

**Founded March 28, 1945  
Avon Old Farms, Connecticut**

**BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION  
BVA NATIONAL BYLAWS**

**Chartered by U.S. Congress  
August 27, 1958**

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## **ARTICLE I**

### **NAME**

**Section 1. The name of this Association pursuant to Public Law 85-769, 85th Congress, U.S. Code, Title 36, 851-868 (72 Stat. 922-927), August 27, 1958, shall be BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION.**

**Section 2. The principal office of the Association shall be located in Washington, District of Columbia, or in such other place as may be determined by the National Board of Directors, and the activities of the Association can and may be conducted in any and all States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Possessions of the United States, or in such other places as the National Board of Directors may deem desirable from time to time.**

**Section 3. The Association shall have in the District of Columbia at all times a designated agent authorized to accept service and process for the Association.**

## **ARTICLE II**

### **OBJECTS AND PURPOSES**

**The objects and purposes of the corporation shall be as follows:**

**a. To promote the welfare of blinded veterans so that, notwithstanding their disabilities, they may take their rightful place in the community and work with their fellow citizens toward the creation of a peaceful world;**

**b. To preserve and strengthen a spirit of fellowship among blinded veterans so that they may give mutual aid and assistance to one another;**

**c. To maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and to encourage loyalty to the Constitution and laws of the**

**United States and of the States in which they reside;**

**d. To be organized and operated as a corporation not-for-profit, no part of the income or assets of which shall inure to the benefit of any of its members, directors, or officers, nor be distributable thereto otherwise than upon dissolution or final liquidation; and such corporation is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable, educational, patriotic, and civic improvement purposes.**

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP, ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP AND HONORARY MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. Any person having been, or being, in the Armed Forces of the United States shall be eligible for Membership if he/she has sustained a substantial impairment of sight or vision, which is service-connected, and as such is hereby termed blind or legally blind and defined as follows:**

**Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees in the better eye.**

**Borderline cases shall be referred to the National Board of Directors for consideration.**

**Section 2. There shall be no discrimination as to race or creed for Membership or Associate Membership in the Association, or for Members or Associate Members holding office or voting for office in**

**the Association.**

**Section 3. Proofs of eligibility for Membership which may be accepted are honorable discharge, retirement, or separation papers from the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard, containing a notation indicating blindness of the applicant was incurred in the line of duty, or a certificate of the finding or determination by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) that the applicant has sustained service-connected blindness as defined in Section 1 above.**

#### **Section 4**

**a. Any person having been, or being, in the Armed Forces of the United States shall be eligible for Associate Membership if he/she has incurred blindness as defined in Section 1 of this Article but not incurred in the line of duty.**

**b. Any Member whose sight improves to such an extent that he/she is no longer eligible for Membership will be retained as an Associate Member if he/she so requests.**

**c. Associate Members shall have all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of Members. They may vote on National issues and hold and vote for National office and for the position of District Director. They may serve as a delegate or alternate from the regional group to the National Convention, and may vote for, and instruct, said delegate(s). They shall be eligible to hold any office in their regional group.**

#### **Section 5**

**a. Honorary Membership may be extended by unanimous vote of the National Board of Directors to individuals who through the office they hold, or the services they have rendered to blinded persons, may be deemed worthy of Honorary Membership.**

**b. Honorary Membership shall be for a period of one (1) year unless otherwise specified.**

**c. Such Honorary Members shall have no direct voice or vote**

of any kind in the affairs of the Association, but may submit suggestions or recommendations for the consideration of the Association and attend meetings.

#### **Section 6**

a. Any person believing himself/herself eligible for Membership or Associate Membership may apply to the Association. Upon verification of the applicant's eligibility and the payment of dues, he/she shall be considered a Member or Associate Member.

b. A Member or Associate Member shall automatically be considered a Member or Associate Member of the regional group in whose jurisdiction he/she resides. Members and Associate Members residing in areas where there are no regional groups shall be Members-at-large and Associate Members-at-large.

c. In the event any application is rejected, the applicant shall not be permitted to submit another application for a period of one (1) year. All applications for Membership and Associate Membership received by regional groups shall be forwarded to National Headquarters within thirty days after receipt.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **OFFICERS**

Section 1. The National Officers of the Association shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Sergeant-at-Arms and a Chaplain.

#### **Section 2**

a. Elections for a term of one (1) year for the officers of the Association, except for that of the offices of National Chaplain and National Sergeant-at-Arms, shall be held at the National Convention.

b. Election of officers shall be by a majority of the Members and Associate Members in good standing present or represented by delegate or proxy. The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

c. A Member or Associate Member who is a paid employee of

**the National Association shall be required to resign from his/her paid position before accepting elective office in the National Association. A Member or Associate Member holding office in the National Association must resign that office before accepting a paid position with the National Association.**

**Section 3. Nominations for the officers of the Association shall be conducted on the floor of the Convention as follows:**

**a. First Business Session:**

**(1) At the appropriate time during the First Business Session, the presiding officer will open the floor for nominations of National officers.**

**(a) All candidates for National office must be in good standing with the Association.**

**(b) A candidate for National office may nominate himself/herself.**

**(c) A candidate for National office may read, or have read for him/her, a short biographical sketch provided the sketch is no longer than one letter-size page in 14-point type.**

**(d) Nominations of National officers may be made by any Member or Associate Member in good standing, seconded by no more than two other Members or Associate Members in good standing.**

**(e) A nominee need not be present on the floor of the Convention to be nominated for National office. However, a letter of acceptance signed by the nominee must be made available to be read on the floor of the Convention at the time of his/her nomination.**

**(f) After the presiding officer has determined that there are no further nominations, he/she shall close the nominations until the election of National officers during the Second Business Session on the last day of the Convention.**

**b. Second Business Session:**

**(1) Nominations of National officers may be reopened at the commencement of the Election of National Officers portion of the agenda for the Second Business Session, or by a simple majority vote**

at any time up to the time of elections. Additional nominations may be made at this time.

