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**The Great War Veterans'
Association of Canada**



Constitution

as adopted by

The Annual Convention

Held in Toronto

1918

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The Great War Veterans' Association of Canada

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1.

Aims and Objects of The Great War Veterans' Association of Canada

(a) To perpetuate the close and kindly ties of mutual service in the Great War, the recollections and association of that experience, and to maintain proper standards of dignity and honour between all returned soldiers.

(b) To preserve the memory and records of those who suffered and died for the nation. To see to the erection of monuments to their valor; the provision of suitable burial places; and the establishment of an annual memorial day.

(c) To ensure that proper provision is made for the due care of the sick, wounded and needy among those who have served; including reasonable pensions, employment for such as are capable, soldiers' homes, medical care, and equitable provision for dependent families of enlisted men.

(d) To constantly inculcate loyalty to Canada and the Empire and unstinted service in their interests.

(e) To guard carefully the good name, interests and the standing of our comrades still overseas, and to which they should be entitled upon their return.

(f) To impress upon its members, that they are to continue in their services to Canada as citizens, the same spirit of sacrifice and loyalty which they have shown to Canada and the Empire as soldiers, and to remain as members of the Association, non-sectarian and non-partisan.

(g) To establish, maintain and operate clubs, club-rooms, hospitals, employment and information bureaus, industrial and other schools and institutions, libraries and establishments for the benefit, promotion and advancement generally of the interests of soldiers, and to furnish, stock and equip the same in such manner as the Association may determine.

(h) To establish, organize and regulate Provincial and local bodies or commands and branches in convenient centres throughout Canada.

(i) To raise funds for all purposes of the Association by fees from members, by obtaining public and private grants and by various forms of amusement, entertainment or instruction, and otherwise as the Association may determine.

(j) To promote recruiting and enlistment and to assist forces on active service by operating hospitals, convalescent homes, canteens and other like institutions either within or without Canada.

(k) To do all such other lawful acts and things relative or incidental to the said objects as may be found necessary or expedient.

(l) To take, purchase, hold and acquire any real or personal property to be held, if desired, by any Provin-

cial or local command or branch in such manner and subject to such rights and liabilities as are hereinafter more particularly set forth.

ARTICLE II.

Organization

1. Organization.

The organization shall consist of the Dominion Command and subordinate to it the Provincial Commands and local branches.

2. Dominion Command.

The Dominion Command shall be the supreme legislative and directing body of the Association.

3. Dominion Convention.

The powers of the Dominion Command shall be exercised in the first place by the Dominion convention, which shall meet annually at a place and time settled by vote of the next previous meeting.

4. Dominion Executive.

In the recess of the convention, the powers of the Dominion Command shall be exercised by the Dominion executive, which shall consist of the Dominion officers elected by the annual convention to wit:—The president and first and second vice-presidents, and one representative from every Province which representative shall be elected at the annual meeting of the convention by the vote only of the delegates from the Province that he is to represent.

5. General Powers.

The Dominion executive shall have power to perform and carry to completion work entrusted to it by the annual convention or this constitution, to fill all vacancies arising during the recess, to supply all omissions left undone by the convention and generally to enact rules and regulations governing the business of the Association not inconsistent with this constitution or the expressed will of the convention. Provided such rules and regulations shall be faithfully reported to the next convention and shall cease to be operative after said convention unless confirmed thereby.

6. Issue of Charters.

The right to charter all subordinate commands and branches remains in the Dominion Command. All local branches shall be members of the Provincial Command, where such Provincial Command exists, before receiving a charter from the Dominion Command.

7. Organizing Work.

The work of organizing new commands or branches rests in the first place with the Dominion executive which may from time to time delegate any portion of this work to any subordinate command and also resume the same, as to the Dominion executive may seem in the interests of the Association.

8. Provincial Command.

Upon request of a majority of the branches in a Province, a Provincial Command may be chartered which shall operate under such Provincial constitution and laws as not being inconsistent with this constitution shall be adopted by a Provincial convention and its clauses confirmed by the Dominion executive.

