

**BYLAWS**

**BIG 10 CONFERENCE  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES**

*As Amended on October 21, 2023*

ARTICLE I

NAME, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE

Section 101. This Association of VFW Departments shall be known as the **Big Ten Conference, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States** hereinafter referred to as the **“Conference.”**

Section 102. The purpose of the Conference is to propose recommendations for the good and welfare of the member states, promote unity among the member states, aid and assist the member states, and promote the interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, as declared in the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, and Manual of Procedure thereof.

Section 103. Guiding Documents. The Conference shall be guided by the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (“VFW”).

Section 104. Business. All matters affecting the VFW shall be deemed relevant for discussion and action at Conference meetings.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

Section 201. Membership in the Conference shall be comprised of the following states: **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.**

Section 202. Addition of Members. A State wishing to become a member of the Conference may submit a formal written request for consideration as follows:

- (a) The State’s written request shall be submitted to the Chairman, with a copy to the Secretary-Treasurer, no later than July 1, for the calendar year in which it wishes to be considered for membership; and

- (b) The State's written request shall include a properly executed copy of the resolution approving application to the Conference as adopted by the membership of the applying State at its annual convention; and
- (c) The request for Conference membership shall be provided to all States for review at the National Convention Meeting; and
- (d) The Chairman, with the assistance of the Secretary-Treasurer, will prepare a resolution detailing all pertinent information about the request to become a member of the Conference. This resolution shall be communicated to all States no less than forty-five (45) days prior to the convening of the Annual Meeting; and
- (e) At its Annual Meeting, the Conference shall consider membership requests as the first item of new business; and
- (f) Any motion to accept the petitioning State as a member of the Conference must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the eligible and voting delegates present.

Section 203. After Admission. After admission to the Conference, a new State shall:

- (a) Immediately be afforded the same rights and privileges of other States, and
- (b) Be inserted alphabetically into the rotation determining which State hosts the Annual Meeting. However, the newly admitted State shall not be eligible to host an Annual Meeting for at least three (3) years from the date of their acceptance into the Conference.

Section 204. Withdrawal. Any State may withdraw its membership in the Conference by submitting a written request to the Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer including a properly executed copy of a withdrawal resolution as adopted by their State's membership at its state convention. Said withdrawal resolution shall be submitted to the Conference Secretary no later than July 1 of the calendar year in which the State wishes to withdraw. Upon receipt and proper verification by the Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer, a State shall immediately forfeit all rights and privileges afforded to States, including, without limitation, any financial interest held by the Conference, or claim to any previously paid dues or fees, or monies contributed to any Conference funds.

### ARTICLE III

#### OFFICERS

Section 301. Elected Officers. The Elected Officers of the Conference shall be Chairman; Vice Chairman; Secretary-Treasurer; and Chaplain.

Section 302. Election. The Elected Officers shall be voted upon and installed for the ensuing term of office at the Annual Meeting.

Section 303. Term. The term of Elected Officers shall be for one (1) year, or until their successors are properly installed, whichever occurs later.

Section 304. Duties of Elected Officers. The duties of all Elected Officers shall be guided by the duties of the same titled national officers of the VFW.

Section 305. Vacancies. In case of a vacancy in the office of Chairman, the Vice Chairman shall immediately succeed to the office of Chairman. In the case of vacancy in any other elected office, their successor shall be elected at the next meeting of the Conference, whether regular or special.

Section 306. Removal. If an Elected Officer ceases to be a member in good standing of the VFW, the elected office which they hold will immediately become vacant.

Section 307. Appointed Officers. The Chairman shall appoint any officers so authorized for their national counterpart as per the VFW Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, but at minimum, a Parliamentarian, Guard, and Sergeant-at-Arms for the National Convention Meeting and Annual Meeting.

#### ARTICLE IV

#### COMMITTEES

Section 401. Standing Committees. The Chairman shall be responsible for appointing membership to the following standing committees, unless otherwise noted:

- (a) Steering Committee. The membership of the Steering Committee may be comprised of a representative from each State appointed by their respective State Commander and shall be chaired by the Conference's immediate Past Commander-in-Chief. If this person is unable to serve, the next immediate Past Commander-in-Chief from the Conference shall serve as Chairman.
- (b) Finance Committee. The membership of the Finance Committee shall be comprised of the Quartermasters from each State and shall be chaired by the Secretary-Treasurer.
- (c) Bylaws Committee. The membership of the Bylaws Committee shall be comprised of a representative from each State appointed by their respective State Commander and shall be chaired by the Vice Chairman.

## ARTICLE V

### MEETINGS

Section 501. National Convention Meeting. The Conference shall meet during the National Convention and the Chairman shall coordinate with National Convention officials to secure adequate meeting space.

