

Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States: National Constitution
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Military Order of Foreign Wars of The United States

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Whereas, In the Providence of God, Victory crowned the efforts of the forces engaged in establishing and maintaining against foreign foes, the principles contended for by the North American Colonies, and, later, by the United States of America in the conflicts known as:

The War of the Revolution	The War with Tripoli	The War of 1812
The Mexican War	The War with Spain, 1898*	The China Relief Expedition*
The Vera Cruz Campaign*	The Nicaragua Campaign*	The Mexican Campaign, 1916*
Mexican Border Service*	World War I*	World War II*
The Korean War*	Overseas Expeditionary Service*	The Vietnam War*
The Persian Gulf Conflict, 1991*	Overseas Armed Forces Service*	The Kosovo Campaign*
Global War on Terrorism*	Afghanistan Campaign*	Iraq Campaign*

(* = Added since institution)

Whereas, Pursuant to the original Institution of the Order, the Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States has, by the officers of the said several State Commanderies in meeting duly assembled, been instituted to honor and perpetuate the names of brave and loyal men and women; to keep in mind the memory of their martial deeds and the victories which they helped to gain; to strengthen the ties of fellowship among the Companions of the Order; to foster the cultivation of Military and Naval Science; and to aid in maintaining National Honor, Union and Independence;

Now, Therefore, To the end that suitable provision may be made for the perpetuation and government of the Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States as a National Order with jurisdiction throughout the United States of America, its possessions and foreign countries in which Commanderies may be established, this National Constitution of the Order is hereby adopted, established, ratified and confirmed.

ARTICLE I: Name

The name and title of this Order shall be: Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States.

ARTICLE II: Principles

This Order recognizes as its fundamental principles:

First - A firm belief and trust in Almighty God, extolling Him under whose guidance the principles contended for have been established and maintained and the blessings of civil liberty secured.

Second - True allegiance to the United States of America, based upon a paramount respect for and fidelity to the National Constitution and laws.

ARTICLE III: Companionship

Section 1: Any person, above the age of twenty-one years, a citizen of the United States or an officer of Allies of the United States or a descendant of such officer, of good moral character and reputation, shall be eligible to Companionship in this Order upon further qualifying as hereinafter provided. When duly admitted such persons shall be known as "Companions." These shall be either *Veteran* Companions, *Hereditary* Companions, *Junior* Companions, or *Honorary* Companions.

Section 2: *Veteran Companions*. These shall be persons **above the age of 21** who performed active

Military or Naval duty during any of the wars, expeditions and/or campaigns designated in section 5 of this article and who at the time of duty or thereafter served as commissioned officers of the Regular or Volunteer Army, Militia, the Navy or Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, under orders of the Federal Military Department concerned and who received their commissions by direct act of either Federal or State Authority.

Provided, That the proposed Companion, if no longer in the service, was honorably discharged or retired therefrom; and,

Provided, That where the commission was received from one of the States, it must be satisfactorily shown that the officer was actually called into service by State or National Authority for the purpose of the designated war, expedition and/or campaign.

Also, Commissioned officers of foreign countries who were, or at any time may be, allies of the United States who served with or commanded United States forces by authority granted by the United States or officers thereof.

Section 3: Hereditary Companions. These shall be any persons above the age of twenty-one who shall be the direct lineal descendants of any *Veteran Companion*, or of a commissioned officer as a propositus, who performed active military or naval duty as a commissioned officer during any of the said wars, expeditions and or campaigns and who received his commission by direct act of one of the thirteen original colonies or of Vermont, or of the Continental Congress, or of one of the States, or of the United States; or of commissioned officers of allied or coalition forces during the periods enumerated in Section 5 of this article.

Provided, That such propositus remained always loyal to his cause and was either killed or died in service or was honorably discharged or retired therefrom; and

Provided, That when the claim to eligibility is based upon the service of an ancestor in the "Militia" it must be satisfactorily shown that such ancestor was actually called into the service of one of said thirteen original Colonies, or of Vermont, or of the Continental Congress, or of one of the States or of the United States, and performed military duty; and,

Provided, That when the claim to eligibility is based upon the service of an ancestor as a "Naval" or "Marine" officer, it must be satisfactorily shown that such service was regularly performed in the Continental Navy or in the Navy of one of the thirteen original Colonies, or of Vermont, or of one of the States, or of the United States or on an armed vessel, other than a merchant ship, which sailed under letters of marque and reprisal, and that such ancestor was duly enrolled in the ship's company as a commissioned officer.

Section 4: Junior Companions. These shall be minors who fulfill the requirements of *Hereditary Companions* as required by Section 3. During their minority such companions shall not be entitled to vote or to hold office. Upon such Companion becoming the age of twenty-one, he shall automatically become an *Hereditary Companion* with all the privileges pertaining thereto.

