



AMVETS
2012 MEMBERSHIP MANUAL



AMVETS

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Membership Manual

MEMBERSHIP MANUAL

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Membership

All members are encouraged to become familiar with AMVETS' history, aims and purposes, programs, services, legislative goals and membership eligibility. An informed member is better able to promote the organization, recruit prospective members and assume positions of leadership.

Each membership application should be carefully screened for eligibility and legibility. It is recommended that proof of eligibility be obtained from all prospective members, i.e., current military ID card, DD-214, honorable discharge papers, or other acceptable documents.

Upon acceptance, each new member should be made to feel welcome; informed about the date, time and place of the general meeting; introduced to officers and members; briefed about activities and invited to participate. All new members should receive a copy of the post constitution and bylaws, together with their membership card.

Eligibility

Any person who served honorably or is currently serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America (Active, Reserve or National Guard) after Sept. 15, 1940, is eligible for regular membership in AMVETS.

Any American citizen, as an American citizen, who served honorably in the Armed Forces of an Allied nation of the United States at any time after Sept. 15, 1940, and before May 8, 1975, is eligible for regular membership in AMVETS.

No person who is a member of, or who advocates the principles of, any organization believing in, or working for the overthrow of the United States government by force, and no American citizen or permanent resident alien in the United States, one of its territories, possessions or the District of Columbia who refuses to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States shall be privileged to become, or continue to be, a member of this organization.

Honorary memberships shall not be granted.

No member shall be a member of more than one post at one and the same time.

Any member of AMVETS classified as a member-at-large may not hold an elected or appointed office at any level in the AMVET organization.

Membership shall run from January 1 through December 31.

Eligibility for membership and the rights and privileges of members shall be as provided in the constitution and by-laws of AMVETS and the terms of membership and requirements for holding office within AMVETS shall not be discriminatory on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

There shall be but one type of membership in AMVETS.

(National Constitution Article IV).

Dues

The programs, services and representation that AMVETS offers are funded, in part, through membership dues. Each post sets its own dues amounts for annual and life members *(National Bylaws, Article VII, Sections 5 and 6).*

Dues are received, together with the membership application, or are generated through renewal notices. The membership contact collects the dues, then coordinates with the finance officer to ensure that each payment is properly recorded in the accounting books and deposited in the post's bank account. The membership contact prepares and mails the appropriate dues remittance forms (D&Rs)—together with the checks for the department and national dues amounts—to the National Membership Department via the state department.

AMVETS has two membership categories—annual and life—each with its own dues structure. The annual membership category includes new members (N), renewals (R), and national charter annual members (NC). National's portion of all annual membership dues is \$13 in recognized department states. The combination of the three dues amounts—post, department and national—adds up to the total dues a post collects from each member.

For the purpose of explaining the dues structure, the following example is offered, using \$30 as the annual dues amount (\$30 represents National's annual dues amount; however, dues may vary depending on the state or post).

Example: A member writes a \$30 check for his dues made payable to AMVETS Post (*number*). The check is recorded and deposited in the post's checking account.

The post finance officer then prepares two checks—one for \$13 (*per member*) made payable to AMVETS National Department and another for \$3 (*per member*) made payable to the AMVETS Department of (*state*). Both checks are cosigned by the two designated officers of the post; then they are given to the membership contact who completes the paperwork and mails the entire package to the department. The remaining \$14 (*per member*) stays in the post's account to pay expenses that have been budgeted. (*In nondepartment states, National's portion of annual member dues is \$14.50.*)

A member shall be considered to have continuous membership if he/she makes up the annual dues at the current rate within a four-year period of the last nonrenewal.

Life member dues are a minimum of \$250, of which \$125 (*50 percent*) goes to the national department, leaving the post and department with \$50.00 each. In non-department states, a post must remit \$150.00 (*the national and department portions*) to the national department. The remaining \$50.00 is deposited in the post's life member escrow account.

All Department's and Post's are strongly encouraged to add and renew members online. Those Post and Department members with the required Special Access are the Department Executive Director, and the Post/Department Commander, First Vice Commander, Adjutant, and Renewal Contact. Step by step instructions or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are included on the AMVETS Reference CD.

All members have the capability to renew their membership online by going into their AMVETS online account at www.amvetismembers.org. The member's login name and password are his or hers member number. A step by step instruction sheet is included in the AMVETS Reference CD.

New Member Cards

In preparation for the new membership year, a supply of blank new member cards is delivered to each department membership contact. The department is responsible for

either preparing and mailing membership cards to members, or distributing the cards to the post membership contact to process locally.

