



## PROGRAM HISTORY

The National Americanism Commission began its administration of the "Veteran of the Month" program following the adoption of a resolution submitted by The American Legion Department of Connecticut to the 1993 National Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The program was already a successful operation in the Department of Connecticut.

The very first "Veteran of the Month" program as described in this booklet was started by Legionnaires Arthur Shaw and Francis Fabbri of Tyler-Seward-Kubish American Legion Post 44 of Bantam, Connecticut. Most of the information found in this instructional guide came from the Post 44 guidebook as authored by Legionnaire and Past Department Commander Arthur G. St. John, also of Post 44.

Tyler-Seward-Kubish Post 44 and PDC St. John received a George Washington Honor Medal from the well known Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge in December of 1992 "In recognition of their efforts to create an All Wars Memorial and the Veteran of the Month Program."

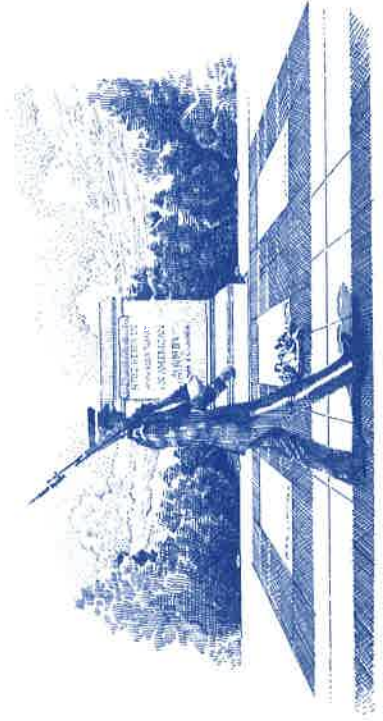
Post 44 offered their first "Veteran of the Month" ceremony on October 25, 1989, and honorings have been held on the "first Saturday of each month" ever since.

The National Americanism Commission is proud to have the opportunity to carry out the traditions as started by Tyler-Seward-Kubish American Legion Post 44 of Bantam, Connecticut.



## THE AMERICAN LEGION

### VETERAN OF THE MONTH PROGRAM



# The American Legion

## Veteran of the Month Program

is an activity of the

## National Americanism Commission

### SUPPORT MATERIALS AND INFORMATION

Veteran of the Month certificates of recognition are available through National Emblem Sales. Also you may order wooden flag presentation cases or the more expensive vinyl flag presentation cases through Emblem Sales. All weather 5' x 9.5' U.S. Flags for use on the flag pole between ceremonies are also available. For current prices and availability, call or write:

National Emblem Sales  
Customer Service  
P.O. Box 1050  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

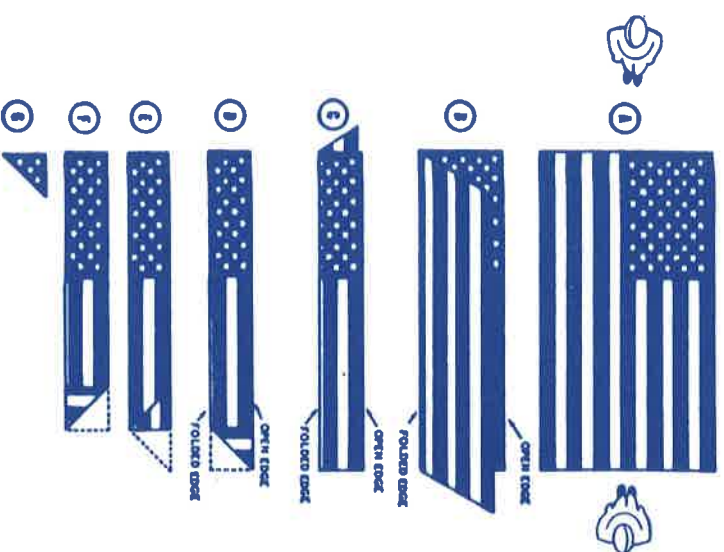
Customer Service Phone: (317) 630-1251

For information about the program, contact:

The National Americanism Commission  
American Legion National Headquarters  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

A/C & Y Phone: (317) 630-1249

### Folding the Flag



#### WHEN ACCEPTING THE FLAG FROM THE FAMILY:

We thank you for allowing Post 00 to pay this tribute. It is fitting that we honor (name of veteran) by flying the Flag of our nation under when he/she served.

