

AMVETS Resolution Process

RESOLUTION PROCESS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Rules	3
Resolutions	4
Scope	4
Types	4
Responsibilities	6
Department/SEC/NEC	6
National Headquarters	6
Committees	7
Convention Floor Procedures	7
Agenda	7
Floor Action	7
Voting	8
Writing A Resolution	8
The <i>Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved</i>	8
The <i>Whereas</i>	9
<i>Dos and Don'ts</i>	9
Review	10

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to describe the process by which resolutions are written and administered from origination through the AMVETS national convention. AMVETS is a large organization, and a well-defined process will ensure that all AMVETS have the opportunity to address an issue with their fellow AMVETS, and to have an impact on AMVETS' national policies and programs.

The Rules

The resolution process is straightforward and conforms to just five simple rules required by AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws (CBL).

Rule 1

Resolutions may originate at any level of AMVETS: post, state executive committee (SEC)/department, National Executive Committee (NEC) or national convention.

Rule 2

Resolutions applicable to national programs and policies that do not affect the national CBL require a simple majority vote for approval.

Note: To be included in the pre-convention PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS Book, these proposed resolutions must be sent to National Headquarters and be postmarked not later than the date published each year by the headquarters.

Rule 3

National Headquarters must forward resolutions (with proposed constitutional) amendments to the National CBL Committee, the National Executive Committee and the departments for information and review, postmarked not later than 30 days prior to the opening date of the national convention.

Note: National Headquarters will publish a postmark date necessary to allow the national staff to process all proposed changes to the national CBL and meet the 30-day advance mail-out requirement. Resolutions proposing amendments to the national CBL received at National Headquarters and postmarked after the announced deadline will be referred by the headquarters to the National CBL Committee and will be considered to have originated at the national convention.

Rule 4

Resolutions that propose amendments to the national constitution require a two-thirds majority at the national convention for approval, unless the proposed amendment(s) originate at the national convention. Proposed amendments to the national constitution originating at the national convention require a *unanimous* vote of the convention body for approval (*AMVETS National Constitution, Article XXII*).

Rule 5

Resolutions that propose amendments to the national bylaws require a simple majority at the national convention for approval, unless the proposed amendment(s) originate at the national convention. Proposed amendments to the national bylaws originating at the national convention require a two-thirds majority of the convention body for approval (*AMVETS National Bylaws, Article XVI*).

Resolutions

Scope

Resolutions may involve issues concerning posts and local communities, department and state matters, or broad national policies, programs and procedures. It would be inappropriate, for example, to forward the following resolutions to National Headquarters for consideration at a national convention.

Be It Resolved that AMVETS Post #9999 will participate in all patriotic parades held in Smith County.

Example A

In Example A, the local post wants to take an action that has no bearing on department or national policies/procedures. Therefore, this resolution should not be considered beyond post level.

Be It Resolved that the AMVETS Department of Anystate will contribute x dollars to the state veterans home.

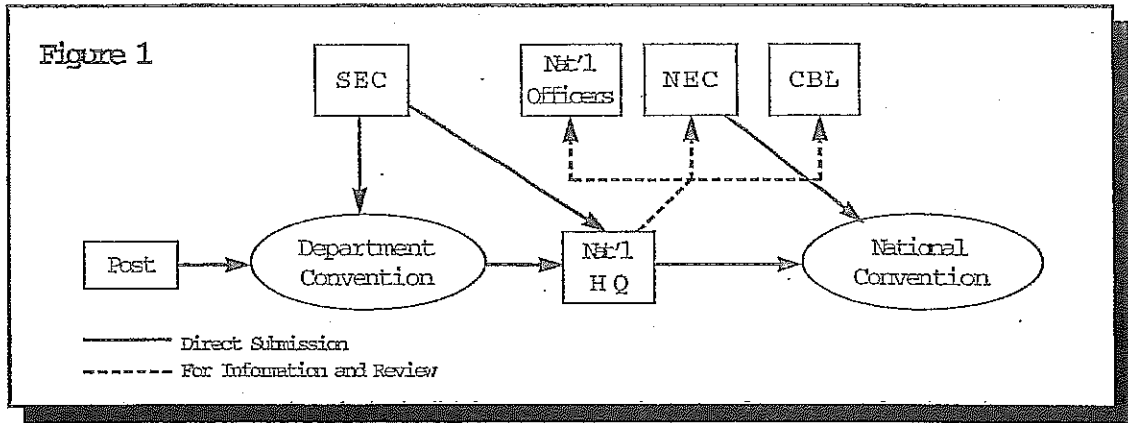
Example B

Example B commits a department to a specific action and does not require national funds or participation. Therefore, this resolution should not be submitted to National Headquarters for consideration at the national convention.