When processing membership, the department and post membership contacts must prepare the appropriate forms and cards (*type or print legibly*) with the required member information. The contact then signs the card as the authorizing official. Timely processing is important to ensure new-member expectations are met. He should, for example, get the membership card to the new member as soon as possible, together with a Welcome to AMVETS certificate. He should also double check the card for correct spelling of the member's name and address and the overall appearance of the card. If mistakes are made that cannot be corrected legibly, a new card should be typed.

Each new member card is a four-part form, consisting of the card itself and three tissues. After typing the card, separate the tissues. It is recommended that the card be personally presented to new members after the induction ceremony and during the orientation. If a personal presentation is not possible at the meeting, deliver the card at a mutually convenient time and location or mail it to the new member, together with a welcome letter and the orientation materials. Process and forward the tissues with the Dues Remittance Form.

After the application for membership is accepted by the post, the delivery of the member cards to the members and the submission of the paperwork to the national headquarters should be completed within 30 days.

Renewal Member Cards

The Membership Department at the national headquarters prepares sheets of preprinted membership renewal cards for each annual member of the organization. The member renewal sheets are printed in alphabetical order by post and delivered to each department in July, along with barcode labels. On receipt of the post's membership paperwork, the department processes and mails the individual cards or forwards the renewal sheets to each post membership contact.

On receipt of membership renewal dues, the department or post membership contact should—

- ensure that the dues are properly recorded and deposited in the post's bank account;
- remove the member's renewal sheet from the secured files, sign the card as the "authorizing official" and separate the entire bottom portion of the sheet (*member card on left*) along the micro-perforations;
- right after the dues are paid, present or send the card to the member (after ensuring the name is spelled correctly and all other information is accurate);
- if the card must be sent, use a Number 6 window envelope (*double check that the name and address are clearly visible before sealing the envelope*); and
- set the remainder of the renewal sheet aside for remittance with the Dues Remittance Form.

Processing the Paperwork

Annual Members

All annual members are identified on a Dues Remittance Form (D&R), which is transmitted through the department to the national headquarters. Each D&R must be

accompanied by the appropriate new member card tissues or renewal member index cards and the department and national dues checks.

The three-part D&R, available through the department or from the national headquarters, or the new interactive D&R available on the national website and the Electronic Reference CD, should be typed or printed legibly and double-checked for accuracy.

To complete the paperwork, type and separate the parts of the D&R into national, department and post order. Collate and attach together National's copies of the D&R(s), new member card tissues, renewal member index cards, labels and dues checks (made payable to *AMVETS National Headquarters*). Do the same with the department's copies and mail both sets in a reinforced envelope to the department. Posts in nondepartment states should send the paperwork directly to National. The post's copies of the D&R, new member card tissues and renewal member index cards should be maintained in a permanent file. Name or address corrections should be made on National's copy of the renewal member index card. Corrections or changes made during the renewal process need not be duplicated or submitted on the Change-of-Address Form.

It should be noted that the paperwork described above can be circumvented by adding new and renewing members online. At the conclusion of this process the member making the payment will receive an email (providing the member has an email address in his AMVETS account) detailing the amount paid, the members paid for and the post to which they belong.

Life Members

On receipt of life member dues, the department or post membership contact should complete a Life Membership Transmittal Form. It is important to double check for legibility and accuracy before the national, department and post copies are separated. Attach the appropriate dues checks to the national and department copies and forward the paperwork and checks to the department.

Life member cards are issued by AMVETS National Headquarters. As a life member is entered into the computer data base, a life member card (similar in appearance to a credit card) and a life member certificate is ordered. Three to four weeks should be allowed for delivery.

Replacement life member cards or certificates may be ordered through the National Membership Department for the nominal fee of \$2 each. The fee helps defray the card, certificate and postage and handling costs.

Annual members who paid their annual dues between September 1 and August 31 may convert to life membership and receive credit for their prepaid annual dues at any time during that period. The membership contact should clearly identify that the member is converting to life status and credit the prepaid \$13 toward the \$100 national portion. A check made payable to *AMVETS National Headquarters* for \$87 must be remitted to the national headquarters.

Note: The gold-colored metal life member card may be purchased through the national membership department for a charge of \$11.00.

Change of Address

Members may go online and update their address, telephone number and other personal information at any time by going to www.amvetsmembers.org and using their member number as their login name and password. If they do not have access to a computer they inform AMVETS of their address change by requesting that the post adjutant complete and forward a Change of Address Form to the national headquarters through the department. Each issue of AMERICAN VETERAN also reminds members to notify AMVETS of their move. If the national headquarters receives returned mail, all future mail for that person is stopped and placed on hold until an update is received.