Section 5: To be eligible for admission to the Order as a *Veteran Companion*, service must be satisfactorily shown to have been performed in one of the following wars, expeditions, and/or campaigns:

- The War of the Revolution, between the 19th day of April, 1775, and the 19th day of April 1783;
- The War with Tripoli, between the 10th day of June, 1801, and the 4th day of June, 1805;
- The War of 1812, between the 18th day of June, 1812 and the 18th day of February, 1815;
- The Mexican War, between the 9th day of May, 1846, and the 4th day of July, 1848;

- The War with Spain, between the 21st day of April, 1898, and the 11th day of April, 1899;
- The China Relief Expedition, between the 20th day of June, 1900, and the 12th day of May, 1901;
- The Campaign in Nicaragua, between the 28th day of April, 1912, and the 2nd day of November, 1912;
- The Vera Cruz Campaign, between the 21st day of April, 1914, and the 26th day of November, 1914;
- The Mexican Campaign, between the 14th day of March, 1916, and the 7th day of February, 1917;
- Mexican Border Service, between the 1st day of January, 1916, and the 6th day of April, 1917;
- World War I, between the 6th day of April, 1917, and the 2nd day of July, 1921;
- World War II, between the 7th day of December, 1941, and the 31st day of December, 1946.
- The Korean Campaign, between the 27th day of June, 1950, and the 27th day of July, 1954, regardless of place of service, provided the person had been awarded the Korean Campaign Ribbon or the National Defense Service Medal.
- The Vietnam Service, from the 1st day of July, 1958, to 28 March 1973, regardless of place of service, provided the person has been awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, or the Vietnam Service Medal, or the National Defense Service Medal.
- The Persian Gulf Conflict, between the 2nd day of August, 1990 and the 30th day of November, 1995, regardless of place of service, provided the person has been awarded the Southwest Asia Service Medal or the National Defense Service Medal.
- The Kosovo Campaign after the 24th day of March, 1999, provided the person has been awarded the Kosovo Campaign Medal.
- The Global War on Terrorism on or after the 11th day of September, 2001, regardless of place of service, provided the person has been awarded the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal or the National Defense Service Medal.
- The Afghanistan Campaign on or after the 24th day of October, 2001, regardless of place of service, provided the person has been awarded the Afghanistan Campaign Medal or the National Defense Service Medal.
- The Iraq Campaign on or after the 19th day of March, 2003, regardless of place of service, provided the person has been awarded the Iraq Campaign Medal or the National Defense Service Medal.
- Any overseas expedition subsequent to the 1st day of July, 1958, to such terminal date as may be prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, provided the person has been awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for participation in such expedition.
- Any overseas armed forces service subsequent to the 1st day of June, 1992 to such a terminal date as may be prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, provided the person has been awarded the Armed Forces Service Medal for participation in such service.

All men and women who serve during all future wars, expeditions, and/or campaigns with a foreign power, and who hold, or have held, a commission in one of the armed forces, shall be eligible to this Order.

Section 6: No applicant shall be admitted to Companionship in this Order who is not judged to be worthy of becoming a Companion and supporter thereof.

Section 7: *Honorary Companionship.* The President of the United States; ex-Presidents of the United States; General Officers of the Army of the United States, the United States Air Force and the United States Marine Corps, not below the rank of Lieutenant General; Flag Officers of the Navy of the United States and the United States Coast Guard, not below the rank of Vice Admiral; Medal of Honor recipients; Officers of the armed services of Foreign Countries, allies of the United States, of corresponding ranks; and individuals who have rendered exceptional service to this Order or to a Commandery of this Order; and others who occupy or have served in senior executive or higher level U.S. Government or equivalent private sector positions, and who support the Order and its goals, shall be eligible to *Honorary Companionship* in this Order and when admitted shall be known as "*Honorary Companions.*"

Section 8: *Honorary Companionships* shall be conferred only by the National Council. Recommendations for *Honorary Companionships* shall be filed with the Secretary-General, accompanied by resolution of the Commandery so recommending, duly signed by the State Commander and attested by the State Secretary or upon recommendation of at least three members of the National Council.

When duly elected, such *Companions* shall become *Honorary Members* of the Commandery recommending, or of the Order, as the Council may elect. No National Head Tax shall be paid for an *Honorary Companion* by the Commandery to which assigned/enrolled.

Honorary Companions shall be ineligible to vote or to hold office in this Order.

Section 9: *Companionship-at-Large.* Those who reside in states where there is no Commandery, and who are otherwise eligible, shall be known as *Companions-at-Large*. They shall be elected by the council of the State Commandery from which the Registrar-General shall have been elected and shall pay their entrance fee and dues to the treasurer of that State Commandery.

Section 10: *Warrant Officers.* As used in this Constitution, the words "officer" and "officers" include chief and commissioned warrant officers, and the words "commissioned officers" include commissioned warrant officers and chief warrant officers.

ARTICLE IV: Organization

Section 1: The Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States, shall be composed of the State Commanderies of the Order now in existence, and such other State Commanderies as may hereafter be chartered, pursuant to the provisions of this Constitution.

Section 2: There shall be a National Council composed of all the General Officers, the Past Commanders-General, and the National Delegate from each Commandery.