(2) When all additional nominations, if any, have been made, the presiding officer shall close the nominations, at which time the election of National Officers shall be carried out.

#### **Section 4**

a. The National Board of Directors shall appoint the National Chaplain and National Sergeant-at-Arms from among those duly qualified Members, Associate Members or Honorary Members.

b. Such appointment shall be for a term of one (1) year and shall be effective on the same date as that of the National Officers elected in accordance with Section 2 of this Article.

**Section 5.** All officers of the Association, District Directors and all officers of all regional groups shall, before assuming the office to which they have been elected or appointed, subscribe to the following Oath of Office:

**"I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the duties of of the Blinded Veterans Association (or \_\_\_\_\_ of the Regional Group) and that I will support, maintain, and abide by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America and the Charter and Bylaws of the Blinded Veterans Association, to the best of my ability, so help me God."**

#### **Section 6**

a. A vacancy in the office of National President shall be filled by naming the National Vice-President to that office.

b. Vacancies occurring among the other National offices shall be filled from among the Members and Associate Members in good standing by a majority vote of a quorum of the members of the BVA



**National Board of Directors present at a meeting of the National Board of Directors called for that purpose. However, a vacancy in the office of National Chaplain or the office of National Sergeant-at-Arms shall be filled from among the Members, Associate Members or Honorary Members in good standing.**

## **ARTICLE V**

### **DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

#### **Section 1. NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

**a. The National President shall be the executive head of the Association with full power to enforce the provisions of the Charter, Bylaws, resolutions and policies adopted by the Members and Associate Members or by the National Board of Directors.**

**b. He/she shall be Chairperson of the National Board of Directors and shall serve ex-officio on all committees appointed by him/her or by any other authority.**

**c. He/she shall have and exercise all the functions especially entrusted to him/her by the Members and Associate Members or by the National Board of Directors and shall perform all duties usually performed by such executive officer.**

**d. The National President shall appoint such committees as may be necessary for the successful operation of the Blinded Veterans Association, and may, in a proper case, and for failure to perform his/her duties, remove such appointed person from such committee and appoint a successor.**

**Section 2. NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT. The National Vice-President shall, during the absence or disability of the National President, have all of the authority and shall perform all of the duties of the National President until the disability of the National President ceases to exist, and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the National President, the National Board of Directors or the Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled.**

### **Section 3. NATIONAL SECRETARY**

a. The National Secretary shall perform all duties assigned to him/her by the National President, the National Board of Directors, or the Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled.

b. The National Board of Directors shall appoint an Assistant National Secretary, who shall be an employee in the National Office, providing that such person shall not be the Assistant National Treasurer, who shall make recordings of all proceedings and keep minutes of all meetings of the Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled and of the National Board of Directors.

c. He/she shall surrender all of his/her books, records, and minutes to his/her successor. The Assistant National Secretary shall sign, together with the Assistant National Treasurer, all checks and vouchers of the Association and keep records thereof.

d. The National Board of Directors may appoint such additional Assistant National Secretaries as may be required to ensure available signatories.

e. The Assistant National Secretaries shall be bonded in a manner, form and amount the National Board of Directors prescribe.

### **Section 4. NATIONAL TREASURER**

a. The National Treasurer shall perform such duties as may be assigned to him/her by the National President, the National Board of Directors or the Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled.

b. The National Board of Directors shall appoint an Assistant National Treasurer, who shall be an employee in the National Office, provided that such person shall not be the Assistant National Secretary, who shall be the custodian of all of the funds of the Association.

(1) He/she shall ensure that correct and complete business books and records are kept within the National Office showing the financial transactions of the Association.

(2) He/she shall cause the funds received by the Association to be deposited in a national bank or depository in which the customers' accounts are insured by an instrumentality of the U.S. Government designated by the National Board of Directors, except that:

(a) Life Membership and Associate Life Membership dues and the Life Membership Fund shall be administered in accordance with Article X of these Bylaws.

(b) The National Board of Directors may establish Endowment Funds and may designate a specified amount of the Association's funds to be invested and to be administered and managed in accordance with Article XI of these Bylaws.

(3) He/she shall sign, together with the Assistant National Secretary, all checks and vouchers disbursing money for the Association.

(4) He/she shall provide financial reports at least quarterly to the National Board of Directors, shall cause the Association's books to be audited by an independent certified public accountant at the close of the fiscal year, and shall send a copy of the audit to the U.S. Congress in compliance with Title 36, U.S. Code, 1102-1103.

c. The National Board of Directors may appoint such additional Assistant National Treasurers as may be required to ensure available signatories.

d. The Assistant National Treasurers shall be bonded in a manner; form and amount the National Board of Directors prescribe, and shall perform such other duties as assigned by the National Board of Directors.

**Section 5. NATIONAL CHAPLAIN.** The National Chaplain may conduct devotional exercises at the National Convention, and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the National President or the National Board of Directors, or the Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled.

**Section 6. NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS**

a. The National Sergeant-at-Arms shall be responsible, under the direction of the National President, for maintaining peace, harmony, and order at all meetings of the National Convention, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned

to him/her by the National President, the National Board of Directors, or the Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled.

b. With the consent of the National President, he/she may appoint another Member, an Associate Member or a non-member as his/her assistant.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **DISTRICT DIRECTORS**

#### **Section 1**

a. The United States and its possessions shall be divided into six (6) Director Districts, to be known as Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, the territorial boundaries of which shall be established at the Winter board meeting in 1994 and each three years thereafter by the National Board of Directors on the basis of the number of Members and Associate Members on November 30, 1993 and each three years thereafter, so that each District will contain as nearly as practicable an equal number of Members and Associate Members.

b. In the event that a change in the territorial boundaries would place a Director in a District other than the one from which he/she was elected, he/she shall serve to the end of his/her duly elected term.

