

American Legion Department of New York

Protocol and Planning Guide for Activities



Revision #3, December 2018
Susan L. Rumsey, Chair
Protocol Committee
Department of New York

Purpose:

This Protocol Guide is intended to assist those responsible for planning and conducting American Legion Functions to achieve successful outcomes for these events. Following established protocols enables functions to proceed smoothly and predictably and serves to enhance the image of both the host organization and The American Legion, Department of New York.

Scope:

This Protocol Guide covers planning and conduct of American Legion functions, including visitations by American Legion dignitaries. It does not cover public events such as Memorial Day and Veterans' Day ceremonies.

Responsibility:

The maintenance of this Protocol Guide is the responsibility of the Protocol Committee of the Department of New York. Recommendations for revisions and/or addenda are encouraged and should be submitted in writing to:

(Name), Protocol Committee Chair
The American Legion
Department of New York
112 State Street, Suite 1300
Albany, New York 12207

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General Planning Guidelines

Successful outcomes are usually determined by detailed planning and effective execution. The individual responsible for an American Legion function must establish an appropriate team to handle the various details of the planning and execution phases. Team members should be familiar with American Legion protocol. Most visitations are joint so the involvement of the entire Legion family is also important to ensure that information is disseminated to all. It is important to remember that the same recognition and courtesies are extended to the dignitaries from each faction of the Legion family. The Event Chairman must communicate frequently with the County/District Protocol Chairs to ensure that the event follows proper procedures. Following are issues which should be addressed in the selection of team members and the planning and conduct of American Legion Functions.

- **Confirmation of Date:** This is a critical issue, often overlooked. In the case of a National Commander's Visitation, for instance, his/her visit is part of a country-wide itinerary established well in advance, and it determines the schedules for many other Department of New York representatives. For a Department Commander's Visitation, it must be communicated through the County Visitation Form (see Appendix "I"). Schedules sometimes change, so we must be alert to any changes and their implications.
- **Site Selection (pg. 3):** The function site selection depends upon its purpose. Generally it should be in a central location, readily accessible to those attending and be located near housing facilities that are adequate to house a traveling party. The facility should be able to support the size of the audience. Considerations: room layout requirements, proper public address equipment, adequate parking, etc. This is preferably an American Legion Post, but site selection should be based upon the suitability of the facility.
- **Event Chair:** This is a key individual. The event chair should have prior experience with planning and conducting the type of function in question and should have a proven track record of managing a functional team, motivating other team members to perform their assigned tasks correctly and advising them appropriately.
- **Dinner Chair (pgs. 5&6, Appendices A, B, C, and F):** must be able to manage all details of dinner planning with either the host Post or the event facility management. Responsibilities can include tickets, ensuring proper room layout, head table arrangement, reserved tables, seating, menu planning, flowers and decorations, program development, etc.
- **Communications Chair (Pg. 7, Appendices G, H, I 1-2):** This responsibility should include both internal American Legion communications (including the American Legion Auxiliary, The Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion Riders) and public relations activities. This position should be filled by someone with excellent communications skills and past history of working with the media.
- **Itinerary Chair (Pg. 4):** This responsibility should include transportation, coordination of any tours to be conducted, rooming, special parking, etc.
- **Master of Ceremonies (Pg 8, Appendices D1-4, and E):** Must be an effective public speaker and familiar with American Legion Protocol.
- **Color Guard:** Posting of colors enhances any American Legion function and should be included whenever possible.

A detailed description of the individual responsibilities of team members follows on the noted pages and in the noted appendices.

General Visitation Protocol

Following protocol enables American Legion activities to proceed smoothly and predictably and serves to provide the courtesies that we should extend to one another. It enhances the image of The American Legion to the benefit of everyone associated or touched by its activities and functions.

Topic	Guideline
County Commander's Visitation to Posts	The County Commander and County Membership Chairman should individually attend at least one complete meeting at all posts in their respective county, coordinating these visits well in advance.
District Commander's Visitation to Counties	The District Commander and District Membership Chairman should individually attend at least one complete meeting at all counties in their respective District, coordinating these visits well in advance.
Department Commander's Visitations to the Counties	<p>Coordination for Department Commander's Visitations to counties should start with the County Visitation Form (See Appendix "I")</p> <p>The county organization is the host for these visitations. Those individuals' receiving complimentary tickets is at the discretion of the county organization. R.S.V.P. letters of invitation to guests with itinerary and complimentary ticket(s), if applicable, should be sent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department level - Commander, Adjutant, NEC and/or Alternate NEC, Vice Commander (for the affected District), Sergeant-at-Arms, If joint visitation: Auxiliary President, S.A.L. Detachment Commander and the Director of the Legion Riders • District level - Commander, Vice Commanders, Adjutant, Treasurer, Judge Advocate, Historian, Chaplain, Sergeant-at-Arms, Executive Committee, and Aides. • County level- Commander, Vice Commanders, Adjutant, Past Department Commanders, Past Department Presidents, and Past Detachment Commanders from the host county, County Auxiliary Officers (if not a joint visitation), County S.A.L. Commander, County S.A.L. Officers. <p>Other - Local dignitaries at the discretion of the host organization.</p>
National Commander's Visitation to the District	<p>The district organization is the host for these visitations</p> <p>Coordination with The Department Commander and The Department Adjutant is essential. Because this visitation will take place in a county within the District it is important to involve both the district and county visitation committees in the planning and execution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R S V P. letters of invitation, with itinerary and complimentary ticket(s), if applicable, should be sent to: <p>See Department Commander's Visitation invitee list, above, plus any media representatives as applicable</p>