Section 3: There shall be but one Commandery of the Order in any State, Territory, Possession of the United States or foreign country, and such Commandery shall be designated by the name of the State in which the same shall be instituted. A Commandery may permit the formation of as many Chapters as may be desired within the State or Territory over which the Commandery has jurisdiction. The District of Columbia, any Territory or Possession of the United States or a foreign country, shall be regarded as a State within the meaning of the term whenever the same is used in this Constitution or otherwise in referring to State Commanderies. Such State Commanderies shall be co-equal and the relative seniority of the same shall be governed by the respective dates of their institution.

ARTICLE V: General Officers

Section 1: The Officers of the Order shall be known as General Officers, and shall be as follows: A

Commander-General, a Senior Vice-Commander-General, a Junior Vice-Commander-General, a Secretary-General, a Deputy Secretary-General, a Treasurer-General, a Deputy Treasurer-General, a Registrar-General, a Deputy Registrar-General, a Historian-General, a Judge Advocate-General, a Deputy Judge Advocate-General, a Chaplain-General, a Surgeon-General, a Quartermaster-General, an Editor of the Newsletter, a Secretary-General for Legislative Affairs, and a Webmaster-General.

Section 2: The General Officers, except the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Quartermaster General, and the Editor of the Newsletter shall be elected at a regular meeting of the Order by a majority vote of all the General Officers, Past Commanders-General and Delegates present.

Section 3: The Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Quartermaster General, and the Editor General shall be appointed by the Commander-General and must be members of the Order when so appointed. They shall be members of the Council but without the privilege of voting therein.

Section 4: The General Officers usually shall serve until the next regular convention of the Order, or until their respective successors shall be elected or appointed. However, any General Officer may be removed for cause, which will include but not be limited to, conviction of a felony, malfeasance in an office in the Order, actions detrimental to the honor and good name of the Order, or a failure to complete duties assigned, by a two-thirds vote of the National Council. Vacancies caused by any reason, except expiration of term of office of an elective General Officer, may be filled by a majority vote of the National Council.

ARTICLE VI: Duties of General Officers

Section 1: Commander-General. The Commander-General shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the Order and at all meetings of the National Council except that the Commander-General may hold votes of the National Council by U.S. Mail, e-mail, telephone, or any combination of U.S. Mail, e-mail, and telephone. He shall perform such other duties as may be designated herein and also such as usually appertain to such office. However, he shall submit all matters of great significance to the Order, to include but not be limited to, an intent to request a surrender of a State Commandery Charter, the intent to remove a General Staff Officer for cause, and the intent to sanction/penalize a State Commandery for violation(s) of this Constitution, between national conventions to the National Council for consideration and decision.

Section 2: *Vice Commander-General.* In the absence of the Commander-General from any convention of the Order or of the National Council, the Senior or Junior Vice-Commander-General there present shall preside. They shall perform the duties of the Commander-General, in accordance with their seniority in the Order, in the event of his death, resignation or incapacitation.

Section 3: *Secretary-General.* The Secretary-General shall conduct the general correspondence of the Order and of the National Council and keep a record thereof, and shall perform such other duties as his office or the Order in convention or the National Council may require. He shall have charge of the Seal of the Order and shall affix the same to all properly authenticated Diplomas of Companionship and to such other papers as require a seal. He shall have charge of all books and papers of the Order other than such as are kept by, or required to be deposited with, the Registrar-General and/or the Treasurer-General. He shall certify all acts of the Order in convention and of the National Council, and, when required, authenticate them under seal. He shall give due notice of the time and place of all regular and special meetings of the Order and of all meetings of the National Council, and shall be present at the same. He shall keep accurate records of all the proceedings of the Order in convention and of the National Council, and shall give due notice to each officer affected thereby of all votes, resolutions and proceedings.

Section 4: *Deputy Secretary-General.* The Deputy Secretary-General shall perform the duties of the Secretary-General at such times and to such extent as may be directed by the Secretary-General, and he

shall also act in the place of the Secretary-General at meetings of the Order in convention or National Council from which that officer may be absent.

Section 5: Treasurer-General. The Treasurer-General shall receive and safely keep the moneys and other securities of the Order, and as often as such moneys shall amount to the sum of one hundred dollars he shall deposit them in a bank or trust company, to be drawn thence for the purposes of the Order and only on check of the Treasurer-General. Out of these sums he shall pay such sums only as may be ordered paid by the Order in convention, or National Council, for such as the purposes of his office require. He shall keep a true account of all his receipts and disbursements in detail, and at each regular meeting of the Order in convention and at such other times as the National Council may require shall render the same to the Order. The Treasurer-General shall furnish a bond, at the expense of the Order, of such amount as the National Council shall determine as adequate.

Section 6: Deputy Treasurer-General. The Deputy Treasurer-General shall perform such duties of the Treasurer-General as may be designated by the latter officer. He shall succeed the Treasurer-General in the event of his death, resignation or incapacitation. He shall furnish a bond, at the expense of the Order, of such amount as the National Council shall determine as adequate.