#### **Section 2**

a. Six (6) Directors shall be elected by the Members and Associate Members residing in the six Director Districts above provided for.

b. The Director elected from each Director District shall be a Life Member or Associate Life Member of the Association in good standing residing in the District from which he/she is elected, and only persons with memberships in good standing residing in that District may vote in the election for the Director of that District.

c. Each District shall elect a Director every three (3) years; two (2) Districts shall elect Directors one year; two (2) Districts shall elect Directors the following year; and two (2) Districts shall elect Directors the third year.

**d. District Directors shall be elected to serve three (3) year terms, except as provided for in Section 5 of this Article.**

**Section 3. Elections for Directors from Director Districts shall be conducted by mail by the National Headquarters in accordance with the following procedures:**

**a. The Executive Director shall give written notice to each Member and Associate Member residing in a District in which an election is to be held not less than one hundred and fifty (150) days before the National Convention that nominations for the position of Director in his/her District are open and must be received at BVA Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) within sixty (60) days.**

**b. Nominations must be accompanied by a letter of acceptance from the candidate and a brief biographical sketch.**

**c. A Member or Associate Member may nominate himself/herself.**

**d. Not more than ninety (90) days nor less than seventy (70) days before the National Convention, the Executive Director shall cause to be prepared and mailed to each Member and Associate Member in each District in which an election is to be held a ballot listing the names of candidates for the office of Director from that District, brief biographical sketches of the candidates, and an envelope marked "ballot" and addressed to BVA Headquarters; the ballot return envelope shall have the name of the Member or Associate Member printed on the reverse side.**

**e. Ballots must be returned in the official envelope furnished and postmarked by midnight of the forty-fifth (45th) day preceding the National Convention in order to be considered valid.**

**f. Ballots shall be sent to individuals who become Members or Associate Members after the date specified for mailing of ballots, provided that marked ballots can be returned by the deadline specified in subsection 3e. above.**

**g. Ballot return envelopes shall be held unopened at the Association's Headquarters until thirty-five (35) days before the National Convention.**

**(1) At that time, all ballot return envelopes for a given**

**Director District shall be opened, the ballots extracted, and the votes tabulated without reference to the return envelopes in which the ballots were received, in order to maintain secret ballot procedures insofar as is possible.**

**(2) The candidate receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared elected.**

**h. As soon as the results of an election in a given Director District are known, the Executive Director shall draw up a report on the election, listing the number of votes cast for each candidate and number of invalid ballots. This report shall be sent to the candidates in the given Director District and presented to the National Board of Directors at its next meeting.**

**i. Ballots and ballot return envelopes shall be kept on file at the Association's Headquarters for at least six (6) months following an election in a Director District and shall be available for inspection by any candidate or member of the National Board of Directors.**

**j. In case of a tie vote in a given Director District, runoff elections shall be held in accordance with the above procedures insofar as is applicable.**

**k. In case there is only one (1) candidate for the office of Director from a Director District in which an election is being held, that candidate shall be declared the winner of the election and the above procedures for conducting a mail ballot in that District shall be dispensed with.**

**l. A Member or Associate Member who is a paid employee of the National Organization shall be required to resign from his/her paid position before accepting the office of District Director.**

**m. A Member or Associate Member who holds the office of District Director must resign the position of District Director before accepting paid employment with the National Association.**

**Section 4. Whenever a District Director no longer continues to reside within the jurisdiction of the District from which he/she was elected, except as provided in Section 1 of this Article, a vacancy shall exist in the office of Director of that District.**

## **Section 5**

a. A vacancy occurring in a Director District shall be temporarily filled by a Member or Associate Member from the District in which the vacancy occurs by a majority vote of a quorum of Directors present at a meeting of the National Board of Directors called for that purpose.

b. At the time of the next regular election in any Director District, a special election shall be held in the District in which the vacancy has occurred for the purpose of electing a Director to serve the remainder of the term.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Section 1.** The National Board of Directors shall consist of the National President, National Vice-President, National Secretary, National Treasurer, the six (6) District Directors, and the immediate past National President provided that he/she has served at least one full term in office.

**Section 2.** Members of the National Board of Directors shall hold office for terms corresponding with their terms of office as National Officers and District Directors.

#### **Section 3**

a. The Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled shall be the supreme authority of the Association.

b. Between Conventions, the National Board of Directors shall have the power to act as necessary, except that it shall not have the power to override, veto, or annul laws, bylaws, regulations, or policies adopted by Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled but shall endeavor to the best of its ability to carry out the provisions of all laws, bylaws, regulations, or policies adopted by the Members and Associate Members in Convention assembled.

c. All acts and policies of the National Board of Directors shall be reported to the next National Convention for ratification, rejection

or modification by the Members and Associate Members provided, however, that no rejection or modification by the Members and Associate Members shall be retroactive.

#### **Section 4**

a. The National Board of Directors shall have the power to adopt rules, regulations, and provisions governing the conduct and providing for the supervision of all officers of the Association.

(1) It shall generally supervise and control the work of all the officers of the Association.

(2) Each and every officer of the Association shall be governed by and abide by all of the lawful directions of the National Board of Directors.

b. The National Board of Directors shall designate the bonds required and amounts thereof for the various officers and approve them as in their judgement is deemed necessary.

#### **Section 5**

a. The National Board of Directors shall designate the depository where the funds of the Association shall be held.

b. It shall have the power to allocate the funds of the Association and to enter into contracts with persons, corporations and firms for the purpose of raising funds and for other purposes which it may deem appropriate.

#### **Section 6**

a. The National Board of Directors is authorized to delegate its powers to an Executive Committee of its own members which in its discretion could and would operate for the welfare of the Association, said Committee to consist of at least three (3) members of the National Board of Directors.

b. The National Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint the delegation, if any, to the General Assemblies of the World Veterans' Federation.