Section 502. Annual Meeting. The Conference shall meet annually no sooner than the second full weekend of October and no later than the second full weekend of November (“Annual Meeting”) unless a majority of the Conference membership approves scheduling outside of this time range.

Section 503. Rotation of Annual Meeting. Beginning in 2023, the Annual Meeting will be hosted by States on a rotating basis in alphabetical sequence as follows: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin (the “Rotation”).

Section 504. Special Meeting.

- (a) The Chairman may call a special meeting as deemed necessary and shall provide a minimum of fourteen (14) days’ notice to all States.
- (b) If a majority of States submit a written request to the Chairman calling for a special meeting, the Chairman will arrange the meeting, providing a minimum of fourteen (14) days’ notice to all States.

Section 505. Electronic Meeting. An electronic meeting allows States to participate in Conference meetings using technology that allows for participating States to communicate with each other simultaneously. Use of electronic meetings by the Conference shall be authorized, facilitated, and conducted as follows:

- (a) National Convention Meeting: The Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer shall make reasonable efforts with National Convention officials to arrange for use of technology that allows any VFW member from the Conference to attend the meeting.
- (b) Annual Meeting: The Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer shall make reasonable efforts to work with the host State to arrange for use of technology that allows any VFW member from the Conference to attend the meeting.
- (c) Special Meetings: The Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer shall ensure that special meetings shall be conducted in an exclusively electronic format.

- (d) Unless expressly approved by a majority of Conference membership by vote at a Regular Meeting or Special Meeting called for that purpose, no National Convention or Annual Meeting shall be conducted in an exclusively electronic format.
- (e) The same parliamentary procedure and rules of conduct governing an in-person Meeting apply to exclusively electronic formats and combined in-person/electronic formats (“Hybrid”).
- (f) Any member, officer, or delegate who electronically attends the National Convention Meeting or Annual Meeting will not be considered present and eligible to vote, unless the meetings are conducted in an exclusively electronic format, or the Chairman deems them present and eligible to vote due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control preventing their physical attendance.

Section 506. Deviation. A State may request deviation from the Rotation system (“Deviation”). If a State seeks Deviation, they shall:

- (a) Submit a written request for Deviation to the Chairman, with a copy to the Secretary-Treasurer, no later than October 1 of the year preceding the Annual Meeting they are hosting; and
- (b) The request must be signed by the current State Commander and State Senior Vice Commander, and attested to by the State Adjutant; and
- (c) In its request for Deviation, the requesting State shall indicate: (i) the reason(s) for being unable to host; and (ii) indicate whether they waive hosting the Annual Meeting until their sequential turn arises again within the Rotation or they are exchanging their host year with the State who is immediate after them in the Rotation; and
- (d) If the requesting State chooses to relinquish its host duties to another State, their request for Deviation must contain a written agreement between the deviating State and the State that is assuming their host duties. The agreement must be signed by the State Commanders and State Senior Vice Commanders of the two States and must be attested to by their State Adjutants.

## ARTICLE VI

### DELGATES AND VOTING

Section 601. Delegate Votes. Each State shall have five (5) delegate votes.

Section 602. Non-Voting Delegates. Past Commanders-in-Chief, Past State Commanders and Past Conference Chairmen who are members of States of the Conference, and who are not appointed by their States as a voting delegate, shall be considered delegates with a voice but no vote.

Section 603. Quorum. The minimum number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a Conference meeting shall not be less than three (3) voting delegates each from six (6) of the Member States.

Section 604. Roll Call Vote. When a roll call vote is required or is requested by a majority of voting delegates present, the Secretary-Treasurer will assure that the order of voting by the States is determined in a random fashion.

Section 605. Tie Vote. If a tie occurs after all votes have been cast, recorded, and tallied, written ballots will be distributed. Successive rounds of voting will occur via written ballot until a majority vote is achieved. Between any successive votes, a caucus may be requested by a majority of States.

## ARTICLE VII

### DUES

Section 701. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year for the Conference shall be from September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

Section 702. Annual Dues. To support the activities of the Conference, each Member State shall pay annual dues. The annual dues amount shall be set by a majority vote of the States at the National Convention Meeting and shall apply to the ensuing Fiscal Year.

Section 703. Invoicing of Annual Dues. No later than fourteen (14) days after the conclusion of the National Convention Meeting the Secretary-Treasurer shall send an Annual Dues invoice to all States.

Section 704. Payment of Dues. Members shall pay their annual dues to the Secretary-Treasurer no later than October 1.