Section 7: Registrar-General. The Registrar-General shall receive and safely keep a yearly updated a list of officers and membership data which shall be forwarded to him by the State Commanderies and shall submit to the National Council for action any deficiencies which he may consider to exist in such data. Each Commandery will provide a duplicate application to the Registrar-General for inclusion on the National Membership Roster and the Registrar-General will keep the copy on file until it can be transferred to our repository at Carlisle Barracks.

Section 8: Deputy Registrar-General. The Deputy Registrar-General shall perform such duties of the Registrar-General as may be designated by the latter officer. He shall succeed the Registrar-General in the event of his death, resignation or incapacitation. He shall assist the Registrar-General in receiving and safely keeping a yearly updated list of officers and membership data.

Section 9: Historian-General. The Historian-General shall keep a record of the growth and the progress of the Order; he shall assist in the preparation of the Year Book when directed by the National Council; and he shall perform such other duties of a like nature as the National Council may from time to time direct.

Section 10: Judge Advocate-General. The Judge Advocate-General shall be a lawyer of at least ten years standing duly admitted to the bar, and it shall be his duty to give legal opinions upon questions of law for the benefit of the Order when called upon so to do by the Commander-General or by the Order in Convention or the National Council. It will also be his responsibility to interpret and render an official opinion on any portion of the Constitution that may require clarification.

Section 11: Deputy Judge Advocate -General. The Deputy Judge Advocate-General shall perform such duties of the Judge Advocate -General as may be designated by the latter officer. The Deputy Judge Advocate-General shall also be a lawyer of at least ten years standing duly admitted to the bar. He shall succeed the Judge Advocate-General in the event of his death, resignation or incapacitation.

Section 12: Chaplain-General. The Chaplain-General shall be a regular ordained clergyman, and it shall be the duty of the Chaplain-General to open and close the meetings of the Order with prayer and to perform such other duties as usually appertain to such office. The Chaplain-General will maintain the book of remembrances.

Section 13: Surgeon-General. The Surgeon-General shall be a physician regularly admitted to practice. His duties include, but not be limited to, keeping the Order and its Companions informed of any and all new or eliminated benefits and information from the Veterans Administration (VA) that would impact our

membership, and assist State Commanderies in developing programs to support local VA Hospitals and retirement homes.

Section 14: Quartermaster-General. The Quartermaster-General shall procure and stock all items of equipment and insignia of the order, said equipment and insignia shall be uniform and of high quality and he shall issue the same to the several State Commanderies upon requisition and payment. He shall maintain an official equipment and insignia catalogue. He may designate to any of the several State Commanderies, the rights to purchase such equipment and insignias.

Section 15: Editor of the Newsletter. The Editor of the Newsletter shall publish up to four newsletters per Biennium. He shall maintain a mailing address list that will be up dated at least twice a year by each State Commandery.

Section 16: Secretary-General for Legislative Affairs. The Secretary-General for Legislative Affairs shall contact members of Congress and/or state legislators, as applicable, concerning matters referred to that officer for action by the Order in Convention or the National Council.

Section 17: Webmaster-General. The Webmaster-General shall manage the Order's website, update sections of the website, and make any needed changes to the website when considered in the best interest of the Order, or when directed by the Order in convention, or by the National Council.

ARTICLE VII: Conventions of the Order

There shall be a regular convention of the Order held once in every two years at such time and place as shall have been designated by the Order at the last Biennial. Special conventions of the Order may be called by the National Council at such time and place as may be deemed best and must be called by the Secretary-General upon the written application of three National Delegates. Such regular and special conventions of the Order shall consist of the General Officers, Past Commanders-General, and a National Delegate and five Delegates from each Commandery in good standing. Each Commandery may also choose five Alternates. A General Officer or Delegate representing a majority of the Commanderies must be present at such regular or special convention in order to constitute a quorum. All business shall be transacted according to parliamentary law.

The following shall be the order of business:

1. Meeting called to order by the Commander-General.
2. Invocation by the Chaplain-General.
3. Reading of Minutes of Previous Meeting.
4. Report of National Council.
5. Reports of Officers.
6. Reports of Special Committees.
7. Communications from State Commanderies.
8. Unfinished Business.
9. New Business.
10. Election of Officers.
11. Notices of Motion for Next Convention.
12. Installation of Officers.
13. Reading and Consideration of the Institution.
14. Benediction.

ARTICLE VIII: Powers of the Order in Convention

The Order in convention shall have the following powers:

1. Power to grant Charters to Commanderies in States where such are not already in existence, provided fifteen persons eligible to, and qualified for, Companionship in the Order make application

therefor. Before such Charter shall be issued the persons applying for the same shall make application for and be admitted to Companionship in the Order.