Site Selection Guidelines

Site selection should provide the maximum suitability and convenience for the attendees of the function with the goal of maximizing participation. This is especially important for National Commanders' Visitations and Department Commanders' Visitations.

Topic	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Geographic Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central to applicable region (district, county) considering population distributions• Accessible to transportation, e.g. airport for National Commander's Visit• Media presence, if applicable• Points of interest for tour, if applicable• Map(s) available (for first-time visitors)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large enough to handle anticipated audience• Parking (including reserved spots for Honored Guests)• Food preparation, serving capacity• Separate luncheon facility, if applicable• Press Conference area, if applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rooming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suitable hotel/motel accommodations (small suite for National Commander, if applicable) Consider all potential guests in visiting party

Itinerary Planning Guidelines

These are the essential support activities that will enable the overall function to run smoothly and problem-free. Visitors from outside the area will experience the results of proper itinerary planning. Paying attention to the details pays off with satisfactory results.

Topic	Suggestions
• General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Finalize list of visitors (from R.S.V.P.'s) with arrival times, departure times, rooming requirements, transportation requirements, if any
• Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Develop detailed activities plan to include arrivals of visitors, luncheon, tour, press conference, dinner, other related activities, breakfast next day, departures, etc. . Coordinate plans with Communications Chair and other event committee chairs . Coordinate agenda with Department Commander/ Adjutant and other Department-level organizations (Auxiliary, S.A.L., Riders) as applicable
• Rooming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . National Commander should be located in a small suite . National Commander's Aide located near the Commander . Department Commander located near National Commander . Consider spouses accompanying guests . Non-smoking rooms preferred by guests? . Advise guests of financial arrangements for room charges and other miscellaneous charges to room. <p>Room charges for National Commander and Aide should be paid by the host organization. Other guest room charges are absorbed at the discretion of the host organization.</p>
• Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Establish Welcoming Committee <p>The Department Vice-Commander for the Area, Department Sergeant-at-Arms from Host County, District Commander and County Commander should greet Distinguished Guests upon arrival. National Commander should be greeted by Department Commander, Department Adjutant, Department Vice Commander for the Area and District Commander plus other(s) at the discretion of the host organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Coordinate airport pick-up, if applicable . Use private autos/vans (arrange for drivers). . Arrange for reserved parking for visiting dignitaries <p>Usually reserved parking spots are provided for National Commander, Department Commander, Department Auxiliary President, S.A.L. Detachment Commander, Dept. ALR Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Consult with Riders for possible motorcycle escort or motorcade escort.

Dinner Planning Guidelines

Proper planning will ensure a smooth-running function and support the necessary protocol. Following are guidelines which may help in planning the dinner and associated activities.

Topic	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish preliminary estimate of attendance, usually based upon past experience • Adequate parking available? Reserved parking spots? • Will it support room layout? (see Appendix "A") • Will non-smoking area(s) be available? • Public Address System to do the job • Kitchen facilities, serving capability to handle anticipated attendance expeditiously • Note that Department dinners and events involving special guests should have dinner served on china with metal utensils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menu & Refreshments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time - cocktail hour, dinner service, ceremonies • Dinner selection • Hors D'oeuvres • Open bar vs. cash bar • Cost calculation, per person and total (consider cost of complimentary tickets and other non-food costs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tickets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop list of distinguished guests (free tickets) Note that if funds are available, suggested recipients of complimentary tickets would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Department Commander and his/her Aides</i> <i>Department Vice Commander from host org.</i> <i>District Commander</i> <i>Department President</i> <i>District President</i> <i>Detachment Commander and his Aides</i> <i>Detachment District Commander</i> <i>NEC and/or Alternate NEC, if invited</i> <i>Department ALR Director/Vice Director from host org.</i> <i>Spouses of Guests receiving complimentary tickets</i> <i>Others as host organization desires</i> • Develop cost per ticket (note costs like decorations, etc) • Develop advertising strategy, invitation letter? • Design/print tickets (see Appendix "C") • Establish ticket sales team, distribute tickets, record numbered blocks if applicable, develop sales records system • Distribute complimentary tickets (indicate "Complimentary on Ticket").