Note: Include member I.D. numbers on all correspondence.

Lost or Replacement Cards

■ Annual Member Cards: Requests for duplicate annual membership cards should be made to the issuing authority at the post, department or national level. Blank new member cards are used for issuing replacement or transfer member cards and no fee is required.

■ Life Member Cards: Requests for a replacement life member card should be made using the Request For A Duplicate Life Membership Card Form, which is available from the department or the national headquarters. A \$2 fee is required to defray expenses. A request for a new life member card, when transferring to a different post, is treated as a duplicate card request.

Transfers

Any member of AMVETS who is in good standing may transfer his or her membership from one post and/or department to another on the acceptance of the transfer. This is normally accomplished without repaying current annual or life membership dues; however, a post has the right to refuse acceptance of the transfer.

Before a transfer will be honored, the member who wishes to transfer and the adjutants from the accepting post and the former post must sign the Transfer Form.

The losing post or department has 30 days to either approve a request for transfer or show just cause why the transfer should not be executed. Failure to respond to the requesting (gaining) post or department in writing by either approving and returning the request for transfer or providing just cause for denial of requested transfer, within 30 days, will be taken as approved for the requested membership transfer.

Note: To register as a voting delegate or an alternate at the national convention, an AMVET must be a member of the post to which he has transferred for at least six months prior to the convention.

Deceased Members

Using the Deceased Member Notification Form, immediately send notification through the department to the national headquarters when a member of the post passes away. An In Memoriam certificate is a fitting way to honor a deceased member. The certificate is signed by both the national and post commander and is available through the department for presentation to the deceased member's family. All deceased members are listed in the memorial book and remembered at the memorial service during the

annual national convention. Deceased members may also be registered on the AMVETS National Carillon Memorial Roster.

Records Retention

How long a post or department keeps certain records and files depends on its activities and legal obligations. The following list is offered only as a suggested guideline and does not constitute the letter of the law nor applicable governmental regulations.

Permanent Records

- Post Charter (and annual Revalidation Certificates)
- Constitution and Bylaws (and dated Amendments)
- Articles of Incorporation (and any periodic reports/updates required by state)
- IRS Assignment of EIN
- Annual Revalidation and Officers Forms
- Any Permits or Licenses issued by state or local government
- Property and Inventory records

Tax Records (7 Years)

- Employee withholding records
- Dues and Remittance (D&R) forms
- Life Member Transmittal Forms
- Depreciation schedule
- Income statements & audited reports
- Annual financial reports
- General ledger
- Balance sheet
- Cancelled checks
- Expense vouchers
- Bank statements
- Bonds

Administrative Records (5 Years)

- Membership applications
- Membership roster
- Contacts
- Meeting minutes
- General correspondence
- Post activity reports
- Insurance Policies (and Proof of Insurance, Expiration, and Termination Notices)

Membership Rosters

Posts and Departments are responsible for maintaining their own membership records. Those Post and Department members with Special Access may access their rosters 24/7 by logging into their AMVETS Online account. Each post should carefully check the printout against their records to insure that the information on file with the national headquarters is correct. Address or member changes may be done by the Member, or Post/Department personnel with Special Access at any time.

The membership roster is divided into seven columns. From left to right, the categories are: member number and type of membership, member's and spouse's names, member's address and phone number, Email address, member's date of birth, date joined, membership expiration date and service information. The header provides the department and post affiliation. If a member's name is not listed on the roster, first check the date that the roster was printed. The print date is located in the upper right-hand corner. If adequate processing time has passed since the member's name was submitted and the name is not identified on the roster, contact your department. The department should handle the investigation from there and will coordinate with the National Membership Department as necessary.

Note: Proper editing will prevent problems throughout membership year, particularly during the renewal mailing.

Membership Year

The annual membership runs from January 1 until December 31; however, AMVETS Fiscal membership year runs from September 1 until August 31 of each year. membership for the price of 12 or four months *free*. AMVETS membership, however, is recognized on the calendar year (January 1 through December 31). Any member who has not renewed his or her membership by December 31 is delinquent and will be suspended from receiving future mailings of AMERICAN VETERAN and other member benefits. The election of national officers takes place in August, with the elected officers assuming their duties on September 1.