2. Sole power to accept the surrender of the charter of a State Commandery.
3. Sole power to demand the surrender of the charter of a State Commandery. Such action shall be taken only at a meeting of the Order in Convention, after investigation by a Committee appointed by the **Commander-General and report** of such Committee duly read and filed, and by a two-thirds vote of all the General Officers and Delegates present, exclusive of the General Officers, if any, and Delegates from such State Commandery.
4. Power to pass finally upon all questions of eligibility to Companionship in the Order referred to it by the Registrar-General or otherwise; to require additional proofs of eligibility to be supplied; to suspend or drop from the roll any Companion whose proofs of eligibility shall be found defective and who shall fail, after notice, to supply such additional proofs; and the acts of the Order in convention hereunder shall be enforced without delay by the State Commandery affected thereby.
5. Power to issue the Insignia of the Order; the Diploma of Companionship; and to prepare and maintain the Register of the Order.
6. Power to regulate the national affairs of the Order.
7. Power to pass finally upon any question involving the construction of this Constitution.
8. Sole power to amend this Constitution.

The total assets of a State Commandery whose Charter has been surrendered, of every name and nature, including good will, shall revert to the Order. These assets, less reasonable expense, shall be transferred to a new Commandery upon its establishment in that state. If it becomes impossible to re-establish such a Commandery these assets shall become a part of the General Fund of the Order.

Except as above provided the Order in convention and the General Officers shall not interfere with the affairs of any State Commandery unless requested to do so by such Commandery in writing.

None of the above powers shall be delegated except as provided in Article IX of this Constitution.

ARTICLE IX: National Council

Section 1: The National Council, in the interim between conventions of the Order, shall exercise all the powers of the Order in convention set forth in subdivisions 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of Article VIII of this Constitution, except that any such act of the National Council, under subdivision 7, shall be subject to an appeal to the next regular or special convention of the Order.

Section 2: The National Council shall elect to companionship in the Order the Charter Companions of each new State Commandery, which Companionship shall be transferred to such State Commandery, *ipso facto*, with the grant of its Charter. Such Charter Companions shall pay no initiation or other fee to the Order, but shall pay to the State Commandery such fees as may be fixed by the By-Laws thereof.

Section 3: It shall be competent for the National Council to appoint **Organizing** Secretaries in States where no State Commanderies exist, with a view to represent the interest of this Order, and, if authorized to do so, to prepare for the organization of new State Commanderies. Such **Organizing** Secretaries shall be subject to the direction and regulation of the National Council. Their appointment shall be from time to time renewable. They may be removed for cause, and their office shall terminate upon the organization of

a Commandery in their state. They shall communicate with and receive communications from the Order through the Secretary-General.

Section 4: The National Council shall have the power to determine the *per capita* tax provided for in Article X. The National Council shall have the sole power to elect *Honorary Companions*.

Section 5: The National Council shall report all its acts and proceedings to the next convention of the Order and oftener if required to do so by the Order in convention.

Section 6: Meetings of the National Council shall be held at such times and places as shall be designated by the Commander-General, but votes of the National Council may also be conducted by U.S. Mail, e-mail, telephone, or any combination of U.S. Mail, e-mail, and telephone. A National Council meeting must be called by the Commander-General or else a vote conducted by him on the written request of three National Delegates.

Section 7: The National Council may remove a General Officer for cause (to include but not limited to, a conviction of a felony, malfeasance in an Office of the Order, actions detrimental to the honor and good name of the Order, or failure to perform assigned duties as required) upon a two-thirds vote.

ARTICLE X: State Commanderies

Section 1: Each Commandery shall, subject to the provisions of this Constitution, have jurisdiction within the territory of its State and power to manage its own affairs; it shall have power to admit Companions of the Order and to be judge of the eligibility of applicants for admission subject to the supervision of the Order as hereinbefore set forth, and sole power to pass upon the other qualifications of such applicants; it shall have power to expel or suspend any Companion upon its roll; and it shall have the power to adopt such Constitution and By-Laws, not inconsistent with this Constitution, as may be best for its government.

Section 2: The Constitution of every Commandery shall contain, in full and without change, Article III of this Constitution.

Section 3: Companions changing residence from one State to another, or coming within the jurisdiction of a new Commandery, may, at their option, retain Companionship in the Commandery in which they were originally admitted. A member of any Commandery may be admitted to Companionship by action of the Council of another Commandery within the bounds of which he is resident, upon satisfactory proof of his Companionship in good standing in the Commandery from which he comes, and subject to the rules and regulations of the Commandery which he enters. No Companion shall vote except in the Commandery in which he is a Companion. An initiation fee shall not be twice required.

Section 4: Those who reside in States which there is no Commandery, and who are assessed or eligible to be companions in the Order, shall be known as *Companions-at-Large*. They shall be elected by the council of the State Commandery from which the Registrar-General shall have been elected, and on election shall pay such entrance fees and dues to the treasurer of such Commandery and as set by the National Council.

Section 5: No Commandery shall admit to Companionship any person unless he or she makes application in writing upon an official blank of such Commandery which shall have been approved as to form by the Registrar-General, or else upon an official blank of the Order approved by the Registrar-General.

Section 6: Every such application shall be accompanied by written or printed proofs of eligibility and shall contain a declaration, subscribed by the applicant declaring upon honor that he will use his best efforts to promote the objects and purposes of the Order, and that he will observe this Constitution, and that he will support the Constitution of the United States.