**Section 7.** A majority of the Directors shall be present at any meeting of the National Board of Directors in order to constitute a quorum, and the votes of a majority of the Directors so present shall



**be necessary for the transaction of any business.**

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

#### **Section 1**

**a. The National Board of Directors may appoint an Executive Director from among the Membership or Associate Membership of the Association, and he/she shall serve at the pleasure of the National Board of Directors.**

**b. If any officer or Director of the Association is appointed Executive Director, he/she shall resign any other office or position in the Association held by him/her at that time, which resignation must take effect before he/she can assume the position of Executive Director.**

#### **Section 2**

**a. The National Board of Directors may delegate to the Executive Director the authority to carry out any and all of the directives, instructions, and policies lawfully adopted by the National Board of Directors.**

**b. The Executive Director shall have authority and power only as delegated to him/her by the National Board of Directors, and shall be at all times subordinate to the directives of the Board.**

**c. The National Board of Directors shall designate the duties of the Executive Director and fix the amount of his/her compensation or salary.**

#### **Section 3**

**a. The Executive Director may, with the approval of the National Board of Directors, appoint such professional employees to positions as may be authorized by the National Board of Directors.**

**b. Professional employees shall serve at the pleasure of the National Board of Directors.**

c. The Executive Director may employ and discharge non-professional employees for positions authorized by the National Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **NATIONAL CONVENTION**

**Section 1.** There shall be held annually a meeting for the Members and Associate Members, to be known as the National Convention.

**Section 2.** Every Member and Associate Member of the Blinded Veterans Association in good standing shall be eligible to attend and participate in all meetings of the Convention and shall be entitled to one (1) vote when present at meetings or by proxy when absent.

a. If not present or voting by proxy, the vote of the Member or Associate Member will be cast by his/her elected delegate, if any; the proxy must be a Member or Associate Member of the Blinded Veterans Association in good standing.

b. The official National Headquarters Proxy Form, mailed by the National Headquarters, shall be the only proxy form recognized at the National Convention.

c. Proxy forms shall be returned to the National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) postmarked not later than twenty-one (21) days before the date of the Convention in order to be considered valid.

### **Section 3**

a. The National Convention letter shall be considered the Official Notice of the National BVA Convention, and shall be mailed to each Member and Associate Member in good standing and each BVA regional group in good standing no earlier than one hundred (100) days nor later than seventy-five (75) days before the date of the Convention. Such Official Convention Notice shall contain the name of the city, the address in such city where the Convention shall be held, the days and dates of the Convention, and shall also contain a statement to the effect that a member wishing to exercise his/her right

to vote by proxy at the National Convention pursuant to the provisions of Section 2 of Article IX of the BVA National Bylaws may do so by writing or calling the National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) not later than 45 days before the start of the National Convention and requesting an Official BVA Headquarters Proxy Form, and then carrying out the provisions of the Section 2c of Article IX of the National Bylaws.

b. Such notice shall also be given in the official publication of the Blinded Veterans Association for at least two (2) issues prior to the date of holding of such Convention.

**Section 4. At the National Convention, 50% of those Members and Associate Members registering for the Convention and present in person and representing at least three (3) Director Districts shall constitute a quorum.**

**Section 5. In the absence of a quorum, the Convention shall have no authority and may transact no business except to adjourn from hour to hour or from day to day or to a day certain.**

**Section 6. Every regional group shall elect a Member or Associate Member in good standing from its group as its official delegate to the Convention; and such official delegate shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote for each Member and Associate Member in good standing of his/her own regional group, not including Members and Associate Members of his/her own group present and voting or voting by proxy.**

**Section 7. At all National Conventions, the regular order of business shall be as follows:**

- I. Invocation**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Addresses of Welcome and Response**
- IV. Report of the Rules Committee**
- V. Report of the Credentials Committee**

- VI. Roll Call**
- VII. Minutes of the Preceding National Convention**
- VIII. Report of the National Officers and National Board of Directors**
- IX. Necrology Report**
- X. Submission of Resolutions**
- XI. Nomination of National Officers**
- XII. Report of the Resolutions Committee**
- XIII. Unfinished Business**
- XIV. New Business**
- XV. Election of National Officers**
- XVI. Installation of National Officers**
- XVII. Adjournment**

**The above order of business may be changed by a majority vote of the Members and Associate Members present on a motion to suspend rules.**

**Section 8. The National Board of Directors will select the time and place of the next succeeding Convention, and the National Board of Directors shall not change the time and place of holding the Convention except for good cause shown. Good cause is hereby defined as a catastrophe making it impractical to hold the Convention in the recommended city; the inability of the city to provide adequate housing at reasonable rates; or such other emergencies as the National Board of Directors may deem adequate.**

**Section 9**

**a. Approximately ten (10) months in advance of the National Convention the National President shall appoint a National Convention Chairman.**

**b. A bank account will be established by National Headquarters in the name of the Blinded Veterans Association National Convention.**

**(1) All Convention funds will be deposited to this**

account.

(2) The BVA Convention Manager will be authorized to write checks on the account upon request of the National Convention Chairman or the Executive Director.

(3) As a general rule, an effort will be made to balance the income and expenses for the National Convention.

(4) If, after all Convention expenses have been met, a balance remains in the Convention Fund, the first three thousand dollars (\$3,000) of such funds may be distributed to the host regional group, at the discretion of the National Board of Directors.

(5) All additional funds will become part of the BVA General Fund.

c. Within seven (7) months following the Convention, the Convention Manager will submit a detailed financial statement of income and expenses. When this report has been received and examined by the Executive Director and the Board, the convention books will be closed.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **DUES**

#### **Section 1. Annual Membership and Associate Membership Dues**

a. During the period September 1, 2016 to August 1, 2017 there shall be no Annual Dues.

#### **Section 2. Life and Associate Life Membership Dues**

a. Life Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 1 of these Bylaws, and Associate Life Membership dues for veterans meeting the requirements of Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, shall be \$20.00.

(1) Individuals paying to Life or Associate Life Membership may also pay \$20.00 to participate in this incentive program.