Renewal Mailings

The AMVETS National Department augments department and post efforts in membership renewal campaigns by mailing two renewal notices to nonrenewed annual members of record. The first mailing is in July after the revalidation date of July 15 and the second renewal notice is in November of each year. The membership renewal contact and annual dues amount identified on the AMVETS Revalidation and Officers Form will appear on each annual member's renewal notice. Delays in forwarding this information may cause undeliverable mail and financial hardship. To be on the safe side, National Headquarters recommends forwarding all revalidation materials to the National Membership Department via the state department—by July 1.

Revalidation

As a tax-exempt veterans' service organization, the national department, each recognized department and all posts must observe federal, state and local laws as well as our own constitution and bylaws. Our document mandates that each entity complies with the annual charter revalidation process outlined in the AMVETS National Constitution, Article X, Section 3:

Every post shall be required to revalidate its charter annually prior to July 15. Such charter revalidation shall be evidenced by an appropriate device to be issued by National Headquarters. In order to revalidate such charter, and to receive a Certificate of Revalidation of its charter, each post, aside from any other requirements imposed in the constitution and bylaws, shall—

- (a) furnish National and its department headquarters with a fully completed and certified Post Revalidation and Officers form;
- (b) file Internal Revenue Form 990 for the post calendar or fiscal year with the United States Internal Revenue Service if required by current IRS regulations, and note same on the Revalidation form;
- (c) furnish National Headquarters with a copy of the post's current constitution and bylaws or a certification stating the copy previously submitted has not been amended;
- (d) be fully paid up in all post accounts with National Headquarters;
- (e) if required, have complied with Article VII, Section 3(c), of the AMVETS National Bylaws;
- (f) have at least 10 members in good standing at the time of revalidation; and
- (g) provide National Headquarters a copy of the post articles of incorporation and certificates of good standing. If required, comply with AMVETS National Bylaws Article VII, Section 3(d), and provide National Headquarters with proof of compliance.

Recognition

Recognition is the “salary” that volunteers receive in return for their time and dedication. A simple “thank you” goes a long way and is certainly appreciated. Remember to share the spotlight in all of the post's accomplishments.

The national department has certificates that post and department commanders can use to acknowledge participation and leadership. Available certificates include those of appreciation, achievement, distinguished service (*for AMVETS members*) and merit (*for non-AMVETS members*). When ordering a certificate, be sure to identify the quantity needed and whether it is a post or department award. The cost of the certificates is ten (10) for \$2.50.

National Membership Incentive Awards

Awards vary from year to year. Below are some past awards and their criteria. Awards criteria are distributed at the National Convention and posted on the AMVETS web site www.amvets.org/membership.

To encourage participation in member acquisition and retention activities, the national department sponsors incentive awards programs. Annual contests are promoted between September 1 and June 30. Posts, Departments and Supervisors submit nominations to the National Membership Department at key times during the year. Annual announcement of awards by the national first vice commander is made at the national convention.

Individual Awards

Early Membership Renewal (early renewal to National by October 31)

Name entered in drawings for stays in Choice Hotels

Promoter of the Year (most new members by paid/compensated AMVET Sep 1-Jun 30)

Receives Trophy, Expert Promoter Pin (with actual #), \$200 Cash Award

First Runner-up Promoter (paid or compensated AMVET)

Receives Plaque, Expert Promoter Pin (with actual #), \$100 Cash Award

Second Runner-up Promoter (paid/compensated AMVET)

Receives Plaque, Expert Promoter Pin (with actual #), \$50 Cash Award

Expert Promoter (30+ new members Sep 1-June 30) (paid/compensated AMVET)

Receives Plaque, Expert Promoter Pin (with actual #), Embroidered Shirt

Promoter (10-29 new members Sep 1-Jun 30) (paid or compensated AMVET)

Receives Certificate, Promoter Pin (10, 15, 20, 25), Embroidered Baseball Cap

Recruiter of the Year (most new members by a volunteer AMVET Sep 1-Jun 30)

Receives Trophy, Expert Recruiter Pin (with actual #), \$200 Cash Award

First Runner Up Recruiter (volunteer AMVET)

Receives Plaque, Expert Recruiter Pin (with actual #), \$100 Cash Award

Second Runner Up Recruiter (volunteer AMVET)

Receives Plaque, Expert Recruiter Pin (with actual #), \$50 Cash Award

Expert Recruiter (30 or more new members Sep 1-June 30) (volunteer AMVET)

Receives Plaque, Expert Recruiter Pin (with actual #), Embroidered Shirt

Recruiter (10-29 new members Sep 1-Jun 30) (volunteer AMVET)

