



AMVETS 101

BASICS OF AMVETS

Mission Statement



To enhance and safeguard the entitlements for all American Veterans who have served honorably and to improve the quality of life for them, their families, and the communities where they live through leadership, advocacy and services.

History

- ▶ Older veteran volunteers began helping WWII veterans obtain their benefits. As the number of WWII veterans grew, it became clear that there needed to be a national organization to assist.
- ▶ AMVETS National organization was founded in 1944 by 18 veterans, representing nine veterans' clubs.
- ▶ AMVETS Department of Illinois was founded the following year, in 1945.
- ▶ In 1947, President Harry Truman signed Public Law 216 making AMVETS the first WWII veterans' organization to be congressionally-chartered.

Illinois AMVETS Organizations

1. Illinois AMVETS Healthcare Facility
 - ▶ Charity – 501 (c)(3) status
 - ▶ Focuses on healthcare for veterans and their families
2. Illinois AMVETS Service Foundation
 - ▶ Charity – 501 (c)(3) status
 - ▶ Comprised of Past Department Commanders and elected AMVETS Department of Illinois Trustees
 - ▶ Primary funding source
3. AMVETS Department of Illinois
 - ▶ Veterans' organization
 - ▶ Membership open to anyone who Honorably served or is currently serving (includes Guard and Reservist)

National AMVETS Breakdown

National Officers & Key Staff

Commander Horace Johnson-FL
First Vice Paul Shipley-PA
Second Vice Sandy Vorheis-OH
Third Vice Christopher Studebaker-IL
Judge Advocate Frederick Bates-GA
Finance Officer Kelly McFarlain- LA
Executive Director Joe Chenelly
Membership Director Warren Cox
Programs Director OPEN

National Districts

- There are 6 districts at the National-level.
- Illinois is part of the 4th District, which is comprised of: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Kentucky
- Commander Sheldon Hartfield-MO
- The district commander from each of the recognized national districts shall report at NEC meetings, chair national district meetings and act on behalf of the National Commander.

Departments

- Departments broken down by state.
- “Organized” departments are those who have at least 150 members, upon charter.
- After 2 years, membership must reach 300.
- Unorganized departments are those states that have AMVETS posts/members but do not operate a “department”.

National Officer Responsibilities

Commander

The National Commander shall be the executive head of AMVETS, with full power to enforce the provisions of the national constitution, the national bylaws and the will of the National Convention and National Executive Committee. The National Commander shall serve as a ex-officio member without right to vote on all committees.

Staff counterpoint: Executive Director

1st Vice

The National First Vice Commander shall be primarily responsible for the membership of the organization and shall coordinate all 37 department membership directors or vice commanders in charge of membership.

Staff counterpoint: Membership Director

2nd Vice

The National Second Vice Commander shall be primarily responsible for the programs of the organization and shall coordinate all department program chairmen.

Staff counterpoint: Programs Director

National Officer Responsibilities

3rd Vice

The National Third Vice shall be primarily responsible for the legislative activities of the organization.

Staff counterpoint: Legislative Director

Judge Advocate

The National Judge Advocate shall advise the national officers and the National Executive Committee on the construction and interpretation of the National Constitution and Bylaws, and shall perform such other duties as are incident to the office.

Finance Officer

The national finance officer shall be custodian of the funds of the national department.

Staff counterpoint: NSF Finance Director

AMVETS Department of Illinois

Leadership & Staff

- Commander Laura Doss
- 1st Vice Ken Rowe
- 2nd Vice John Cole
- Judge Advocate Richard Van Natta
- Finance Officer Joye Morris
- Executive Director Jim King (Acting)
- Operations Manager Ashley Murphy
- Veterans Service Director Ed Humphrey

Districts

- There are 5 districts in Illinois.
- District 1 is comprised of Cook County.
- District 2 is Northern Illinois.
- District 3 is Western Central Illinois
- District 4 is Eastern Central Illinois.
- District 5 is Southern Illinois.
- Further breakdowns by County can be found on the website.

Posts

- There are 51 posts in Illinois
- 16 Posts with Clubrooms
- Posts must have at least 10 members in good standing and follow the Revalidation procedures each year as required by National.

District Officer Breakdown in Illinois

District 1

- Commander Henry Trujillo
- Meetings will be held the 3rd Thursday in February, May and September at 7:30 PM. Location may vary.

District 2

- Commander Nancy Clark
- Meetings will be held at 1 PM on the following dates:
 - September 17 at Post 245
 - January 21 at Post 922
 - April 14 at Post 90

District 3

- Commander Matt Doss
- Meetings will be held at the conclusion of the Department SEC meetings.

District Officer Breakdown in Illinois

District 4

- Commander Robert Gossett
- Meeting date as follows:
 - October 8th at 1 PM at Post 52 in Fisher

District 5

- Commander Chris Miller
- Meetings will be held at 1 PM on the following dates:
 - January 14 at Post 148
 - May 16 at Post 40

AMVETS Subsidiary Organizations

Ladies Auxiliary

- Membership in AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary is open to the mothers, wives, widows, grandmothers, sisters, daughters and granddaughters of AMVETS and female veterans who are currently serving or who have honorably served in the Armed Forces of the United States, including the National Guard and Reserve components, anytime after September 15, 1940.
- 16 Ladies Auxiliaries in Illinois currently
- At least one in every district