(2) Individuals paying to Life or Associate Life Membership

**principle already paid shall be placed in the Life Membership Fund.**

**b. Any Life or Associate Life Member who has died shall have his/her membership continued in memoriam unto perpetuity. A roster of perpetual Life and Associate Life Members shall be maintained at the National Headquarters.**

**(3) Should an application for Membership or Associate Membership be rejected, dues or application fees paid by the applicant shall be refunded and his/her application shall not be entertained again for a period of one (1) year.**

**d. Life and Associate Life Membership dues shall be paid to the National Association and shall be placed in a Life Membership Fund, and the net income earned in dividends and interest from the Life Membership Fund shall be divided among the various regional groups in good standing, with 90% to the Life Membership Fund and 10% to the BVA General Fund.**

**c. The Board of Director's has the authority to periodically offer special promotions to stimulate the recruitment of members and associate members.**

**d. The Life Membership Fund shall be administered by a Board of Trustees, consisting of six (6) individuals appointed by the National President with the advice and consent of the National Board of Directors.**

**(1) One (1) trustee shall be the National Controller of the National Headquarters, and not less than one-half (1/2) of the trustees shall be Members or Associate Members of the Blinded Veterans Association with at least one (1) being on the National Board of Directors.**

**(2) The terms of office shall be three (3) years, with two (2) trustees appointed three (3) year terms each year.**

**(3) The National President shall designate one (1) of the trustees as Chairperson.**

**(4) The Life Membership Fund Board of Trustees shall elect such other officers it may deem necessary and shall adopt rules of procedure governing the investment and distribution of funds, such rules of procedure to be subject to approval by the National Board of Directors. The Life Membership Fund Board of Trustees and the National Board of Directors shall be the exclusive determiners of the**

rules governing the investment and distribution of funds, and, notwithstanding Article VII, Section 3 of these Bylaws, except for an amendment to these Bylaws, no law, regulation or policy passed by the membership of the Association in Convention assembled or otherwise shall govern how such funds are invested or distributed.

(5) The Board of Trustees shall have the power to buy and sell securities. In so doing, the Board of Trustees shall have the power to engage a Corporate Investment Manager and to give such Manager discretionary authority to buy and sell securities for the Investment Account of the Life Membership Fund.

### **Section 3. Regional Group Dues**

a. Payment of dues for membership in the National Association automatically enrolls a Member, Associate Member, Life Member or Associate Life Member into the regional group having jurisdiction over the area of his/her residence without payment of additional dues to that regional group.

b. A regional group shall not levy any additional assessment upon its Members, Associate Members, Life Members or Associate Life Members as a requirement for Membership or Associate Membership in the group.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **FINANCES AND INVESTMENTS**

#### **Section 1**

a. An Investment Fund may be established by the National Board of Directors for the purpose of investing specifically designated funds of the Association.

b. The National Board of Directors shall set the amount of funds to be invested, and they shall also ensure that sufficient reserves are kept; the reserve amount shall not be less than the current year's budget (other than direct-mail expenses).

## **Section 2**

**a. The Investment Fund shall be administered and managed by a Board of Trustees, consisting of six (6) individuals appointed by the National President with the advice and consent of the National Board of Directors.**

**b. One such individual--the BVA Controller--shall be a permanent member of the Investment Fund Board of Trustees. Not less than three (3) of the trustees shall be Members or Associate Members of the Blinded Veterans Association with at least one (1) of the three trustees being on the National Board of Directors.**

**c. The terms of office for the trustees shall be three (3) years, with two (2) trustees being appointed to three (3) year terms each year.**

**Section 3. The National President shall designate one (1) member as Chairperson of the Investment Fund Board of Trustees, and its members shall elect such other officers as they may deem necessary and shall adopt rules of procedure governing the investment of funds, such rules of procedure to be subject to approval by the National Board of Directors.**

**Section 4. The Investment Fund Board of Trustees shall have the power to buy and sell securities. In so doing, the Investment Fund Board of Trustees shall have the power to engage a Corporate Investment Manager and to give such Manager discretionary authority, within the guidelines established by them and approved by the National Board of Directors, to buy and sell securities for the enhancement of the Association's Investment Account.**

## **Section 5.**

**a. The National Board of Directors is authorized to establish endowment funds to benefit the Scholarship Fund, the Field Service Program, Eye Medical Research and such other charitable programs and activities as may be consistent with the purposes and mission of this organization.**

**b. Endowment funds may be administered as subgroups of the Investment Fund of this organization or may be administered**



separately at the discretion of the National Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **REPRESENTATION**

The Association, either through the National Convention or the National Board of Directors, may appoint a delegate or delegates to national or international conferences (however they may be named or called) which conferences aim to achieve objectives consistent with those of this Association.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **POLICY**

The policy of the Association shall be determined by the National Convention, and shall be non-sectarian and non-partisan.

## **ARTICLE XIV**

### **REGIONAL GROUPS**

#### **Section 1**

a. The Association shall have the power to organize affiliate groups to be known as regional groups; to issue, revoke, and amend their charters; to discipline their officers and members; to regulate their elections; to fix their dues; and, generally, to regulate their activities and the conduct of their affairs.

b. It shall be the policy of the Blinded Veterans Association that regional groups shall be allowed the greatest amount of freedom of action and liberty consistent with reasonable control by the National Authority.