#### WHEN PRESENTING THE FLAG AFTER HONORING:

On behalf of the Government of the United States and The American Legion, I return the Flag under which (name of veteran) so nobly served. We thank you for allowing Post 00 to pay him/her this tribute.

## Sample Reading

We will now raise (or lower) the Flag of World War II U.S. Army Sergeant Thomas T. Jones as the July, 1995 "Veteran of the Month." His Flag will fly in honor until August 5, 1995, when it will be retired and the Flag of (name of next month's honoree) will be raised.

Sergeant Jones enlisted in January of 1942 and was assigned to the 3rd Armored Division. He served in the (list theater of operations, military occupation, overseas assignment, decorations/awards, date of discharge, and any other relevant military information).

He was born (date and place) and was the son of (list parents). He attended and/or graduated from (list high school, college, type of degrees, majors, etc.) He was a (occupation or trade) and worked for (companies, self-employed) and retired (date) after (number) years of service.

He was a member of (organizations, offices held) and was an (elected or appointed official) of the community.

He is survived by (list survivors and where they live).

He died on (date and location) and is buried (location of cemetery).

This quiet, unassuming man never spoke much about his time in the army. He was one of the more than 9 million who served in World War II, yet his act of heroism in combat is well documented. His dedication to the safety of his community was shown by his commitment to the Your City Fire Department, which he served as Chief for over 25 years. We hope that the flying of his Honor Flag will be an inspiration to all who served their community and their nation. For it is this type of devotion and commitment that makes our country the greatest on earth.

We salute Sergeant Thomas T. Jones as the July, 1995 Veteran of the Month and we thank his family for allowing Post 00 to pay tribute to this great American.

## THE PROGRAM

The "Veteran of the Month" program provides a medium through which families, friends, and the community can honor deceased honorably discharged veterans in a public recognition of the service they rendered to their country. Honoring ceremonies use the veteran's burial Flag, an endeared remembrance of the veteran, as the primary symbol for the tribute. Ordinarily, these Flags are stowed in a bureau or closet.

The veteran's personal and military life is profiled in advance publicity and read at the time of the Flag raising and again at the Flag lowering service at the end of the month long honoring period. The Flag service includes sounding taps and the folding and re-presentation of the burial Flag to a member of the deceased's immediate family in a protective case.

## HOW TO CONDUCT A PROGRAM

### Scheduling a Day and a Time

It is important that the time and day be set to accommodate the greatest number of families as well as those volunteers who conduct the monthly service. The date should also be one that is easily remembered. The first Saturday of each month has proven to be an excellent time for the program conducted by Post 44 in Connecticut. The hour of 10:00 A.M. is also a convenient time to conduct the service.

### Commitment

A "Veteran of the Month" program must have a positive commitment from the Post members to ensure that the program will continue on a monthly basis until such time that there are no longer any families wanting to take advantage of the honoring ceremony.

## Personnel

**PROGRAM COORDINATOR** – This individual is responsible for the success of the program. The Coordinator handles the scheduling and information coordination with the honoree's family, prepares and distributes press releases in a timely manner, and provides the profile material and scripts for the services. It is generally a good idea to have the Program Coordinator serve as the **MASTER OF CEREMONIES** since he/she is already familiar with the presentation materials.