Section 7: No person who may be enrolled as a Companion in any Commandery shall be permitted to continue in Companionship therein where his proofs of eligibility shall be found to be defective, and upon failure to supply additional proofs, after notice, shall be dropped from the roll.

Section 8: It shall be the duty of the Secretary of every Commandery to forward to the Registrar-General, upon the admission of each Companion or upon his separation from the Order for any cause such data regarding such Companion as the National Council may from time to time prescribe, including on admission a facsimile of the new Companion's application.

Section 9: Each State Commandery shall annually forward to the Editor General (biannually), Secretary-General, the Registrar-General, and the Treasurer-General complete lists of the Officers and Companions of such State Commandery, together with the names of such Companions as have died, resigned or been transferred, and of such as have been expelled or dropped from the roll, with a brief statement of the cause; a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of such State Commandery if the same shall have been amended during the year; a copy of each publication of such State Commandery; and such other matters as may be desired to be communicated to the Secretary General.

Section 10: Each Commandery shall annually pay, on or before the first day of April to the Treasurer-General for the use of the Order, a *per capita* tax for each *Veteran, Hereditary, and Junior Companion* (excepting *Honorary Companion*) on the rolls of such Commandery as of the preceding December 31. The amount of the tax shall be determined by resolution of the National Council.

Section 11: The State Commandery who hosts a National Convention of the Order shall prepare and distribute the Minutes of the said Convention. The Minutes will be a written report/record of the Convention's proceedings and will be distributed, as a minimum, to the Secretary-General, the Historian-General, and to the delegates attending the next Convention prior to the start of that Convention's first business session. All costs incurred by that State Commandery in the preparation and dissemination of the Minutes will be borne by that Commandery.

ARTICLE XI: Religion and Politics Prohibited

No question involving any religious matter or party politics shall ever be discussed at any Convention of the Order, or meeting of the National Council, or of any Commandery.

ARTICLE XII: Seal

The Seal of the Order shall be as follows: Within a title scroll surrounded by bullets, and bearing the inscription, "Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States," clouds proper, charged with thirteen stars argent above and about a shield, per pale gules and azure, bearing four swords, two in bend, two in bend sinister, meeting at nornbril point proper, upon a chief embattled or, an eagle issuant displayed sable; the shield surmounted as a crest by a mural circlet or, an arm in armor embowed, the hand holding four thunderbolts proper. Motto: *Deus et Libertas* between the date "1894."

ARTICLE XIII: Insignia of the Order and Award Medals of the Order

The insignia of the Order shall be pendant from a ribbon by a gold ring, and wreath of chased gold, and shall be:

Obverse: A red enameled star of eight points, each starpoint edged and divided by a line of gold; and between each two star-points, rays of burnished gold, joined, and ending in a point; and in the center of an eagle raised and chased gold with extended wings.

Reverse: Stars and rays the same. In the center within a circular band of blue enamel, edged with gold,

and bearing in gold the motto: Deus et Libertas, an anchor and cross swords upon a field of red.

Ribbon: The ribbon shall be of watered silk, ribbed, one inch and one-half in width, and one inch and one-half in displayed length, of buff, bordered with blue and edged with red; the border and edge to be respectively one-eighth of an inch in width.

The insignia shall be worn by the Companions of the Order on all occasions when they assemble as such, for any stated purpose or celebration, and may be worn on any occasion of ceremony. It shall be worn conspicuously on the left breast; but Veteran Companions or Companions who are or have been officers may wear it suspended around the neck. The insignia shall never be worn as an article of jewelry, nor except in the manner and under the conditions herein prescribed; but that the ribbon may be worn in the form of a bar, not to exceed the width of the ribbon in length of one-quarter inch in depth upon the uniform of the Armed Forces of the United States and of the National Guard or Naval Militia when allowed by the regulations of the respective Armed Forces or of the National Guard or Naval Militia unit in question.

No Companion shall receive more than one insignia, unless to replace one the loss of which shall first be satisfactorily established.

On occasions as hereinbefore designated, except meetings for a stated purpose, Companions to whom the insignia has been issued may wear a miniature insignia, which shall be a duplicate in miniature of the insignia, with ribbon, and which shall be worn under the conditions prescribed for the wearing of the insignia, but only upon the left breast or at the button-hole.

On conditions other than those above set forth, Companions may wear a rosette of the prescribed ribbon and pattern, in the upper button-hole of the left lapel of the coat, or a miniature ribbon extending from the button-hole and turned under the lapel of the coat.

The award medals of the Order are:

1. The gold colored Distinguished Service Medal, to be awarded by vote of the Order in Convention, for distinguished service to the Order involving accomplishment(s) of great significance.
2. The silver colored Exceptional Service Medal, to be awarded by the Commander-General, for exceptional service to the Order involving accomplishment(s) of importance to the Order but not of such a nature as to warrant award of the Distinguished Service Medal.
3. The bronze colored Meritorious Service Medal award by a vote of a Commandery council for accomplishment(s) of importance to that Commandery.