**Section 2. Charters of new regional groups may be issued on the accepted application of five (5) or more Members and/or Associate Members in any area in which regional groups do not exist. The Charter issued to any new regional group must contain the name of the State (or geographic area) in which the regional group is organized.**

**Section 3. When, in the opinion of the National Board of Directors, it would be to the best advantage of the Members and Associate Members located within the jurisdiction of any existing regional group to divide such group area into two (2) or more new groups, the Board may take such action with the consent of the regional group concerned and may designate the area of jurisdiction of the new regional group.**

**a. Since this action will require an Amendment to the Regional Group's Bylaws approval of the split requires a two-thirds vote of the membership assembled to conduct such business.**

#### **Section 4**

**a. When, in the opinion of the National Board of Directors, the best interests of the Members and Associate Members of two (2) or more regional groups will be served thereby, the National Board of Directors may consolidate any two (2) or more regional groups with the consent of the active group or groups.**

**b. If one (1) or more groups become inactive, this action may be taken with the consent of the active group or groups.**

**c. In the event of such consolidation, all funds and records of the consolidated groups shall be delivered to the regional group formed by the consolidation.**

#### **Section 5**

**a. Any group of ten (10) or more Members and/or Associate Members in good standing with the National Organization may incorporate without the permission of the National Organization.**

**b. No group of less than ten (10) Members and/or Associate Members may incorporate without the permission of the National Board of Directors provided, however, no group shall incorporate unless and until it has been in existence for at least a one-year period.**

## **Section 6**

**a. The National Board of Directors may cause any regional group to be investigated; and if such investigation establishes the fact or facts tending to prove that the regional group has willfully violated any of the provisions of these Bylaws, or is otherwise disqualified to continue as a affiliate body of the Blinded Veterans Association, the National Board of Directors may revoke the Charter of such affiliate body.**

**b. Such investigation can be held only after reasonable notice to the Members and Associate Members, and all of the proceedings of the investigation shall be open to any Member and/or Associate Member of the Blinded Veterans Association.**

**c. Any decision of the National Board of Directors adverse to a regional group may be appealed to the next National Convention.**

**Section 7. Inherent in the revocation of any regional group charter is the loss of permission to use the name "Blinded Veterans Association."**

## **Section 8**

**a. In the event of the revocation of the Charter of any affiliate regional group, all of the property of such group, including all of its books, records, equipment, and funds, shall be delivered to the National Association to be held in trust by such National Association for a period of at least two (2) years.**

**b. If, within such two (2) year period, a new group shall be organized in the region formerly occupied by the group whose Charter has been revoked, then all such property, books, records, equipment, and funds shall be delivered to and become the property of the new group so organized.**

**c. If, after a five (5) year period has elapsed following the original Charter revocation, the group whose Charter was revoked has not been reorganized nor has a new group been formed in the region formerly occupied by the group whose Charter was revoked, then the following administrative actions shall be implemented by the**

**National Board of Directors with respect to the property, books, records, equipment and funds of the group whose Charter was revoked:**

**(1) All books and records shall be relegated to the archives of the National Association.**

**(2) All property and equipment shall be disposed of as determined by the National Board of Directors.**

**(3) All funds and other monies of the group shall permanently revert to the General Fund of the National Association.**

**Section 9. The National Board of Directors may establish and adopt rules and regulations governing regional groups, and otherwise have supervision and authority over all affiliate or regional groups.**

#### **Section 10**

**a. Immediately after its organization, each new regional group shall elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer (provided that the group, in its discretion, may combine the offices of Secretary and Treasurer), and other officers from among its Members and/or Associate Members considered necessary for its operation and shall forthwith adopt and forward to BVA National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) bylaws for its government and control.**

**(1) Such bylaws shall not be effective unless or until approved by the National Board of Directors.**

**(2) No bylaws, or provisions thereof, not required of all regional groups under the same or similar circumstances, shall be required of any one regional group.**

**b. To facilitate efficiency and good communications, a regional group shall submit an up-to-date listing of its officers (to include name, office held, address and telephone number with area code) to BVA Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) immediately after its initial organization, and thereafter within thirty (30) days after an election of officers or any change of officer(s) for any reason.**

**Section 11. All meetings at which regional group business is conducted, including the election of regional group officers, the election and instruction of delegates to the National Convention, the**

**establishment of regional group policies and programs, and the spending of regional group funds, must be held in a location within the regional group's territorial boundaries as set forth in the regional group's Charter, issued pursuant to this Article XIV.**

## **Section 12**

**a. Each regional group shall be entitled to elect a delegate to the National Convention from among its Members and Associate Members in good standing and to instruct that delegate as to voting for or against any given subject, or for or against any particular candidate or candidates for office.**

**b. All regional groups are required to inform their Members and Associate Members, in writing, of the date/time/location of all regional group meetings. This specifically includes the meeting at which balloting will take place for the purpose of electing a delegate to the BVA National Convention and instructing said delegate as to candidates for National office and other issues.**

**(1) A copy of the notice of meeting to elect and instruct delegates shall be sent to National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) at the same time it is mailed to the Members and Associate Members. Failure to submit subject notice to the National Headquarters may result in the regional group's delegation not being seated at the National Convention.**

**(2) In no instance shall notice be less than forty (40) days prior to the National Convention, or less than ten (10) days prior to that regional group meeting.**

**(3) All ballots cast in writing, in person, or by proxy must be counted at that regional group meeting.**

**c. Credentials, certifying to the election of the regional group delegate, and instructions to him/her shall be in writing, signed by the regional group president, authenticated by the secretary, and in triplicate.**

**(1) One (1) copy of such credentials and instructions shall be delivered to the delegate prior to the start of the National Convention.**

(2) One (1) copy shall be mailed to the National Secretary at the National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) postmarked not later than twenty-one (21) days prior to the National Convention.

(3) One (1) copy shall be retained in the regional group files.

d. When such delegate has been so instructed, he/she must vote in accordance with his/her instructions; and if he/she refuses to do so, the National Secretary shall cast a ballot for him/her in the name of the regional group issuing such instructions.

### **Section 13**

a. In order to be recognized by the Blinded Veterans Association as a regional group in good standing, a regional group shall:

(1) Meet at least once during each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

(2) Submit a copy of the minutes of its meeting(s) to National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) within sixty (60) days of such meeting(s).

(3) Submit an annual financial statement to National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) on the forms provided for that purpose within three (3) months following the end of the fiscal year (not later than September 30).

(4) Comply at all times with the BVA National Bylaws, as amended.

(5) Comply with all written directives and other communiqués of the National Headquarters in a timely manner.

b. A regional group which fails to comply with any of the provisions of subparagraph a above may be placed in a "NOT IN GOOD STANDING" status by the BVA National Board of Directors/National Headquarters. A written warning will be issued by the National Headquarters thirty (30) days prior to such action being taken.