**POST COMMANDER** – The Commander is responsible for accepting and returning the respective burial Flags of the honorees from both the previous month and the new month. The Commander returns the Flag to the family of the past honoree and then accepts the Flag from the family of the new honoree, which is then presented to the Flag Detail.

**LANYARD ATTENDANT** – This individual raises and lowers the respective ceremonial U.S. Flags.

**FLAG ATTENDANTS** – Two to four attendants keep the Flag at “full spread” (as if it were being held over the casket) during the folding and unfolding of the Flags. One flag attendant is responsible for folding the Flag in the prescribed manner and offering it to the Commander for presentation. This person then accepts the new Flag from the Commander, unfolds it in a reverse procedure, and readies it to be raised.

**POST CHAPLAIN** – The Chaplain offers the appropriate prayers.

**BUGLER** – The bugler plays Taps. If a bugler is unavailable, an individual familiar with the available sound equipment plays an audio tape of Taps.

**IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT ASSIGNED PERSONNEL REHEARSE REGULARLY TO ENSURE A DIGNIFIED SERVICE.**

## Program Format

It is recommended that the program be started by asking everyone present to turn to the person next to them, shake their hand and tell them, **“I’m proud to be an American.”**

- The **“Pledge of Allegiance”**
- Place the **POW-MIA** flag on a chair, stating “the flag symbolizes the absence of the Prisoners of War and the Missing in Action of all wars. May we spare no effort to release those in captivity, the repatriation of those who died, and for an accounting of those who are still missing.”

### • RETIREMENT OF FLAG FROM PREVIOUS MONTH

The Veteran's Profile is read while the Flag is lowered, folded, and presented to the Post Commander by the Flag Detail. The Post Commander then presents it to the family of the honoree with appropriate remarks.

### • RAISING OF FLAG FOR CURRENT MONTH

The Veteran's Profile is read while the Post Commander accepts the Flag from the family of the new honoree. The Commander then presents the Flag to the Flag Detail. The Detail unfolds the Flag and holds it taut in a horizontal position until the conclusion of the reading of the tribute, the Chaplain's prayer, and the sounding of TAPS. (The Flag is held taut at a height slightly above the holder's waist.)

Upon the start of the National Anthem, the Flag Detail slowly walks the Flag to the base of the flag pole where it is attached to halcyard cleats and hoisted briskly to full staff. As the Flag is being hoisted, the remainder of the Flag Detail takes one step back and assumes the position of Present Arms. At the conclusion of the anthem, the Commander issues the command, “order arms.”

The Commander then makes closing remarks and any other announcements.

## Suggested Press Release

(The following suggested news release should be retyped, double spaced, on Post letterhead. Include all the required local information to increase the value to your local media outlets. Obtain specific names of individuals in the media who are to receive the news release. Send or deliver completed news release to all local news media outlets.)

### American Legion to honor World War II veteran

(YOUR HOMETOWN) — (date) — (Name and number of your post) will honor the memory of (name of deceased veteran) as the (month) “Veteran of the Month” during services to be conducted at (time, day, place of ceremony).

The Post conducts services on the (day of the month) for the deceased veteran being honored. The service includes the flying of the honored veteran’s burial flag.

(Insert background on veteran being honored including service dates, any and all appropriate military history as outlined on the profile form, personal data, such as birthplace, education, occupation, civic endeavors and organizational memberships.)

He (or she) died on (date) and is buried (name and/or location of cemetery).

The (date of ceremony) marks the (number) consecutive month that (Post name/number) has honored a deceased veteran in the “Veteran of the Month” program at (ceremony location). Anyone who wishes to nominate a deceased loved one for the honor of “Veteran of the Month” may contact (name and daytime telephone number of program contact).

The program is designed to honor any deceased veteran of the U.S. armed forces. The veteran to be honored must have received an honorable discharge or have died while in service. The schedule of veterans to be honored currently runs through (month and year).