Topic**Suggestions**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Room Layout	Coordinate with banquet facility (see Appendix “A”) for head table location, distinguished guests table(s), etc. Table tent cards, head table place cards Head table arrangement (see Appendix “B”)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programs	Usually printed just prior to function to accommodate last-minute changes Should list guests and agenda (see Appendix “F”)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decorations, etc.	Room decorations Flowers (at head table, other tables?) Corsages/boutonnieres for head table guests Banner(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Order	The order of the program is up to the discretion of the hosting organization. Please note that all elements of the program need to be included. For instance the hosting organization may wish to change the speakers to the first part of the program and have the dinner after.

Communications Planning Guidelines

Getting the word out is essential. Most American Legion functions require communication both within the American Legion Family and to the general public.

Topic	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification & Coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Commander's Visitation - use form as shown in Appendix "I 1-2" • National Commander's Visitation - date will be advised by Department Adjutant. Coordinate all details closely with Department Commander and Department Adjutant. • Coordinate with Department Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and Department ALR as applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters of invitation to Distinguished Guests, local dignitaries, news media, etc. See Appendix "H". Include complimentary ticket(s) with invitation, where applicable. List should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department level - Commander, Adjutant, NEC and/or Alternate NEC, Vice Commander (for the affected District), Sergeant-at-Arms, If joint visitation: Auxiliary President, S.A.L. Detachment Commander and Director of The ALR • District level - Commander, Vice Commanders, Adjutant, Treasurer, Judge Advocate, Historian, Chaplain, Sergeant-at-Arms, Executive Committee, and Aides. • County level- Commander, Vice Commanders, Adjutant, Past Department Commanders, Past Department Presidents, and Past Detachment Commanders from the host county, County Auxiliary Officers (if not a joint visitation), County S.A.L. Commander, County S.A.L. Officers. • Advise guests who will be seated at Head Table that they'll be seated there and whether or not they'll be speaking. • For those who will participate in an itinerary, describe what will be done on the tour, etc. • Advise rooming arrangements as applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News releases to local TV, Radio, Print media (See Appendix "G") • Usually a National Commander's Visitation will include a press conference. • Determine invitation list and suitable site. • Posters to advertise event • American Legion Post Newsletter article(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain biographical data for honored guest(s) for use in news releases and program. Edit as appropriate. Obtain pictures if they're available for news releases and/or programs

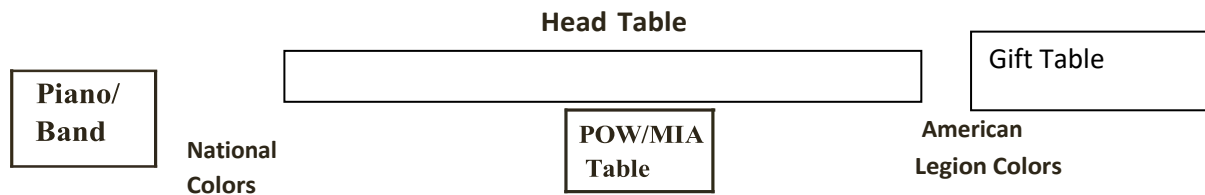
Speaking Protocol

Protocol helps to make American Legion functions proceed smoothly and expeditiously. Generally, all speeches should be brief with a simple and clear message. This will help to keep the interest of the audience.

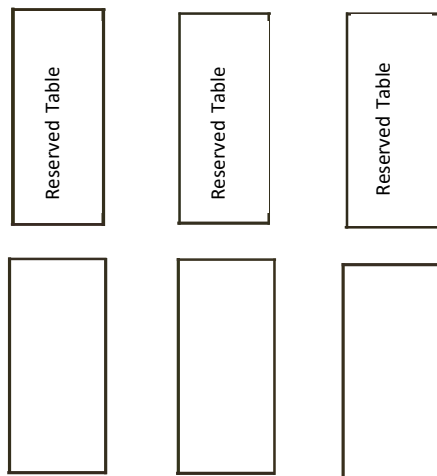
Topic	Guideline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking Order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main speaker/guest of honor speaks last as he/she will receive the longest speech of introduction and their address will conclude the speaking portion of the program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeches of Introduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be brief, to-the-point • Refrain from reciting biographical data, use anecdotes when appropriate • Length of speech of introduction varies with respect to the rank of the individual being introduced; the highest-ranking guest receives the longest speech of introduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Head Table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally done by the Master of Ceremonies • Order of introduction starts with speaker's extreme left, working toward the center, then with speaker's extreme right, working toward the center • Introductions should be brief - names and titles/functions. Refrain from lengthy introductions of any particular individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of Introductions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are generally done in order of rank within the organization, from low to high: <i>Local dignitaries, non-American Legion guests, Legion Riders, S.A.L. Officers - Local, District, Department, National Auxiliary Officers - Local, District, Department, National American Legion Officers - Local, District, Department, National</i> American Legion Officers are usually introduced in the order by which they're installed into office: <i>Sergeant-at-Arms</i> <i>Service Officer</i> <i>Historian</i> <i>Judge</i> <i>Advocate</i> <i>Chaplain</i> <i>Treasurer</i> <i>Adjutant</i> <i>Vice-Commander</i> <i>Commander</i> <i>If NEC or Alternate NEC is present, this officer should be introduced just prior to the Department Commander</i>