ARTICLE XIV: Flag

The flag of the Order shall consist of the colors of the Order arranged vertically, as in the ribbon of the Order, the Insignia being superimposed in the center. The face of the flag bearing the obverse of the insignia surmounted by the name of the Commandery in semi-circle. The back of the Flag to show the reverse of the Insignia surmounted by the lettering MILITARY ORDER OF FOREIGN WARS in semi-circle, and surmounting the lettering OF THE UNITED STATES, in two lines.

The flag of the Order together with the National Colors should be displayed upon all occasions of ceremony.

ARTICLE XV: Diploma

The Diploma of Companionship in the Order shall be in such form and shall be signed by such General and State Commandery Officers as the National Council may from time to time prescribe. Each State Commandery is authorized to issue to each Companion upon admission, a suitable Diploma or certificate, evidencing his Companionship in the Order.

ARTICLE XVI: Endowment Fund

There shall be created and established a separate fund to be known as the Endowment Fund. Contributions thereto shall be solicited, accepted and held in trust, and the income applied from time to time in the discretion of the trustees for the advancement of the purposes of the Order. The trustees shall be the Commander-General, the Senior Vice-Commander-General and the Treasurer-General, and their successors in office, and they shall have full and complete control over said Fund. A detailed report, with a list of the contributors to such Fund, shall be published in the Order's year book.

ARTICLE XVII: Amendments

Section 1: This Constitution may be amended only by the following procedure: At least four General Officers, Past Commanders-General, or National Delegates must endorse a request for such change or changes. A copy of this request, together with the proposed amendment, and including the names and Commanderies of such endorsers, must be sent to each Commandery at least ninety (90) days before any further action shall be taken. The call for the Convention of the Order at which action upon this request will be taken shall include a copy of this request and state that action will be taken thereat.

Section 2: A two-thirds vote of those present and qualified to vote at a regular or special convention at which a majority of the active Commanderies are represented, provided the above conditions have been complied with, shall be required to adopt such amendments.

Section 3: Notice of this meeting shall be issued not less than sixty (60) days in advance of the date specified.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States dates from its institution on December 27, 1894. The Order is a military organization with social and patriotic objectives. Its hereditary line of descent spans American history since our national independence. Membership has included presidents, members of the cabinet and the Congress, and distinguished military leaders. Companionship is conferred only upon commissioned officers of the Armed Forces of the United States and its allies and their lineal descendants who have served in foreign wars of the United States.

PURPOSE

The Order has been instituted to:

- honor and perpetuate the names of brave and loyal men **and women;**
- keep in mind the memory of their martial deeds and the victories which they helped gain;
- strengthen the ties of fellowship among the Companions of the Order;
- foster the cultivation of military and naval science;
- bear true allegiance to the United States of America, based upon a paramount respect for, and fidelity to, the National Constitution and laws; and,
- to aid in maintaining national honor, union and independence.

Finally, in October of 1959 the National Council adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that to give substance and unity to the objectives of the Military Order of Foreign Wars, it is hereby declared a prime purpose of the Order to foster and encourage the study of American History and particularly of American Military History, to the end that the memory of brave men **and women** may freely be enshrined and that we and our children may learn from the past to formulate sound policies for the present and future.

The implementation of this resolution provides the Order with a concrete and tangible objective that will afford each Commandery a unique opportunity for bringing the significant features of our national military experiences to the attention of the thoughtful portions of their own communities.

COMPANIONSHIP

Companionship in the Order is conferred only on qualified and duly sponsored officers. Active military service in any of our foreign wars, or military expeditions **and campaigns**, dating from the Revolutionary War to the **Afghanistan Campaign** and any subsequent military expeditions, will qualify an officer as a Veteran Companion, as will honorable service as a commissioned officer in the armed forces of our allies. Descent in the direct line from such an officer may also qualify an applicant for hereditary or junior companionship. All candidates for Companionship must be of good moral character and reputation and be so certified by the sponsoring Companion.

Qualified officers and descendants are invited to submit applications for companionship to their State Commandery Registrar or to the Registrar-General of the Order. As the oldest existing order of

commissioned officers **and warrant officers**, the Order is interested in outstanding officers who have served our nation well. Companions of the Order are entitled to wear the rosette of the prescribed ribbon and pattern.

HISTORY

A group of distinguished patriots assembled in the office of the Honorable Frank M. Avery in the Tribune Building in New York City, on December 13, 1894. As a result, the "Military and Naval Order of the United States" was organized and later incorporated under that name.

In April of 1895 the name of the Order was officially changed to the "Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States," under which name our Order continues to function.

The design of the insignia adopted by the Order was modeled from the war medal of Portugal, changing the crown to the wreath of victory; the white enamel to red (representing war) and by placing the American Eagle on its face. The swords and anchor on the reverse represent officers of the Army and Navy. The motto, Deus et Libertas (God and Liberty), exemplifies the overarching themes of the Order. The War and Navy Departments, under various resolutions of the Congress, gave recognition to our Order and have permitted the wearing of the insignia on their uniforms.