(1) A regional group which has been placed in a "NOT IN GOOD STANDING" status will be officially notified in writing of such administrative action by the BVA National Headquarters (Administrative Director).

**(2) The following administrative sanctions shall be implemented by the National Board of Directors/National Headquarters against any BVA regional group, which is placed in a "NOT IN GOOD STANDING" status:**

**(a) The group's delegation will not be seated at the BVA National Convention, and accordingly, the group's delegate will be precluded from casting any vote on the floor of the Convention.**

**(b) The group's annual Life Membership Fund dividend/interest apportionment and quarterly dues apportionment's will be withheld by the National Headquarters until such time as the group is returned to a "GOOD STANDING" status by the National Board of Directors/National Headquarters.**

**(3) A regional group will be officially notified in writing by the BVA National Headquarters (Administrative Director) at such time as it is returned to a "GOOD STANDING" status.**

**c. Regional group program activities shall be left to the discretion of the individual regional groups.**

**d. Regional groups shall establish bank accounts in the name of the regional group and are encouraged to bond the account signatories.**

**e. In advance of undertaking any fund-raising, other than fund-raising conducted within the regional group involving no outside party and as described in subparagraph f. below, regional groups shall submit a program budget, and plan of fund-raising activities to the National Board of Directors for approval.**

**(1) Written approval from the National Board of Directors shall be required before such fund-raising activities are initiated.**

**(2) The regional groups shall be notified of the action of the National Board of Directors within sixty (60) days of submission of the fund-raising plan.**

**(3) The advice of the Executive Director or the Administrative Director of the National Organization shall be obtained before submitting such fund-raising plans.**

**f. As specified in this subparagraph, regional groups planning limited, within-group fund-raising projects, may by letter or telephone, obtain approval of the fund-raising project from the**

**Executive Director or the Administrative Director of the National Organization.**

**(1) Fund-raising activities authorized under this subparagraph would include only those projects carried out by members of the regional group and which involve no outside party in any manner.**

**(2) In carrying out fund-raising projects covered by this subparagraph, the words 'Blinded Veterans Association' or 'BVA' shall be used only as they appear in the official regional group name.**

**(3) Examples of fund-raising projects covered by this subparagraph would be:**

**(a) soliciting the regional group membership for cash and equipment donations to support regional group volunteer programs;**

**(b) selling raffle tickets at regional group meetings;**  
**(c) auctioning donated items at regional group meetings;**

**(d) holding yard sales or garage sales of donated items; and**

**(e) selling tickets to regional group picnics, dances and similar events conducted solely by the regional group.**

**g. Regional groups shall obtain prior approval from the National Board of Directors before acting on Federal legislation.**

**h. Regional groups may work for legislation in their state legislatures, provided that all regional groups in a state agree on the action to be taken.**

## **ARTICLE XV**

### **DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

**Section 1. Any Member or Associate Member may be tried for violations of the provisions of Section 2 of this Article, and if found guilty, may be publicly reprimanded, fined not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00), suspended from Membership or Associate Membership or expelled from the Blinded Veterans Association.**



**Section 2. Any officer of the Association or officer of a regional group may be removed from his/her office and may be subjected to the sanctions set forth in Section 1 of this Article, and any Member or Associate Member may be subjected to the sanctions set forth in Section 1 of this Article for:**

**a. A misappropriation of funds belonging to the Association or to a regional group.**

**b. A willful violation of the Bylaws of the Association or of a regional group, or the rules, regulations, and mandates of the National Board of Directors, or of the governing body of a regional group, or of the Members and Associate Members of the Association or of the Members and Associate Members of a regional group as expressed by majority vote.**

**c. A willful refusal to obey the lawful instructions of a superior officer, resulting in, or threatening to result in, detriment to the Association, a regional group, or its Members or Associate Members or its funds.**

**d. Conviction of a felony or misconduct involving moral turpitude.**

**e. Willfully and wrongfully creating gross dissension or disorder in any meeting.**

**f. Other misconduct tending to bring the National Association or a regional group into disrepute.**

**g. Becoming a professional beggar.**

**h. Willfully joining, or knowingly remaining a member of any lodge, party, assembly, or organization advocating the overthrow or teaching the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence.**

## **ARTICLE XVI**

### **TRIAL PROCEDURE**

**Section 1. Should any officer, Member or Associate Member of the Association be accused of misconduct, such accusation shall be**

reduced to writing and signed by a Member or Associate Member. Such written charges, before they may be filed or considered, shall

bear the following endorsement, signed by some other Member or Associate Member, to wit:

"I \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby certify that I have carefully read, or heard read to me by some person other than the accuser, the foregoing charges, and that after careful consideration of such charges, based upon facts made known to me, I am convinced that proper cause exists for the consideration of such charges by proper authorities of the Blinded Veterans Association."

## **Section 2**

a. Immediately upon receipt of any such charges so endorsed, the National Secretary shall deliver a copy thereof to the accused by having such copy served upon the accused by some reliable person or by registered mail.

b. If the service is made otherwise than by registered mail, proof thereof must be shown and attached to the original charges by the person making such service.

**Section 3.** Within twenty (20) days following the service upon him/ her of such charges, the accused may make a written answer of denial in whole or part of such charges, or may admit such charges in writing.