Room Layout Guidelines

*Proper room layout enables the audience to participate fully and serves to establish an appropriate atmosphere for the occasion. The total number of guests at the head table is up to the host organization however a good rule of thumb is that at a minimum the head table should accommodate the following: **National Commanders visitation to the District**, no one lower in office than the District Commander, the District President, the District Detachment Commander and the District Chaplains should be seated. For the **Department Commanders visit** to the county, no one lower than the County Commander, County President, the County Detachment Commander and the County Chaplains should be seated.*



Access for Color Guard



Reserved Tables

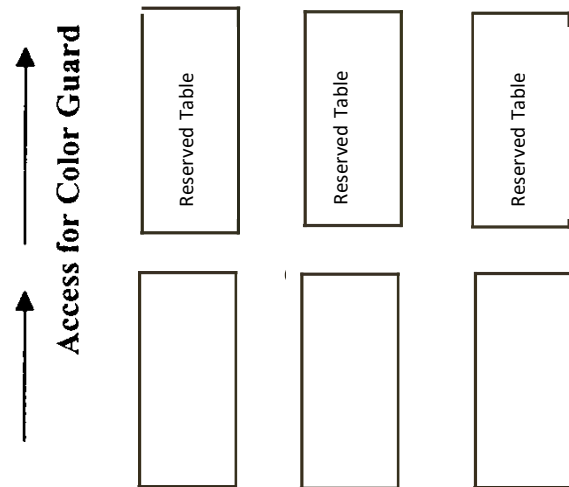
Department Commander's Visitation:

*Past Department Commander(s)
Past Department President(s)
Spouses of Guests at Head Table
Host Post Commander/Spouse
Host Unit President/Spouse
Other honored guests at discretion of Committee,
e.g. Past Department Officers, District Officers, etc.*

National Commander's Visitation:

*Past Department Commander(s)
Past Department President(s)
Spouses of Guests at Head Table
Host County Commander/Spouse
Host County Auxiliary President/Spouse
Other honored guests at discretion of Committee,
e.g. Past Department Officers, etc.*

Access for Color Guard



Notes

If Head Table is raised, must have a front skirt or drape. This arrangement is preferable in any case.

Need wide aisle ways for Color Guard, if Colors are to be posted

If no-smoking areas are provided, signs should indicate where smoking is/is not permitted

Reception/registration table to collect tickets/money should be located outside of main function room

Reserved tables should be indicated with tent card

Allow enough space between the wall and seated guests at the Head table to allow for easy passage of speakers/presenters.

Head Table Configuration Guidelines

The Head Table is a place of distinction. Placement of guests at the Head Table is indicative of their rank within the American Legion and protocol should be followed explicitly.

For Department Commanders Visitation to the County:

- A- County Chaplin
- B- Department Vice-Commander
- C- NEC (if room at Head Table)
- D- District Commander
- E- County Commander
- F- Department Commander
- G- Master of Ceremonies
- H- Lectern
- I- Auxiliary Department President
- J- County Auxiliary President
- K- District Auxiliary President
- L- Department Detachment Commander
- M- County Detachment Commander
- N- District Detachment Commander
- O- Department ALR Director
- P- County Auxiliary Chaplain

Head Table

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Audience

For National Commanders Visitation to the District:

- A- District Chaplain
- B- NEC
- C- Department Vice-Commander
- D- District Commander
- E- Department Adjutant
- F- Department Commander
- G- National Commander
- H- Master of Ceremonies
- I- Lectern
- J- Auxiliary Department President
- K- District Auxiliary President
- L- District Detachment Commander
- M- Detachment Vice-Commander
- N- Department Detachment Commander
- O- Department ALR Director
- P- District Auxiliary Chaplain

Head Table

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Audience

If other distinguished guests should be located at the Head Table, or if another configuration is to be considered, check with the Department Protocol Committee if there are any questions regarding layout or proper position of guests.

Place cards indicating guest's name should be at each place on the Head Table.

Other Distinguished Guests may be located at reserved tables at the discretion of the Committee.