The influence of the Order spread rapidly, and soon Commanderies were formed in other States; notably Connecticut and Pennsylvania. It was then deemed advisable to form a National Commandery which would centralize and coordinate the activities of the various State Commanderies and have general supervision and control over the policies and activities of the Order. The National Commandery was therefore founded at a joint meeting of the New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania Commanderies in December of 1894 held in the Governor's Room in the City Hall in New York. The first officers of the Order were:

- Commodore David Banks, Commander
- James Henry Morgan, esq., Vice Commander
- Frank M. Avery, Esq., Judge Advocate and Acting Secretary
- Brigadier General Egbert L. Viele, USV, Treasurer
- George W. Olney, esq., Registrar
- Rev. T. Stafford Drowne, Chaplain

Other officers and gentlemen who were the founders were:

- Lieutenant Irving M. Avery, New York State Volunteers
- Captain John C. Calhoun
- Maturin S. Delafield, Jr.
- Colonel DeLacey Floyd-Jones, USA
- Major General Edwin Seneca Greely
- Colonel (Brevet Major General) John P. Hatch, USA
- William L. Keese
- Robert Webb Morgan, esq.
- Hon. Charley H. Murray
- Colonel (Brevet Major General) Francis E. Pinto, USV
- Major General Gustavus W. Smith
- Marshall B. Stafford, esq.
- Brevet Major General Alexander S. Webb, LL.D.

The Order grew rapidly owing to the large increase in eligible officers following the Spanish- American War. Among those who joined were Admiral of the Navy George Dewey and Lieutenant John J. Pershing.

Even more marked followed World War I. By 1923 the Order had twenty State Commanderies and 5,648 Companions. In 1927 and 1928, respectively, a European Commandery was established in Paris and a Canadian Commandery was established in Montreal. Unfortunately, meetings fell off during World War II; and as many of the older Companions died a number of the State Commanderies became inactive.

Following World War II, however, a revitalization took place. While only a single new Commandery was chartered (in Louisiana), the large number of new eligible members supplied the enthusiasm needed for a renewed, younger membership. Provision for biennial convention in place of the former triennial national convention has afforded closer contact between the several State Commanderies. Under the terms of later constitutional amendments, officer veterans of the Korean conflict, Vietnam service, the Persian Gulf Conflict (1991) and all future foreign wars have become eligible for companionship.

The Roster of past and present Companions includes the names of former Presidents, many Admirals and Generals, and the names of many other key figures and statesmen. We believe the present records of our Order will be of as great an interest to future historians as the records of the past are to us.

COMMANDERS-GENERAL

(* = deceased)

1894-1896	Commodore David Banks*
1896-1911	Major General Alexander Stewart Webb*
1911-1914	Brigadier General Charles Francis Roe*
1914-1917	Rear Admiral William B. Caperton*
1917-1920	Brigadier General Samuel W. Fountain*
1920-1923	Rear Admiral Robert E. Coontz*
1923-1926	Major General Clarence R. Edwards*
1926-1932	Captain William Seaman Bainbridge, USNR*
1932-1938	Lieutenant Colonel Pelham St. George Bissell*
1938-1941	Colonel Philip L. Schuyler*
1941-1945	Colonel William Innes Forbes*
1945-1946	Major General John F. O'Ryan*
1946-1949	Colonel James A. Doherty*
1949-1951	Colonel Edwin S. Bettelheim, Jr.*
1951-1953	Brigadier General Joseph H. Lewis*
1953-1955	Major General John Williams Morgan*
1955-1957	Commander Ross H. Currier*
1957-1959	Captain Richard F. Warren, USN*
1959-1961	Lieutenant Benjamin L. Cook, Jr.*
1961-1963	Colonel Frederick Bernays Wiener*
1963-1965	Commander James A. Lamphier, USNR*
1965-1967	Brigadier General William C. Baxter*
1967-1969	Rear Admiral Robert Granville Burke*
1969-1971	Colonel Wilbur J. Myers*
1971-1973	Rear Admiral Theodore C. Aylward*
1973-1975	Colonel R. Graham Bosworth*
1975-1977	Brigadier General Joseph S. Zariako*
1977-1979	Colonel Richard H. Love*
1979-1981	Colonel John Denny Dale*
1981-1983	Brigadier General William Uriah Ogletree*
1983-1985	Brigadier General Arthur N. Phillips*
1985-1987	Lieutenant Commander T. Johnson Ward*
1987-1989	Major General James C. McElroy
1989-1991	Commander Thomas F. Wiener
1993-1993	Colonel Charles H. Bechtold*
1993-1995	First Lieutenant Chalmers Dale*
1995-1997	COL Versel Case Jr.
1997-1999	LTC Ronald Sommer *
1999-2001	COL Joseph P. Kirlin
2001-2003	CPT Ronald E. Fischer
2003-2005	MG John J. Salesses
2005-2007	COL Duane H. Bartrem
2007-2009	COL Arthur J. Nattans
2009-2010	LTC Lewis L. Neilson Jr.
2010- 2013	MAJ Wulf R. Lindenau
2013- 2015	COL David H. Russell