Section 705. Arrears. A Member who has not paid their Annual Dues in full by October 1 will be prohibited from participation in any Conference business until paid in full.

Section 706. Assessments. Assessments may be levied at any Regular Meeting or Special Meeting called for that purpose. The Conference officers shall determine if a need exists and prepare a resolution detailing all particulars. The resolution must be

forwarded to all Member States no less than thirty (30) days prior to a Regular Meeting or Special Meeting called for that purpose. If deemed necessary, a majority of Member States may elect to waive this thirty (30) day requirement. No assessment may be imposed which is greater than the Annual Dues in effect for that year.

Section 707. Disbursements. Disbursements of Conference monies and property, of any amount, must be authorized by a proper and recorded vote of the Membership.

Section 708. Bookkeeping and Recordkeeping. The Secretary-Treasurer shall:

- (a) Establish a bank account for the Conference under the employer identification number of their department; and
- (b) Receive for proper deposit and securing: all monies, securities, and any other property of value; and
- (c) Create and properly maintain receipts for all distributions of monies and property; and
- (d) Upon vacating office, close the bank account established for receiving Conference monies, and deliver to their successor all monies and property within their possession or control.

Section 709. Annual Budget. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary-Treasurer, in consultation with the Finance Committee, shall prepare a written proposed budget and present it to the States at the Annual Meeting for discussion and adoption.

Section 710. Financial Reports. The Secretary-Treasurer shall present a financial report to the Conference at any Regular Meeting or Special Meeting called for that purpose. This report shall be audited by a committee as appointed or designated by the Chairman.

Section 711. Check Signing. If the Secretary-Treasurer is unable to sign checks on behalf of the Conference due to illness, incapacitation, death, or other reason physically preventing them from doing so, upon notification to the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Quartermaster of the State in which the Secretary-Treasurer is a member, may sign Conference checks on their behalf.

Section 712. Offset Expenses of Conference Elected Officers. To offset the expenses incurred for mandatory attendance, the Secretary-Treasurer shall disburse funds for both the National Convention Meeting and the Annual Meeting to the Elected Officers. These disbursements shall only be made to each of the elected officers after conclusion of the Conference, their confirmed roll-call attendance at all business activities of each of the meetings, and submission of supporting receipts. If any of the elected officers are

otherwise on orders and receiving per diem from national or their department, may not simultaneously claim this offset from the Conference. Additionally, the Secretary-Treasurer shall pay the Annual Meeting registration fees for all Elected Officers.

## ARTICLE VIII

### ENDOSEMENT OF CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL OFFICE

Section 801. Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. The Conference shall endorse their candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief at the National Convention held the year prior to the National Convention in which he or she is presented to the national membership for election.

Section 802. Other National Offices. The Conference nominee for National Chaplain, Surgeon General, and Judge Advocate General, will be endorsed at the National Convention meeting that is held at the same National Convention in which he or she is presented to the national membership for election.

Section 803. Declaration of Candidacy. A Comrade may at any time declare their candidacy for a National Office, regardless of when the election for that office is being held.

## ARTICLE IX

### MISCELLANEOUS

Section 901. Procedure. All Conference meetings shall be guided by the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. Any procedures not explicitly listed in the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure shall be handled by the most current edition of Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised.

Section 902. Notification. Notification to States shall be considered satisfied when an electronic communication is sent to the States' Commander and Adjutant.

Section 903. Written Notice. Written notice shall be defined as printed copy and/or electronic communication.

## ARTICLE X

### AMENDMENTS

Section 1001. Eligibility. Only a State, Elected Officer, or the Bylaws Committee may submit a proposed amendment to these Bylaws.



Section 1002. Amendment Submission Process. The following process shall be followed when proposing amendments to these Bylaws:

- (1) The Bylaws Committee shall submit all received proposed amendments, along with their recommendations and comments, to all States no later than May 1.
- (2) The States shall submit their comments, proposed revisions, or additional proposed amendments to the Chairman no later than five (5) days after the conclusion of their State Convention.
- (3) The Bylaws Committee shall compile all proposed amendments, along with their recommendations and comments to be presented at the National Convention meeting for discussion.
- (4) The Bylaws Committee shall compile the proposed amendments along with their final recommendations and comments and submit to the Chairman for distribution to the States no later than thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting. Any proposed amendments received after this date may not be considered for adoption by the Conference until the following year's Annual Meeting.

Section 1003. Amendment Adoption. An amendment to these Bylaws may only be adopted at an Annual Meeting with two-thirds (2/3) approval by the delegates present and voting.

Section 1004. Adopted Amendment Effective Date. Amendments properly adopted at an Annual Meeting shall become effective on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) of the month immediately following the annual meeting.