Sample Ticket Layout

Tickets should provide essential information for event attendees and provide a means to record sales and receipts.

Joint Visitation Dinner	
<i>In honor of</i>	
Department Commander John Doe	
Department President Jane Smith	
Detachment Commander William Simpson	
May 14, 1994	
Holiday Inn, Waterloo, NY	
Cocktails: 6 PM - Dinner: 7 PM	
Donation \$22.50 each	No. 174

Notes:

Ticket blanks are generally 2.25" x 3.75"

The word "Complimentary" should be written on complimentary tickets.

Tickets should be serialized to enable record keeping and provide the best possible estimate of final audience size.

Guide for Master of Ceremonies

Program Activity	<i>Comment(s)/Suggested Wording</i>
Call to Order	<i>May I have your attention please? (...pause...)</i>
Entrance of the Head Table and Honored Guest(s)	<p>Distinguished Guests at the Head table may be escorted into the function room at the beginning of the event as a group, reserving the Honored Guest(s) for last.</p> <p><i>Please rise for the entrance of the Head Table, escorted by (name, title).</i></p> <p>Then individually introduce the guest(s) of honor...</p> <p><i>Let us welcome our Honored Guest(s) for this evening (name, title), escorted by (name, title).</i></p>
Salute Colors (if the colors are in place)	<p><i>Please rise to salute the Colors of our Nation. (...pause...)</i></p> <p><i>Right hand salute! (...pause...) Ready, two!</i></p>
Posting Colors (if used)	<p><i>Please rise for the posting of our Nation's Colors. (...pause...)</i></p> <p>As the colors begin to move,</p> <p><i>Right hand salute!</i></p> <p>Salute is held until the Colors are posted, then</p> <p><i>Ready, two!</i></p> <p>Allow color guard time to leave.</p>
Invocation	<p><i>We will have the Invocation delivered by (_____), Chaplain of (_____. Please uncover. After Invocation is delivered.... Thank you, (_____).</i></p>
Pledge of Allegiance	<i>With your hand over your heart, please recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.</i>
National Anthem (if used)	<i>Please join (_____) in the singing of our National Anthem.</i>
POW/MIA Remembrance Service	<p>MC may conduct POW/MIA Service or it may be conducted by another.</p> <p><i>Please remain uncovered while we conduct a service of remembrance for our POW's and MIA's.</i></p> <p>If performed by another...</p> <p><i>This Service will be conducted by (name/title)</i></p>
Welcome	Appropriate brief welcoming remarks by MC

Program Activity	<i>Comment(s)/Suggested Wording</i>
Introduction of Head Table	Brief introduction of Head Table, names and titles/positions only. <i>We are pleased to have with us tonight several distinguished guests seated at our Head Table. Begin at far left of speaker....At my far left we have (1, 2, 3, 4, etc).</i> Then introduce head table from speaker's right. Starting at my far right, we are pleased to have with us (1, 2, 3, 4, etc).
Dinner	<i>Thank you. Please enjoy your dinner.</i> Optional - you may wish to remind male Legionnaires/ALR that they should uncover during the meal.
Introduction of Distinguished Guests	Brief introductions of those seated at Distinguished Guests Table(s), such as spouses not seated at Head Table, Guests not participating in the program, etc. <i>May I have your attention, please? We have several Distinguished Guests with us tonight. I ask that you please stand when I announce your name.</i> <i>Please hold any applause until all of our Distinguished Guests have been introduced</i>
Welcoming Remarks by County or District Commander (depending on what visitation is)	MC will introduce County or District Commander for brief welcoming remarks. <i>We are pleased to have with us this evening (Name/title) who will offer welcoming remarks.</i>
Department ALR Director Remarks	MC will introduce the ALR Director. After The ALR Director remarks, <i>Thank you (name)</i>
S.A.L. District Commander	MC will introduce the S.A.L. District Commander who will in turn introduce the S.A.L Detachment Commander
S.A.L. Detachment Commander Remarks (if applicable)	After S.A.L. Commander's remarks, <i>Thank you, (name)</i>

Order of introductions may vary according to what the visitation is (Department to County or National to District} If it is Department to County then the County Commander, President and Detachment Commander will be at the head table as well and can be included in the order of introductions. If it is National to District, then The District officers will be at the head table and will be in the order. Introductions and remarks of all but the National/Department Commander, President and Detachment Commander should be brief.