Receives Certificate, Recruiter Pin (10, 15, 20, 25), Embroidered Baseball Cap

National Commander's Century Club (100 or more new members Sep 1-June 30)

Receives Plaque, Century Club pin, Embroidered Jacket

Largest New Post Organizer (new charter & final membership total Sep 1-June 30)

Receives Plaque, Expert Organizer Pin, Embroidered Shirt, \$100 Cash Award

Post Organizer of the Year (the most new posts chartered Sep 1-June 30)

Receives Plaque, Expert Organizer Pin, Embroidered Shirt, \$100 Cash Award

Post Organizer (listed on application of new post chartered Sep 1-June 30)
Receives Certificate, Post Organizer Pin, Embroidered Baseball Cap

Post Awards

1st Vice Commander's Early Renewal of 85% of Annual Members (Aug 31-Oct 31)
Receives Eagle Certificate of Achievement

1st Vice Commander's Early Renewal of 100% of Annual Members (Aug 31-Dec 31)
Receives Eagle Certificate of Achievement

Early Membership Achievement of 100% (Aug 31-Dec31)
Receives Eagle Certificate of Achievement

Membership Increase to 105% (Aug 31-Mar 31)
Receives Eagle Certificate of Achievement

Membership Increase to 110% (Aug 31-Jun 30)
Receives Eagle Certificate of Achievement

1st Vice Commander's Top Growth by Category (Aug 31-Jun30)
8 Awards: 10-49; 50-99; 100-199; 200-299; 300-399; 400-499; 500-999; 1,000+
Receives Plaque and \$100 Cash Award

1st Vice Commander's Second Highest Growth by Category (Aug 31-Jun30)
8 Awards: 10-49; 50-99; 100-199; 200-299; 300-399; 400-499; 500-999; 1,000+
Receives Plaque and \$50 Cash Award

Department Awards

1st Vice Commander's Early Renewal of 85% of Annual Members (Aug 31-Oct 31)
Receives Eagle Certificate of Achievement and \$200 Cash Award

1st Vice Commander's Early Renewal of 100% of Annual Members (Aug 31-Dec 31)
Receives Eagle Certificate of Achievement and \$200 Cash Award

First 100% Department (Aug 31-until achieved)
Receives Plaque and \$200 Cash Award

Second 100% Department (Aug 31-until achieved)
Receives Plaque and \$100 Cash Award

Third 100% Department (Aug 31-until achieved)
Receives Plaque and \$50 Cash Award

National Growth Goal by Department (Aug 31-Jun 30)
Receives Growth Award Plaque

National Commander's Top Growth by Category (Aug 31-Jun 30)
5 awards: 1 from AA, A, B; 1 from C & D; 1 from E; 1 from F; 1 from G
Receives \$250 Cash Award

National Commander's Second Highest Growth by Category (Aug 31-Jun 30)
5 awards: 1 from AA, A, B; 1 from C & D; 1 from E; 1 from F; 1 from G
Receives \$150 Cash Award

- Post Development (greatest net gain in posts Sep 1-Jun 30)
2003 CBLs and Officer Forms must be on file at National
Receives Plaque and \$250 Cash Award
- Post Development (2nd highest net gain in posts Sep 1-Jun 30)
2003 CBLs and Officer Forms must be on file at National
Receives Plaque and \$150 Cash Award

National District Awards

- Achievement in Early Annual Renewals (highest percentage Aug 31-Dec 31)
Permanent Plaque at National Headquarters & Commander's Certificate
- Achievement in Membership Growth (greatest percentage gain Aug 31-Jun 30)
Permanent Plaque at National Headquarters & Commander's Certificate
- Achievement in Post/Department Development (greatest net gain Sep 1-Jun 30)
Permanent Plaque at National Headquarters & Commander's Certificate

Co-op Advertising

The AMVETS National Membership Department offers a 50 percent reimbursement (up to \$100) for a post's membership advertisement expenditure of \$200 or more, with a maximum reimbursement of \$200 per membership year (offer subject to available funding).

Contact the AMVETS National Public Relations Department to create a recruitment advertisement that promotes membership and identifies a post contact. Submit to your local newspaper, pay for the ad, and then send a copy of the paid receipt and the newspaper clipping with a cover letter requesting reimbursement. Mail all requests to the attention of the National Membership Department.

All posts are encouraged to promote membership and build rapport within their community. Member loyalty and name recognition are benefits that cannot be stressed enough. Posts may combine their efforts and sponsor a larger advertisement within a geographic area where all posts may benefit. The matching funds program will reimburse up to \$200 per participating post. Only one reimbursement request should be submitted.