Types

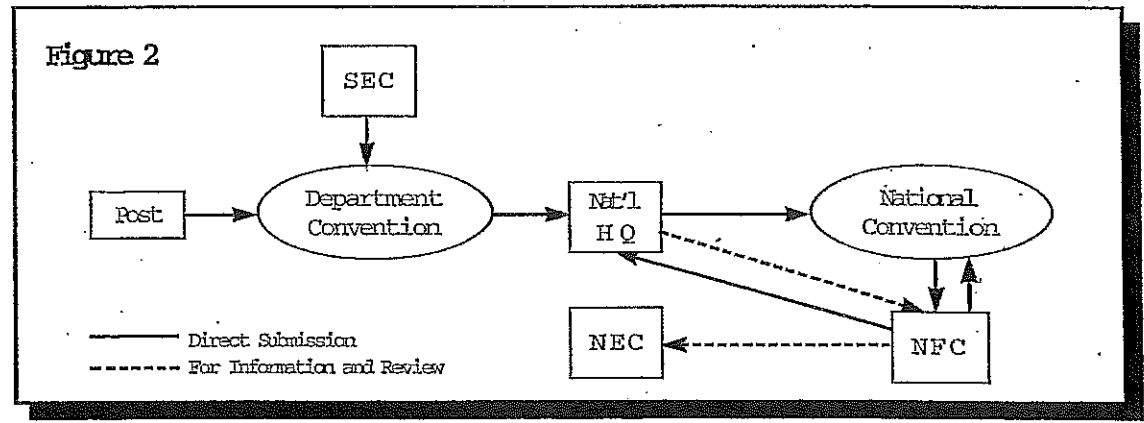
There are three major categories of resolutions, although any resolution may fall into more than one category.

■ Resolution to Amend AMVETS' National Constitution or Bylaws. Figure 1 illustrates the proper path of a resolution to amend the national constitution and/or bylaws.

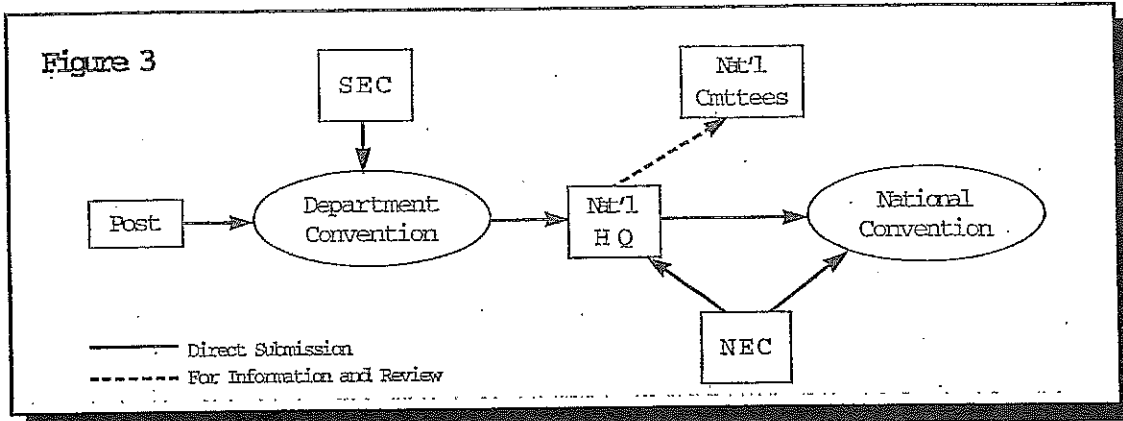


■ **Resolution Requiring Funding Decisions.** Figure 2 below illustrates the proper path of a resolution requiring a funding decision by the National Finance Committee.