Program Activity	<i>Comment(s)/Suggested Wording</i>
County Auxiliary President (If Dept. to County)	MC will introduce County Auxiliary President who will in turn introduce District Auxiliary President
District Auxiliary President	Who will in turn, introduce Department Auxiliary President
Department Auxiliary President's Address	After Department Auxiliary President's Address, <i>Thank you, (name).</i>
County Commander (If Dept. to County)	MC will introduce County Commander who will, in turn, introduce the District Commander
District Commander	District Commander introduces Department Vice Commander who in turn will introduce the Department Commander
Department Commander	If this is a Department Commander's Visitation, the Department Commander will make address here. If this is a National Commander's Visitation, Department Commander will make a speech of introduction for The National Commander.
National Commander (if applicable)	Address by National Commander. Then MC assumes the podium. <i>Thank you (National Commander, name)</i>
Presentation of Gifts	If gifts are presented during the function, the order of presentation is: Department ALR Director, S.A.L Detachment Commander, Department Auxiliary President, Department Commander or National Commander (if applicable).
Benediction	<i>Please stand and uncover for the Benediction to be delivered by (name/title)</i> Benediction Thank You (name).
Salute Colors (if not posted by Color Guard)	<i>Please cover and remain standing as we salute the Colors of our Nation (...pause...) Hand salute! (...pause...) Ready, two!</i>
Retiring of Colors (by Color Guard)	<i>Please cover and remain standing as we retire our Nation's Colors.</i> As the Color Guard removes the flags from the standard <i>Hand salute!</i> Remain at hand salute until Colors reach the back or leave the room. "Ready, two".

Program Activity	Comment(s)/Suggested Wording
Singing of "God Bless America"	<i>Please remain standing and join hands for the singing of "God Bless America".</i>
Closing	<i>This concludes our program for this evening. Thank you for joining us tonight.</i> May add remarks about any pertinent upcoming events, thank you's for involved committees, reminder to drive home safely and soberly, etc.

Please note that the hosting organization has the option to have the honored guests speak first then have the meal after.

POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

The following is a suggested POW/MIA Remembrance Service to be used at American Legion meetings, banquets, luncheons or memorial gatherings in conjunction with the POW/MIA flag draped over an empty chair. The service can be adopted or modified appropriately. Members should remove their caps during this service however the option to have the audience remain standing while the service is conducted is at the discretion of the host organization.

Those who have served, and those currently serving in the uniformed services of the United States, are ever mindful that the sweetness of enduring peace has always been tainted by the bitterness of personal sacrifice. We are compelled to never forget that while we enjoy our daily pleasures, there are others who have endured and may still be enduring the agonies of pain, deprivation and imprisonment.

Before we begin our activities, we pause to recognize our POWs and MIAs.

We call your attention to this small table which occupies a place of dignity and honor. It is set for one, symbolizing the fact that members of our armed forces are missing from our ranks. They are referred to as POWs and MIAs.

We call them comrades. They are unable to be with their loved ones and families, so we join together to pay humble tribute to them, and to bear witness to their continued absence.

The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner, alone against his or her suppressors.

The tablecloth is white, symbolic of the purity of their intentions to respond to their Country's call to arms.

The single rose in the vase signifies the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of the family and friends of our missing comrades who keep faith, while awaiting their return.

The red ribbon on the vase represents an unyielding determination for a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us.

A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate.

The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.

The glass is inverted, they cannot toast with us at this time.

The chair is empty. They are NOT here. The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to the open arms of a grateful nation.

The American flag reminds us that many of them may never return – and have paid the supreme sacrifice to insure our freedom.

Let us pray to the Supreme Commander that all of our comrades will soon be back within our ranks.

Let us remember – and never forget their sacrifice.

May God forever watch over them and protect them and their families.

EXAMPLE OF PROGRAM

2018-2019 Steuben County American Legion Welcomes



Gary M. Schacher
Dept. Commander



Marie Mock
Dept. President



James Coates
Det. Commander

Distinguished Guests

American Legion

Gary M. Schacher, Department Commander
Thomas Schreck, Department Vice Commander
Tim Collmer, 7th District Commander
Jean Williams, Steuben County Commander

American Legion Auxiliary

Marie Mock, Department President
Debi Hammon, 7th District President
Colleen McDaniels, Steuben County President

Sons of American Legion

James Coates, Detachment Commander
Ron Kuczenski, Detachment Vice Commander
Jim Daly, 7th District Detachment Commander
Colin McDaniels, Steuben County Detachment Commander

Program

Welcome and Advancement of Distinguished Guests
Hon. Joseph Latham, Master of Ceremonies

Invocation (remove cover)
Marjorie Wilson, Steuben Co. Chaplain

Pledge Of Allegiance
William Crane, Past Department Vice Commander

POW/MIA Remembrance Service
George Mulhair, Past District Commander

Welcome and Introduction of Head Table
Hon. Joseph Latham, Master of Ceremonies

Dinner (remove cover)

Remarks
Benediction (remove cover)
Steuben County Auxiliary Chaplain

Respect to the Colors

God Bless America (sang by all)

In this example the visitation is the Department to the county. If the visitation is the National Commander to the District you would replace all of the county officers with District officers and include any NEC Members who may be attending. You may wish to include NEC Members at the head table for any visitation if there is room, but always for a National Commanders visit.