**Contact: (Name and daytime telephone number of media contact)**

## Facilities

Conducting a month-long tribute requires a flag pole that:

- is dedicated specifically to this program
- is equipped with 24 hour lighting
- is an appropriate height to fly the 5' by 9.5' Flag

Flags are to be taken down only under extreme weather conditions that would damage or destroy the Flag.

The location of the dedicated flag pole depends on available facilities. The flag pole could be at a Post home or at a public memorial site, village green or other community site. If a dedicated flag pole is unavailable for the program, then a new flag pole should be erected specifically for the “Veteran of the Month” program. This provides an opportunity to get the community involved in the fund raising and overall support of the program. The site selected should be in a central location, accessible at all times and with an unobstructed view to provide public visibility AT ALL TIMES.

Other equipment or accessories which are desirable include:

- White gloves for the Commander and the Flag Detail
- Public address system
- Chairs for those having difficulty standing
- Umbrellas
- A tape player
- A flag presentation case
- At least two “all-weather” 5' x 9.5' Flags for use during the month so that “burial Flags” are not damaged by outdoor use
- A snow removal detail

## Scheduling Honorees

Program coordination is time consuming but vital to the success of the “Veteran of the Month” program. The PROGRAM COORDINATOR must be able to dedicate the time necessary in carrying out the program in a timely manner. Ceremonies are held REGARDLESS of weather conditions.

The PROGRAM COORDINATOR’S responsibilities include:

- Honoree scheduling – For the initial start up, Post members should assist the Coordinator by polling the membership to find at least three past members or friends to be honored during the first three months. This allows time for scheduling of honorees for subsequent months.
- Media relations – The Coordinator has to develop press releases for distribution to area newspapers, radio and TV stations to announce the program’s start and press releases for subsequent honorees. It is helpful to personally contact editors, reporters and station managers to explain details of the program. Good publicity and personal contacts should produce enough inquiries to keep the program going. Press releases should include the telephone numbers of three Post members (including the Coordinator) actively involved with the program. Names and addresses of those inquiring about the program are given to the Coordinator so that he can send an information letter and a “Veteran’s Profile” form to those interested. He/she maintains an active file of “profiles” for future publicity development.
- Even though your schedule of honorees may be full for several months, it is very appropriate to contact the families of recently deceased Veterans to offer the honor to their loved one. It may be possible to offer the honor on the anniversary month of the death.

## Sample Letter Scheduling an Honoree

USE POST LETTERHEAD

Mrs. Thomas T. Jones  
234 Apple Lane  
Your City, CT 06000

Date

Dear Mrs. Jones:

We are pleased to confirm that **American Legion Post 00** will honor your late husband, World War II Army veteran Sergeant Thomas T. Jones, as the **July, 1995 “Veteran of the Month.”**

Ceremonies will take place at the (Insert Location) at ten o’clock on the morning of Saturday, July 1, 1995. At that time, we will raise his burial Flag (which you will provide) in his honor and this tribute will continue until Saturday, August 5, 1995 when his Flag will be retired and returned to you in a ceremonial manner.

In order to prevent weather damage to the burial Flag (government Flags are not made for outdoor use), it will be flown on the first and last day of the tribute. An Honor Flag will be used in its place for the balance of the month. This in no way detracts from the honor being bestowed on him, but enables you to keep the burial Flag in perfect condition. If for any reason you cannot supply the burial Flag, we will be pleased to use the Honor Flag for the entire period.

We thank you for allowing Post 00 to offer this tribute to Thomas, and are sure that family and friends will want to join with us on Saturday, July 1st for his Flag raising and again on Saturday, August 5 when his Flag will be retired.

We thank you for allowing us to do this honor.

