes were distributed via email and were available on the correspondence before the meeting. Are there any corrections to the minutes? (Silent Consent) There being no corrections, the minutes are approved.” RONR 355]
6. Quartermaster’s Report. [“Are there any objections to the QM Report? Hearing none, the QM report is accepted, subject to audit.”]
7. Report of Service Officer
8. Distress: Commander: “Is there a Comrade or the family of a Comrade in distress?” X 3
9. Committee report(s)
10. Unfinished business
11. New business
12. Good of the Order
13. Commander: [There being no further business,] Comrades, I now declare this business session of _____ No. _____ closed. Our next regular meeting will be: _____. [One rap]