Press Release

Otsego county American Legion
Leo Mackin, Commander
279 Cullen Rd.
Richfield Springs, NY 13439

For Immediate Release

Contact Beth Akulin
Phone: (607) ***_****

American Legion New York State Commander, Auxiliary President and Detachment Commander Visit Otsego County

Cooperstown, NY November 23, 2013

The Otsego County American Legion Organization will host a joint visitation by Department Commander Ken Governor, Auxiliary President Barbara Corker and Detachment Commander John Chang on Saturday, November 23, 2013. During the visitation, Ken Governor, Barbara Corker and John Chang will have a lunch at the Clark F. Simmons Post 579 in Cooperstown, and then visit the Baseball Hall of Fame at 1:30 PM. At 7:00 PM there will be a dinner at the Hugick-Purcell-Shepard Post 616, 13 Lake Street, Richfield Springs, NY 13439.

Department Commander Ken Governor is from Rensselaer County and is a Life Member of North Greenbush Memorial Post 1489 and has held the office of Commander for the Department of New York since July 2013. Auxiliary President Barbara Corker was born and raised in the Bronx. She has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary for 34 years. Detachment Commander John Chang is from New York City. During their one-year terms in office, the Department Commander, Auxiliary President and Detachment Commander visit each of the sixty-two counties in New York State to coordinate Legion activities within the state.

The American Legion is an organization formed in 1919 to represent Veterans and to promote patriotism and citizenship in America. Membership is open to men and women who have served in the armed forces during a time of conflict. It is the largest Veterans' organization, having over 2.4 million members nationally. In New York State there are over 79,000 Legionnaires in 860 local posts. The Legion Auxiliary membership consists of mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and/or granddaughters of Veterans who are Legionnaires or, if deceased, would have qualified for Legion membership. The Auxiliary has over 44,000 members in New York State in 547 local units. The Sons of the American Legion is made of male descendents of Legionnaires or, if deceased, would have qualified for Legion Membership. There are approximately 29,000 members in the Detachment in 400 local squadrons.

For information on how you could become a member of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or S.A.L contact an American Legion Post near you or go to www.nylegion.net.

Sample Letter of Invitation

A letter of invitation is a courtesy to prospective guests. It should encourage them to attend and describe the event(s) that will take place and define the role, if any, that the invitee will have. Consider a separate letter for those invitees who will receive a complimentary ticket or for guests who will be requested to participate.

Organization Stationery

Date

Invitee, Title
Street
City State ZIP

*For general invitations, may address invitations by title, e.g.
Past Department Commanders, County Commanders, etc. for general mailing. See
General Visitation Protocol for suggested invitees by position. For invitees receiving
complimentary tickets, seated at Head Table or who are to
speak at the event, suggest individual letters.*

Dear _____,

We are pleased to announce that organization will host event on date at location. We would be honored if you would attend.
For those receiving complimentary tickets -

For your convenience, we have enclosed complimentary tickets for you. For those not receiving complimentary tickets you will need to describe the meal and the cost of the tickets.

Describe event and associated activities such as tours here. Include dates, times, locations, travel directions, cost of ticket(s), if applicable, and any other information which will help invitees to plan to attend.

For those guests staying in our area overnight, we've made arrangements at:

Hotel

Street

City, State, ZIP

Phone

As applicable - Please contact the hotel directly to make reservations for whatever nights you wish to stay.

As applicable - As an Honored Guest, we have arranged for you to be seated at our Head Table, and, *as applicable* - and we would like you to describe speaking responsibility.

Please help us to plan for this event by filling out the attached response form, indicating the activities taking place that day you will be attending, and your meal choice(s) no later than date to:

Name, Event Coordinator

Address

Phone

For those Guests being greeted upon arrival - Please advise us of your arrival and departure plans to enable us to coordinate local transportation. If you have any questions, contact the Event Coordinator.

We look forward to seeing you at event.