Sincerely,

Send a follow up reminder 30 days before ceremony
------------------------------------------------------

Signed by the Program Coordinator  
Show Coordinator’s Address and Telephone Number

## Sample Profile of Deceased Veteran

Veteran's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please check: ( ) WWI ( ) WWII ( ) Korea ( ) Vietnam ( ) Other  
 Community of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

### MILITARY HISTORY:

Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Entered Service on \_\_\_\_\_ Discharged on \_\_\_\_\_  
 Military Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Overseas Service \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Decorations and Awards \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### PERSONAL HISTORY:

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent's Names \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade School name and location \_\_\_\_\_  
 High School name and location \_\_\_\_\_  
 College \_\_\_\_\_ Degrees \_\_\_\_\_  
 Graduated (year) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Majored in \_\_\_\_\_  
 Civilian Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employed by \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. Years \_\_\_\_\_ Retired? ( ) yes ( ) no Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organizational Memberships in (civic, veteran, fraternal, social, political)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### SURVIVORS:

Wife's Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Marriage \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
 Children \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other living Relatives \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Veteran's Death \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
 Where Buried \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prepared By \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (USE OTHER SIDE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION)

## Honoree Qualifications

General qualifications are as follows:

- The program is open to *all honorably discharged veterans and those who died while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, and those who remain Missing in Action.*
- There are **NO** specific service dates for honoree eligibility.
- It is not mandatory that the honoree be a former resident of the community where the services are conducted. Out of town veterans are welcome.
- All dates are scheduled on a "first come, first served basis." There are times when schedules have to be altered due to sickness, unavailability, etc.; therefore, it is easier to insert the last request into the vacated spot than to rearrange the whole schedule.

**NOTE: AT THE HONORING SERVICE FOR A VETERAN DESIGNATED AS MISSING IN ACTION (MIA), AN AMERICAN FLAG PROVIDED BY THE POST WOULD BE USED FOR THE FLAG RAISING AND FOR THE MONTH LONG HONORING PERIOD. THE BALANCE OF THE CEREMONY WOULD REMAIN THE SAME EXCEPT THAT THE FLAG WOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO THE NEXT OF KIN.**

## **Program Option**

It can be very helpful to the success of the program for the Post to hold a reception following the service to treat all those in attendance to light refreshments. This gathering offers an opportunity for the program volunteers to discuss the service with each other and the other attendees. Comments and critique from those in attendance can go a long way in helping to perfect the dignity of the ceremony. The reception also offers the volunteers and the attendees an appropriate opportunity to remember the deceased veteran in a more informal atmosphere.

## **Funding**

The Post will need to fund several items for this program. Costs involved with erecting a flag pole will need to be considered if a dedicated flag pole is not available. The Post will need to provide at least two 5' x 9.5' all-weather Honor Flags. It is very appropriate following the Flag lowering to re-present the burial Flag to the family in a presentation case. Costs involved with reception refreshments will have to be budgeted if receptions are to be planned. Certificates of Recognition are also available through National Emblem Sales. Finally, the costs of administration items such as stationery, envelopes, postage, paper, and copies will need to be considered when developing your program.

## **Sample Letter Responding to Requests for Information on "Veteran of the Month"**

### **USE POST LETTERHEAD**

Mrs. Thomas T. Jones  
234 Apple Lane  
Your City, CT 06000

Date

Dear Mrs. Jones:

Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding the scheduling of burial Flag honors for your deceased loved one.

Enclosed is a veteran's information form that we ask that you complete. This information will be very helpful in formulating the profile of (his or her) military and personal history. This information will be used in advance publicity and read at the services which will be held at (Location).

The only eligibility requirement is that the deceased must have served in the United States Armed Forces and was honorably discharged or died while in the service. Honorees are not required to have been from this community.

Scheduling is on a first come, first served basis. Therefore, the earlier we can receive the information form, the sooner we can designate a specific month to honor your loved one as a "Veteran of the Month."

We urge you to complete and return the enclosed form at your earliest convenience. Upon receipt, we will notify you of the earliest month that honors can be scheduled.

Thank you for your interest in our program.

Sincerely,

Signed by the Program Coordinator  
Show Coordinator's Address and Telephone Number