9. *Constitutional Dispute.*

Any clause of a Provincial constitution not confirmed by the Dominion executive shall not be operative but may be appealed by the Provincial executive to the next Dominion convention for final settlement.

10. *Sphere of Dominion Command.*

Otherwise than by way of recommendation privately communicated to its immediately superior command, no other body than the Dominion Command shall deal with matters of national import.

11. *Sphere of Provincial Command.*

In cases where there is a Provincial Command, then otherwise than by way of recommendation privately communicated to a Provincial Command, no other than a Provincial Command shall deal with matters of Provincial import.

12. *Necessary Powers Implied.*

Except as expressly limited by this Constitution all commands and branches shall be deemed to have all necessary powers for the conduct of their affairs, and for forwarding the aims and objects of the Association but always within the confines of their respective spheres of action.

ARTICLE III.

Finance

13. *Dominion per capita Tax.*

For the support and maintenance of the Dominion Command there shall be levied a per capita tax on each and every member of the whole Association throughout Canada, the amount of which shall be fixed annually

by the annual convention. This tax shall be paid out of the general fund of every local branch and remitted in quarterly payments directly to the office of the Dominion Command and shall be calculated on the number of members in the branch not more than three months in arrears.

14. Provincial per capita Tax.

For the support and maintenance of the Provincial Command (when existent) there shall be levied a per capita tax on each and every member of the whole Provincial body, the amount of which shall be fixed by the Provincial convention. This tax shall be paid out of the general fund of every local branch in the province and remitted in quarterly payments directly to the office of the Provincial Command, and shall be calculated on the number of members in the branch not more than three months in arrears.

ARTICLE IV.

Salaries and Remuneration

15. No Salaries to Executive.

No salary or remuneration shall be paid to any member of the Dominion or any Provincial executive. And no such member shall outside of his authorized expenses receive any money for his services. No salaried officer of any command or branch shall sit on the Dominion executive as a member thereof while drawing a salary from said command or branch.

16. Salaried Officers.

Salaried officers of all commands and branches such as the secretary or secretary-treasurer, shall be appointed by and be under the disciplinary control of the

executive of the body for which they are working. The executive may suspend or dismiss any such salaried officer and shall be responsible that any officer handling any funds of the Association is properly bonded.

In the absence of a written agreement a salaried officer shall be deemed to be hired from month to month and shall be required to give one month's notice if he wishes to resign.

ARTICLE V.

Membership

18. Membership.

Membership in the Association shall be limited as follows:—

Any man of good character who has seen active service in the Great War of 1914 with the forces of the Allied armies on one of the belligerent fronts, or in England, or, in the opinion of the branch of which he purposes to become a member, has seen equivalent service with the forces of the Allied navies, and who is still in the service or has received an honourable discharge therefrom, shall be eligible for active membership;

Provided, however, in the case of a man who has seen active service in England and has failed to reach a belligerent front, he shall first show to the satisfaction of the branch of which he purposes to become a member, that such failure to reach a belligerent front was through no fault of his own.

And further, provided that nothing in this section shall be taken to affect in any wise the status of any member, active or associate, of the Association on the date of the coming into effect of the Constitution.

19. Application.

Application for membership shall be in writing upon

a form furnished for that purpose and shall give in detail the applicant's name, age, birthplace, residence, occupation, address where employed, date and rank on enlistment, his rank at the time of discharge, the unit or units to which he belonged, the date and reason of his discharge, the length of time he served, and if wounded, when and in what engagement, and in what manner and degree.

The application accompanied by the initiation fee shall be sent to the secretary of the local branch within whose jurisdiction the applicant resides. The secretary will make a preliminary investigation and report the application and all information in his possession to the branch executive at its next meeting. The executive may either complete the investigation itself and report to the next meeting of the branch or hand the case over to an investigating committee of the branch when such a committee has been formed.

The applicant shall declare that he has not been or tried to become a member of any other branch of the Association.

20. Acceptance and Rejection.

Every applicant must be proposed by a member and his application recommended by the body charged with the duty of investigation; otherwise his application will be deemed rejected.

21. Returns required.

The secretary of each local branch shall each month forward to the Provincial Command or where there is no Provincial Command to the Dominion Command a list of all applications for membership, showing the disposition made of them and in case of rejections the grounds on which the applications were rejected.