Sincerely,

Event Chair

The American Legion

Department of New York
 112 State St., Suite 1300
 Albany, NY 12207
 (518) 463-2215 or (800) 253-4466

Department Commander's County Visitation			
County		Visitation Date(s)	

County Contact(s)		
Commander	Name	
	Street	
	City/State/Zip	
	Home Phone	
	Work Phone	
Other/Alternate	Name/Position	
	Home Phone	
	Work Phone	

Itinerary		Joint Visitation? Y/N
Event	Time(s)	Location/Phone
Lunch		
Press Conference		
Tour		
Dinner		

Lodging		
Hotel/Motel	Name	
	Street	
	City/State/Zip	
	Phone	
Arrival Date:		Departure Date:
Has reservation been confirmed? Y/N		Confirmation Number:

Send copies of this completed summary to:

Department Commander
 Department Adjutant
 Department Vice Commander (this area)
 District Commander
 Department Commander's Aide (this area)

COUNTY: _____

COUNTY LEGION PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING

	(Yes or No)		
	ROOM	LUNCH	DINNER
<i>Department Commander & Guest</i>			
<i>Department Vice Commander & Guest</i>			
<i>District Commander & Guest</i>			
<i>District Vice Commander & Guest</i>			
<i>Department Commander's Aide</i>			
<i>Department Photographer</i>			

COUNTY AUXILIARY PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING

	(Yes or No)		
	ROOM	LUNCH	DINNER
<i>Department President & Guest</i>			
<i>District President & Guest</i>			
<i>Others:</i>			

POST OR COUNTY SQUADRON PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING

	(Yes or No)		
	ROOM	LUNCH	DINNER
<i>Detachment Commander</i>			
<i>SAL District Commander</i>			
<i>Others:</i>			

Legion Cap Etiquette

The American Legion Cap is both symbolic and illustrative to Legionnaires and conveys a distinct message to the general public about American Legion membership. The cap should be decorated in accordance with the guidelines of Resolution 31, July 1967, of The Department of New York. It must be neat and orderly in its appearance.

Women Legionnaires may remain covered at all times, generally following the directives of uniformed military personnel regarding headgear.

Male Legionnaires may wear the Legion Cap at all times during Legion functions except for:

- Religious segments of functions such as Invocations and Benedictions and other prayer
- Memorial to Departed Comrades
- Recital of the Pledge of Allegiance
- Playing of the National Anthem
- As routine courtesy during dining
- During the POW/MIA Remembrance Service

Masters of Ceremony or Meeting Chairs should remind attendees to uncover during the above activities.

Cap over Heart

The Cap should be worn in church only by the Honor Guard or Color Guard while in marching order or standing guard. When returning to or while seated in pews, the Cap should be removed.

Legionnaires not in formation will remove the Cap while in church.

Legionnaires will hold their Cap over their heart in the following instances:

- If marching in formation into church, until seated in the pew and as exiting the church
- Approaching a casket. (Note that the Cap over the heart is a form of salute. If a Legionnaire desires to render a hand salute at the casket of a Departed Comrade, he/she may cover, salute, and then uncover).
- At graveside, during the entire service, except for cold or inclement weather when the Cap should not be doffed
- Religious segments of Legion functions such as Invocations, Benedictions and other prayer
- Pledge of Allegiance (Female Legionnaires will place their hand over their heart if covered)
- National Anthem (Female Legionnaires should render a hand salute and not sing if covered)
- Memorial to Departed Comrade(s)
- POW/MIA Remembrance Service

Cap Embellishments:

Pins, patches and other items should be kept to a minimum and are never placed on the left side (side with the Legion Emblem) of the cap.

Flag Etiquette

Our Nation's Colors are one of the most revered symbols for Legionnaires. We must pay proper respect to the Flag whenever it is encountered. As we approach the Flag or as it approaches us, it is appropriate to render a salute. If under cover (wearing the Legion Cap), a hand salute is given. If not wearing the Legion Cap, recognize the Flag by placing the right hand over the heart. The following are general guidelines. Much more detailed information may be found on the website.

When observing parades, there are often several units carrying our Nation's Colors. As the Flag approaches (approximately 20-30 feet away) render the appropriate salute, holding the salute until the Colors pass. When participating in a parade, as the marching unit approaches stationary Colors, the unit leader should call "eyes right" or "eyes left" (according to the flags location) and order a hand salute until the unit passes the Colors.

At outdoor American Legion functions where the Colors are flying, a hand salute is rendered at the beginning and conclusion of the function. A hand salute is rendered during the hoisting or lowering of Colors, as applicable.

During indoor functions, when our Nation's Colors are to be posted, a hand salute is ordered by the Master of Ceremonies while the Colors are being posted at the beginning of the function and when they are retired at the end of the function.

During indoor functions while Colors are already posted, Legionnaires should render an appropriate salute when exiting and re-entering the meeting room. This should be done at the center of the room or, if that is not practical, at the point closest to the exit while still in view of the flag. Travel to and from the head table should be done around the end opposite the Nation's Colors. This is important for those called to the podium to speak or to receive awards or recognition. Never pass between the Colors and the Commander's station (cutting the flag).

Presentation of Gifts

Utilize the form located on the web site in the resources area (Dept Commander's Gift Form) to record all gifts received at the event. It is advisable to obtain this information prior to the start of the event so that the MC knows if gifts are going to be presented to all of the honored guests. This will prevent them from being called to the podium for receipt of a gift when there is not one.