Sons of AMVETS

- To join the Sons of AMVETS you must be a male relative of an eligible member of AMVETS: husband, widower, father, grandfather, grandson, or brother not less than 18 years old.
- 8 Squadrons in Illinois

Riders

- Riding Members must be the legally registered owner of a motorcycle or be the spouse of an AMVETS Rider who is the legally registered owner of a motorcycle.
- 1 Riders Chapter in Illinois

Junior AMVETS

- Junior AMVETS Are the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and grandchildren of AMVETS, deceased members of AMVETS, members of the Auxiliary, Sons Of AMVETS and servicemen and servicewomen who died and who would have been eligible for AMVETS membership, including all children that they may be legal guardian of . Age eligibility is from the age of five (5) to and including, seventeen (17) Years.
- Currently 1 Junior AMVETS in Illinois

Sad Sacks

- A fun-making and honor organization comprised of AMVETS members, the Sad Sacks (who derive their name from the famous cartoon character of World War II) provide, as their chief community service project, scholarships for nurses.
- 1 Sad Sacks Chapter in Illinois

Veteran Service Officers for Illinois AMVETS

- ▶ AMVETS Service Officers offer information, counseling and claims service to all honorably discharged veterans and their dependents concerning disability compensation, hospitalization, rehabilitation, pension, education, employment and other benefits.
- ▶ We currently have 4 VSOs working for the Illinois AMVETS.
- ▶ We have 1 volunteer VSO who has completed training.
- ▶ We have 4 volunteer VSOs currently in training.
- ▶ VSOs are located in Hines, Jesse Brown, North Chicago, Marion, Danville, Bloomington, and Peoria

By-Laws - Info

- ▶ Officers of a Post shall consist of a commander, not more than three Vice Commanders, adjutant, finance officer, provost marshal, judge advocate, three trustees and such other officers as may be prescribed by the Bylaws.
- ▶ Furnish national and its Department Headquarters with a certified list of current Post Officers not later than July 15 – send to Department HQs
- ▶ Membership year shall run from September 1 through August 31
- ▶ No person shall be a member of more than one post at any one time
- ▶ The Post shall be the judge of its own membership, subject to the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the national and department organizations.

Uniform and Insignia

Male: navy blue blazer, medium-gray trousers, white dress shirt, black belt, navy blue necktie and appropriate black footwear

Female: navy blue blazer, medium-gray slacks or medium-gray skirt, white dress blouse and appropriate black belt and neckwear and black footwear

**There shall be no other patches worn on the shirt except the POW-MIA patch (optional), which shall be worn under the American Flag in a proportional manner or centered

AMVETS caps are different, depending on the title of the member:

- POST OFFICERS AND MEMBERS: Green with gold piping and lettering
- STATE OFFICERS: White with green piping and lettering
- STATE DISTRICT OFFICERS: Green band, white top with gold piping and lettering
- NATIONAL OFFICERS: White with gold piping and lettering
- NATIONAL COMMANDER: Gold with white piping and lettering

**Members may wear the cap of the highest office they held, provided that the year they served is indicated on it

Uniform Extra

- ▶ The AMVETS uniform and cap should be worn at all AMVETS functions.
- ▶ Additionally, they should be worn at all patriotic events and when cooperating with, or participating in observances of other veterans' military organizations.
- ▶ The cap should be worn indoors and outside; however, it should be removed when entering a church, unless worn by a member (or the commander) of an armed honor or color guard.
- ▶ To properly hold the AMVETS cap during prayer, simply grasp the cap lengthwise in the right hand with the insignia showing, insert four fingers inside the cap and place it over your heart.

Robert's Rule of Order

- ▶ Each post should have a copy – Judge Advocate should be your subject matter expert
- ▶ The Commander, when presiding, always accedes to the will of the majority of the members present and it is not for him to insist on points against the decision of the members
- ▶ We should not allow discussions between members across the floor. No member may speak unless first recognized by the Commander
- ▶ These might be stated briefly as follows:
 - 1. Only one subject can come before the meeting at one time.
 - 2. Each proposal coming before the AMVETS shall be freely debated.
 - 3. Each member has rights equal to those of every other member.
 - 4. The will of the majority shall be carried out, yet the minority shall have the right to present its case

Officers and Their Duties

- ▶ Commander: he/she is the senior executive officer of the post. They should be the voice and providing pertinent information to its membership
- ▶ 1st Vice Commander: This is your membership chairman and fill in for the commander in their absents.
- ▶ 2nd Vice Commander: This is your programs and their promotions
 - IE. Program reporter, Girl Scouts Gold Award, Americanism, AADAA, White Clover, Patriotism (to name a few)
- ▶ Adjutant: administrative support and taking minutes
- ▶ Finance Officer: is the treasurer (should have a bond)
- ▶ Provost Marshal: keeping order and care of post colors
- ▶ Judge Advocate: responsible for by-laws
- ▶ Service Officer: provide information about veteran benefits
- ▶ Women Veterans' Representatives: Reports on subjects related to women veterans.

Summary

- ▶ History – founding 1944 – State founded 1945 – Signed in law 1947
- ▶ Get to know your National/District commanders
- ▶ Revalidation – Each year by July 1 to IL HQ
- ▶ When you are conducting AMVETS Business – have the correct cap and uniform
- ▶ Conduct all meeting IAW Roberts Rules of Order
- ▶ Officer Duties

Questions?????

- ▶ Shawn Miller
- ▶ IL Department Provost Marshal
- ▶ IL District 2nd Vice Commander
- ▶ AMVETS Post 94 Commander