Note: Any resolution involving the expenditure of funds or any financial commitment shall be referred to the National Finance Committee for consideration. In reviewing resolutions adopted at a national convention, the National Finance Committee shall have three options: (1) provide funding from the newly adopted national budget, (2) defer funding, pending appropriate planning by the national staff as part of the next fiscal year or (3) deny funding, based on current and projected funding levels. If a resolution is denied or deferred because of a want of available funds, the National Finance Committee shall report such decision to the National Executive Committee at its next meeting (*AMVETS National Constitution Article XI, Section 9*).



■ **General Resolutions.** The third category usually represents the majority of resolutions. Typically, these are resolutions that direct the national staff to seek legislation, state AMVETS' policy on a national issue of interest to veterans, or establish new AMVETS programs. Figure 3 illustrates the path of a general resolution that does not propose a change to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws nor require a funding decision by the National Finance Committee.



Responsibilities

Department/SEC/NEC

Resolutions adopted at the SEC/department level that deal with national matters should be forwarded by the adjutant/executive director to AMVETS National Headquarters (ATTN: National Executive Director) for review.

Note: Resolutions must be postmarked not later than the date announced each year by National Headquarters. Because of publication scheduling requirements, resolutions received after the deadline date may not appear in the PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS book. All resolutions should be clearly typed and certified by either the department adjutant/executive director or the department commander. Resolutions not in proper form, unclear in meaning or concerning local matters will be returned to the originator and not included in the PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS book.

National Headquarters

National staff will review resolutions to ensure they are in proper format, clearly written and pertinent. The national legislative director will assign each incoming resolution to an appropriate national committee. Subsequently, the staff will publish the national convention PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS book. Concurrently, all resolutions affecting the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws received at National Headquarters by the postmark deadline will be distributed to the National Executive Committee, the departments and the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee, postmarked at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the forthcoming national convention.

Where possible, a national staff representative will be present at each national committee meeting. Following the meeting of the national committees, the national staff representatives will inform the national legislative staff of resolution recommendations. In the case of committee amendments to resolutions contained in the PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS book, the national legislative staff will prepare amended resolutions for presentation on the convention floor. The committee-amended resolutions will be presented on the floor in lieu of the original resolu-

tion.

Following the national convention, the national legislative staff will compile and publish the post-convention ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS book containing all resolutions adopted at the national convention.

Committee

Because AMVETS is a large organization and veterans issues are highly complex and diverse, we have established committees to study issues and resolutions and to make recommendations to the convention body. Therefore, the committee members have a serious responsibility to the whole membership of AMVETS. Committee members have an obligation to give a fair and impartial hearing to any proposal before the committee. Committee members, especially the chairperson, should remain actively involved when the convention is considering any resolution within their jurisdiction.

Many resolutions fall within the jurisdictions of more than one national committee. A resolution calling for a change in membership criteria, for example, would be referred to the National Membership Committee. But because it would also involve a proposed change to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws, it would also be referred to the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Each committee would separately consider such a resolution. Therefore, in the case of a jointly-referred resolution, it is the responsibility of each committee chairperson to keep other chairpersons informed of respective committee recommendations.

If two (or more) committees having jurisdiction over the same resolution differ in their recommendation to the convention floor, it is the responsibility of each committee chairperson to report his/her respective committee's recommendations to the convention body.

Convention Floor Procedures

Agenda

To assist the convention body, the national convention agenda will detail the date(s) and time(s) when resolutions will be brought up on the floor. Resolutions will be considered in order of their appearance in the PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS book. Resolutions originating from national committees and those coming directly from the convention floor will be considered following action on those in the PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS book.

Floor Action

Committee chairpersons will be present on the convention floor when resolutions are considered. As each resolution is presented to the floor, each committee chairperson having jurisdiction over the resolution will be polled to determine that

committee's recommendations. Once all committees with jurisdiction over a resolution have reported their recommendations to the floor, the presiding officer will proceed to act on the resolution.

Resolutions *originating in committee* that propose amendments to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws will be read once on the convention floor and immediately referred to the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee for consideration and recommendation. As soon as practicable, the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairperson will report back to the convention floor on recommendations for action on all such resolutions.

The national legislative staff will prepare copies of all resolutions that originate in national convention committees which propose amendments to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws. One copy of each such resolution will be provided to each department on the convention floor for review prior to voting.

Voting

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER (*Newly Revised*) governs the disposition of all resolutions on the national convention floor.