**Section 4.** Within twenty (20) days following the answer of the accused, which answer must be delivered personally by the accused or by registered mail to the National Secretary, the National Board of Directors, or if they are not available, then the National President, shall appoint a committee of three Members and/or Associate

**Members to hear evidence in support of such charges and any evidence which the accused may care to submit in his/her defense, and to determine from such evidence the truth or falsity of such charges.**

**a. If such charges are proven or partly proven, such trial committee shall by a majority vote first determine whether such charges as proven constitute a violation of the laws of the Association.**

**b. If they find that such proof does show that the accused is guilty of a violation of the laws of the Association, they shall find him/her guilty and fix his/her punishment.**

**c. The Member or Associate Member shall be tried in the vicinity of his/her own regional group, or if not a Member or Associate Member of a regional group, in the vicinity of the nearest regional group.**

#### **Section 5**

**a. Whenever possible, the trial committee shall include an attorney, but not necessarily an attorney in the jurisdiction where the trial is to be held.**

**b. If a Member or Associate Member who is an attorney is available and is serving on the committee, he/she shall be the legal advisor to the committee and the chairperson thereof.**

**Section 6. Members or Associate Members against whom charges are pending shall not be permitted to resign their Membership or Associate Membership.**

**Section 7. All procedures at such hearing shall be, as nearly as may be, in compliance with the rules of evidence in non-jury cases adopted by the courts in the place where the trial is held.**

**Section 8. The accused shall have the right to be represented by an attorney of his/her own choice.**

**Section 9. If the accused is found guilty, he/she may have the right of appeal to the next National Convention.**

**Section 10. If such charges are proved to be false, or are not proved to be true, the committee shall so find and in that event shall determine whether the charges were maliciously made and without foundation in fact; and if they find that such charges were maliciously made, and were not found in fact, then the trial committee may reprimand, fine not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) or suspend from Membership or Associate Membership for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days, the person making such charges.**

**Section 11. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent any regional group from adopting bylaws providing for similar procedure within its own regional group, not inconsistent with the provisions herein contained.**

## **ARTICLE XVII**

### **AUXILIARY**

**Section 1. An auxiliary to the Blinded Veterans Association may be established, such to be known as the Blinded Veterans Association Auxiliary.**

**Section 2. Membership in the Auxiliary shall consist of families and friends of blinded veterans.**

**Section 3. The Auxiliary shall adopt bylaws for its government and control which shall not be effective unless or until approved by the National Board of Directors.**

**Section 4. The actions of the Auxiliary, to include publicity, shall not conflict with the Bylaws of the Blinded Veterans Association or with the policies and resolutions established by the Blinded Veterans Association in Convention assembled or by the National Board of Directors.**

## **ARTICLE XVIII**

### **BUILDING FUND**

**Section 1.** The National Board of Directors may establish a Building Fund for the purpose of constructing or purchasing a building for the Association's National Headquarters.

**Section 2.** The Building Fund shall be maintained separately from other Association funds and kept in non-speculative, interest-bearing investments or accounts, as designated by the National Board of Directors.

**Section 3.** The principal and income of the Building Fund shall be used only for expenses related directly to the purpose of the Fund.

## **ARTICLE XIX**

### **AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS/PETITION TO U.S. CONGRESS TO AMEND CHARTER**

#### **Section 1**

**a.** These Bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at any National Convention.

**b.** Proposed amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted in writing to the National Secretary at the National Headquarters (Attn: Administrative Director) postmarked no later than ninety (90) days before the National Convention.

**(1)** A copy of all such proposed amendments shall be made and distributed to the Members and Associate Members no earlier than ninety (90) days nor later than forty-five (45) days before the National Convention.

**(2)** Amendments of an emergency nature may be submitted on the opening day of the National Convention with unanimous consent of the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee.

**c.** No such amendment may change the basic charitable purposes of the Association as set forth in the Charter and these

## **Bylaws.**

**Section 2. These Bylaws may also be amended by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast in mail referendum provided that a majority of the Members and Associate Members has voted.**

### **Section 3.**

**a. BVA is an organization whose Charter was granted by an Act of the U.S. Congress (72 Stat. 922 (August 27, 1958)). Section 18 of the Act specifically reserves to Congress the right to alter, amend, or repeal subject Charter.**

**b. A petition to the U.S. congress to alter or amend the BVA Charter may be submitted, and shall be processed, in accordance with the procedures set forth in subparagraphs b and c of Section 1 above.**

**c. Such petition may not be considered by mail referendum.**

## **ARTICLE XX**

### **ASSETS UPON DISSOLUTION OR LIQUIDATION**

**Upon final dissolution or liquidation of the corporation and after discharge or satisfaction of all outstanding obligations and liabilities the remaining assets of the corporation shall be transferred to the Department of Veteran's Affairs General Post Fund to be applied to the care and comfort of the blinded veterans.**

## **ARTICLE XXI**

### **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

**"Roberts' Rules of Order, Newly Revised" shall govern this Association in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with these Bylaws.**

**Administrative footnote: This edition of the BVA National Bylaws incorporates amendments approved by the following BVA National Conventions on the respective dates indicated:**

- 46th BVA National Convention, Reno, Nevada, August 24, 1991;
- 47th BVA National Convention, Nashville, Tennessee, August 15, 1992;
- 48th BVA National Convention, Tucson, Arizona, August 14, 1993;
- 49th BVA National Convention, Cincinnati, Ohio, August 27, 1994;
- 50th BVA National Convention, Arlington, Virginia, August 26, 1995;
- 51st BVA National Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, August 17, 1996;
- 52nd BVA National Convention, Reno, Nevada, August 23, 1997;
- 53rd BVA National Convention, Itasca, Illinois, August 15, 1998;
- 58<sup>th</sup> BVA National Convention, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, August 30, 2003;
- 59<sup>th</sup> BVA National Convention, Reno, Nevada, August 14, 2004;
- 61<sup>st</sup> BVA National Convention, Buffalo, New York, August 19, 2006;
- 63<sup>rd</sup> BVA National Convention, Phoenix, Arizona, August 13, 2008 and
- 64<sup>th</sup> BVA National Convention, Portland, Oregon, August 22, 2009;
- 65<sup>th</sup> BVA National Convention, Arlington, Virginia, August 28, 2010
- 66<sup>th</sup> BVA National Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada, August 20, 2011
- 67<sup>th</sup> BVA National Convention, Galveston, Texas, August 23, 2012

- **69<sup>th</sup> BVA National Convention, Sparks, Nevada, August 21, 2014;**
- **71<sup>st</sup> BVA National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 26, 2016**