22. *Further application after rejection.*

Any man whose application has been rejected shall not be eligible for membership in any other branch without the consent of the Provincial Command if within a Provincial jurisdiction, otherwise of the Dominion Command, given after careful investigation of his record.

ARTICLE VI.

Initiation

23. *Obligation and Entrance.*

In the absence of any ritual that may be hereafter adopted by the Dominion convention, after an applicant's application has been duly accepted, he shall be admitted to membership in the Association after giving a written undertaking to abide by the constitution and by-laws of the Association in the form following:

"I do hereby agree to become a member of the G.W.V.A. and to abide by the spirit of its constitution, by-laws and regulations."

The presiding officer shall then give to each man his membership card and badge, and at the same time furnish him with a copy of the constitution.

For a good reason, the initiation of a member may be carried out by the executive in the above manner, but in each case full reason therefor shall be written upon the application and read out at the next general meeting.

ARTICLE VII.

Dues and Suspension for non-payment thereof

24. Membership dues and initiation fee.

The local branches may, subject to section 12, make by-laws fixing the amounts of and periods for payment of membership dues, care being taken to make provision for securing enough money to cover per capita taxes as well as running expenses. An initiation fee of two dollars (\$2.00) shall be charged by every local branch throughout the Dominion.

25. Dates of payments of dues.

In the absence of a special by-law of the branch the dues shall become payable quarterly at the first meeting of the branch in the months of March, June, September, and December in every year.

26. Suspension for non-payment of dues.

A member failing to pay his dues for a period of six months becomes *ipso facto* suspended. Notice shall be mailed by registered post by the secretary of the branch to the member at his last known address, informing him of his suspension and that if he pays up his arrears within one month from the date of notice, he will be reinstated, but that if he fails to pay up within said month, his membership ceases and any office held by him becomes vacant.

A suspended member failing to reinstate within the said period shall forfeit his membership and office according to notice.

27. Reinstatement by action of Branch.

An ex-member who has lost his membership under the

foregoing provisions may be reinstated at any time by a two-thirds vote of any meeting of the branch, but his reinstatement by such vote will not restore him to any office which he may have forfeited.

28. Case of Member of an Executive.

In case the member in default is a member of the Dominion or a Provincial Executive, a duplicate of the foregoing notice shall be mailed by the secretary of the branch to the secretary of said executive.

ARTICLE VIII.

Discipline

29. Power of Dominion Executive.

Subject to an appeal to the next Dominion convention, the Dominion executive may suspend the charter of any Provincial command or local branch and may suspend any officer of such command or branch from the exercise of his office, and may suspend any member of this Association.

30. Power of Provincial Executive.

Subject to an appeal to the next Provincial convention, and a further appeal to the Dominion executive, a Provincial executive may suspend any officer of any branch subject to the Provincial jurisdiction from the exercise of his office, and may suspend any member of a branch subject to the Provincial jurisdiction.

ARTICLE IX.

Expulsion of Member for cause

31. Causes of Expulsion.

Any member may be expelled from the Association

for breach of his obligation or of the constitution or for disloyal utterances or acts or for profane or disorderly conduct in a meeting of any body of the Association or for maliciously making a false charge against a member or for conduct unworthy of a member.

32. Charge in Writing.

Any charge under the foregoing Section 31 against a member must be in writing and signed by the accuser, and lodged with the secretary of the branch or command where the accusation is made.

33. Trial Committee.

Upon receipt of the charge, the presiding officer of the branch or command shall appoint a trial committee of three members (with one or more waiting members) to try the case.

34. Procedure.

The trial committee shall take all necessary steps to ensure a fair trial of the case, including notification of the accused, and shall decide on the evidence submitted.

35. Report of Verdict to Branch.

The trial committee shall report its verdict to the branch or command for confirmation or rejection, a two-thirds vote of the members present being necessary to confirm the expulsion or suspension of a member.

36. Appeal.

An appeal will lie, after confirmation of a verdict, to the executive of the next higher body; said appeal to be made by registered letter addressed to the proper office within ten days of the said confirmation.