Writing a Resolution

Correctly prepared resolutions contain two separate parts: 1) *Whereas* clauses that describe a problem or situation which requires action and 2) *Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved* clauses that propose action(s) to be taken, program(s) to be created or change(s) to be carried out.

Give careful consideration to the exact wording of the resolution and the impact of its possible adoption. In the final analysis, the *Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved* clause(s) are the meat of the resolution and must be carefully written.

The *Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved*

Write the *Be It Resolved* clause(s) first! Describe exactly what action or policy you are advocating AMVETS adopt. It also makes writing the supporting (but less important) *Whereas* clauses much easier. Limit the *Be It Resolved/Be It Further Resolved* clauses to a total of two.

Be It Resolved that we petition Congress to do so immediately.

Example C

Example C illustrates how *not* to compose a *Be It Resolved* clause. Note that, when read by itself, this *Be It Resolved* clause is meaningless. Just what is it that Congress should do?

Be It Resolved that AMVETS petition Congress to enact legislation to provide a 5 percent increase in service-connected disability compensation.

Example D

Be It Resolved that AMVETS National Constitution Article V, Section 2b be amended to read as follows:

"Each department shall choose 10 delegates and ten 10 alternates at its convention."

Example E

Example D illustrates a complete and properly constructed *Be It Resolved* clause. Note that this clause contains a specific course of action to resolve an issue. The clause is easily understood without needing to refer to the *Whereas* clauses.

As Example E illustrates, resolutions to amend the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws must be definite and specific as to the exact citation and language to be amended. Example E illustrates the proper format for the *Be It Resolved* portion of a resolution to amend the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws.

The *Whereas*

When writing *Whereas* clauses, state a minimum amount of factual information in support of the action or policy being proposed. Keep *Whereas* clauses simple and present them in a logical order.

Whereas inflation has eroded the buying power of those on fixed incomes; and

Whereas many disabled veterans live on fixed incomes based solely on VA disability compensation payments; now therefore...

Example F

In clear and concise terms, Example F illustrates a situation that calls for action on the part of the AMVETS National Legislative Department.

Dos and Don'ts

- Do use short, clear sentences; they are much more effective.
- Do seek to state your justification with as few *Whereas* clauses as possible.
- Do propose changes to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws that are well thought-out and researched. Consider whether a change in one part will create a conflict with another. When proposing a change to either the national constitution or the national bylaws, be sure to thoroughly review both.

- DON'T be long-winded; it only detracts from the message.
- DON'T use more than four *Whereas* clauses. If you can't justify your proposed action or policy with four *Whereas* clauses, your proposal is either weak or too complex.

Do Not Say:

Be It Resolved that AMVETS opposes (or supports) H.R. 9876.

Do Say:

Be It Resolved that AMVETS opposes any legislation that decreases De-pendency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) rates.

- DON'T refer to specific bills before Congress, either in support of or opposition to. The content of a bill can change often in the legislative process, and a bill that starts out good for veterans may end up being very bad for them. Therefore, a resolution in support of such a bill would force the national department to act in a manner contrary to the best interests of the veterans we serve. For example—
- DON'T propose changes to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws unless they are absolutely necessary.

Review

- A resolution can originate at any level of the organization but should be forwarded only if it is pertinent to a broader portion of AMVETS. When a legislative resolution is passed by the body at the annual national convention, it becomes AMVETS' legislative agenda for two years (from September 1 to August 31).
- Each level of the AMVETS organization has responsibilities in the resolution process:
 - The Individual proposing the resolution has the responsibility to compose a coherent, concise resolution.
 - Deliberative Bodies such as posts, SEC, NEC and the national convention body are responsible for giving careful consideration to each resolution presented.
 - AMVETS National Staff is responsible for the overall administration of national resolutions and for ensuring that all valid proposed resolutions are presented to the national convention and incorporated into national policies and procedures when adopted by the national convention body.
- Write resolutions clearly and simply. Thoroughly research resolutions pertaining to the AMVETS National Constitution and Bylaws.

Note: If you have questions or comments regarding these guidelines, contact the national legislative director by calling or writing to AMVETS National Headquarters, 4647 Forbes Boulevard, Lanham, MD 2070; (301)459-9600; (301)459-7924 (FAX).