37.

The conviction of any member by a competent court of criminal jurisdiction in Canada or in the country where the member's local branch is situate, for any offence deemed to come within the purview of the foregoing section (31) may be accepted by the local branch as conclusive evidence of the commission of such offence without the formality of a trial committee.

ARTICLE X.

Dominion Convention

38. *Interpretation.*

In the following sections, the words members and membership shall be exclusive of associate members and inclusive only of those returned to the Dominion command as members for whom per capita tax is paid to the end of the quarter immediately preceding the convention:

1. Each local branch shall be entitled to send to the convention as representing its members one delegate, and in addition, one delegate for the next 300 members above the first 100, and thereafter one delegate for every additional complete 500 members.

Voting.

2. Where no poll is demanded the vote of the convention shall be by yea and nay or by a standing vote.

Where a poll is demanded each branch shall, on any question, have one vote for every member as defined above.

When more than one delegate voting for a branch.

3. Where delegates from any branch disagree on any question being polled, each of such delegates shall have

the voting power of the number of delegates present from that branch divided into the membership of that branch as above defined.

Several branches uniting on delegate.

4. Where two or more branches voluntarily combine to send a single delegate, he shall carry credentials from each of the branches accrediting him and be entitled to cast the vote of each of such branches.

Executive.

5. Irrespective of whether they have been re-elected as delegates the Dominion executive shall be fully qualified members of the convention until its close. Where no poll is demanded they shall vote in the same manner as above set forth. Where a poll is demanded, they shall not vote unless delegates.

39.

At each session of any convention, the following committees shall be elected, whose powers and duties shall terminate with the adjournment of the convention for the year:

1. Resolutions.
2. Ways and Means.
3. Constitution and Law.
4. Procedure.
5. Committee on Appeals.

40. *Committee on Resolutions.*

To this committee shall be handed all resolutions read at the various sessions, for consideration and report; and for combination, amendment or consolidation. Should any resolutions be adversely reported on by the committee the delegate who moved such resolution shall have

the right to re-introduce it to the convention, provided a majority of the delegates present are favourable.

41. Committee on Ways and Means.

This committee shall consider the financial standing of the convention and recommend the per capita tax for the following year and also any extraordinary expenditure not provided for in the constitution.

42. Committee on Constitution and Law.

To this committee shall be handed all amendments to the constitution and laws of the Association for consideration, and report to the convention.

43. Committee on Procedure.

To decide on programme of the convention, and the priority of the resolutions.

44.

The success of any Dominion convention depends on an open minded consideration by the delegates of the views, expressed on the floor of the convention, from all parts of Canada. Instructions by branches to delegates should not be in the form of hard and fixed resolutions precluding such consideration.

ARTICLE XI.

General Provisions

45. Procedure.

In matters not provided for in this constitution, or the constitution of a Provincial Command, or the by-laws of a local branch, all meetings shall be conducted on parliamentary lines.

46. *Decision of the Chair.*

Meetings are not intended for the parade of technical niceties of procedure. The presiding officer will rule promptly on all matters of procedure and his decision will be final, subject to an appeal sustained by a two-thirds vote of the meeting.

47.

The presiding officer at any meeting shall rule out of order all matters pertaining to political or religious discussion, or which do not refer to the well-being and progress of our Association.

48. *Property of Association.*

All officers on their retirement from office shall hand over to their successors or, (if none are appointed) to the presiding officer of their executive all books, papers and other property of the bodies of which they are officers, and shall duly transfer any bank account of the funds held by them as such officers.

49. *Holding of Real Estate.*

Where there is no incorporation of a command or branch, real property may be held in the name of two or more trustees who shall execute such declaration of trust as shall be satisfactory to the executive of the command or branch.

ARTICLE XII.

By-Laws of Local Branches

50. *Local Autonomy.*

Local branches may pass by-laws to cover all matters in their own sphere not provided for in this constitution.

51. *Half-yearly return.*

Each local branch shall furnish, every six months, to the Dominion and to its respective Provincial secretary, a complete list of all members in good standing, on a form provided for that purpose by the Dominion and Provincial Commands respectively.