KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO AMERICA'S VETERANS

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October 19, 2026

Mr. Gerald Rodriguez, Adjutant
Francis McLhinney Chapter #15
Disabled American Veterans
P.O. Box 292
Havre De Grace, MD 21078

EIN: 52-6074839

Dear Adjutant Rodriguez:

The Constitution and Bylaws for Francis McLhinney Chapter #15, Department of Maryland are hereby approved as of this date, with the following change.

Article IV, Section 3 of the Chapter's Constitution is amended to comply with Article 9, Section 9.2, Paragraph 1 of the National Bylaws: *"Neither a chapter commander nor any vice commander may serve simultaneously as an adjutant, treasurer, or judge advocate."* This requirement was adopted at the 2026 National Convention in Orlando, Florida.

An electronic copy of this document is being returned to Chapter #15 and the Department. National Headquarters is also retaining a copy in its permanent files for future reference.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Dobmeier
National Judge Advocate

MED:cb

Attachment

c: Department of Maryland Adjutant Robinson-Ambrose
Department Judge Advocate Patterson
Chapter #15 Commander Wallace Jr.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Francis McLhinney Chapter Number 15
Department of Maryland
Disabled American Veterans

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I NAME

Section 1: The name of this Chapter shall be Disabled American Veterans, Francis McLhinney Chapter No. 15, Department of Maryland.

Section 2: The name of this Chapter of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) must not be used in connection with, nor shall the Chapter engage in, any political, sectarian, or labor dispute, nor in any matter not directly related to wartime service-disabled veterans. However, nothing in this section shall prevent this Chapter from participating in political issues that directly affect the welfare of America's disabled veterans.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Chapter is to fulfill our promise to American veterans who served and, in furtherance of that purpose, to support the programs of the Disabled American Veterans as provided in the National Constitution and Bylaws and the regulations of the National Executive Committee,

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this Chapter shall adhere to the requirements established in the National Constitution and Bylaws. There shall be no associate, special, or honorary memberships within this Chapter.

ARTICLE IV - ADMINISTRATION

Section 1: The administrative affairs of this Chapter shall be managed by the Chapter Executive Committee only in emergencies, and all other actions taken by the Executive Committee must be approved by a majority vote of the Chapter members present and voting at the next regular Chapter meeting.

Section 2: At the time specified in the Chapter Bylaws, the Chapter shall annually elect a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander (not to exceed three), Treasurer, Adjutant and Chaplain.

Section 3: The appointed officers of the Chapter shall include the, Historian, Service Officer(s), Judge Advocate, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Officer of the Day, all appointed by the Commander with the Chapter's approval. The Commander may also appoint other officers as needed to operate the Chapter, subject to the Chapter's approval. Neither the Chapter Commander nor any Chapter Vice Commander shall serve as the Chapter Adjutant or Treasurer.

Section 4: The Executive Committee shall consist of the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander(s), Treasurer, Chaplain, Adjutant, and Judge Advocate.

Section 5: The Commander, Adjutant, and Treasurer shall always be bonded, and the Chapter shall pay the bond premium according to the National Bylaws.

ARTICLE V - EXECUTIVE

The executive authority of this Chapter shall be vested in the Chapter Commander.

ARTICLE VI - AUXILIARY

The chapter acknowledges a DAV Auxiliary, subject to supervision that conforms to both the National and Department Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any Chapter meeting by a two-thirds vote of Chapter members present and voting, subject to the approval of both the Department and National Judge Advocates, and only becomes effective after such approval. Additionally, any amendment must be read at two meetings, and Chapter members must be notified of the proposed change before each meeting.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - ORGANIZATION

Section 1: This Chapter recognizes the National Organization known as Disabled American Veterans (DAV), incorporated by an act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the National Organization, its Constitution, Bylaws, and all rules, mandates, and regulations issued under them. Upon the chapter's dissolution, any remaining assets after paying debts shall be distributed according to Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5, 6, and 8, of the National Bylaws.

Section 2: The governing body of this Chapter shall be the Chapter in session, except as specified in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 3: Minutes of the Chapter meetings, including those of the Chapter Executive Committee, shall be documented and available for inspection by any chapter member.

ARTICLE II - CHARTER

The Charter of this Chapter, issued by the National Executive Committee, serves as its authority to operate and shall be displayed at the Commander's station at all regular meetings.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: No new applicant shall be denied Chapter membership if he or she meets the eligibility requirements as outlined in the National Constitution and Bylaws,

Section 2: Only members of the Chapter are eligible to vote on any motion or at any election.

Section 3: Members of another Chapter may transfer their membership to this chapter with the approval of this chapter's membership. Section 4: The membership year begins on July 1 and ends at midnight on the following June 30. Dues shall not be divided or prorated.

Section 5: Dues in this Chapter shall be determined by the direction of the National Organization.

Section 6: All disciplinary actions taken or initiated against members or officers shall comply with Article XVI of the National Bylaws.

Section 7: Each member who accepts or continues membership in this Chapter agrees to be bound by the Chapter's Constitution and Bylaws, the Department Constitution and Bylaws, and DAV National Bylaws, whether currently in effect or hereafter adopted or amended.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

Section 1: Elected Officers

Paragraph 1: The Chapter shall annually elect a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander (not to exceed three), Treasurer, Adjutant and Chaplain.

Paragraph 2: A member shall hold only one elected Chapter office at any given time. A delegate to a National or Department Convention or Department Executive Committee is not considered an "elected officer" within this section. Except as otherwise provided herein, an elected officer may also hold an appointed office, and vice versa, except that the Chapter Commander and Vice Commanders shall not serve as Chapter Adjutant or Treasurer.

Paragraph 3: Any member of this Chapter is eligible for any elected or appointed office within the Chapter, unless otherwise specified in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Paragraph 4: Upon the election, appointment, and installation of a successor to any office, all Chapter property in the possession of the predecessor shall be surrendered to the newly installed officer.

Paragraph 5: A Chapter Officer Election Report must be submitted by the Adjutant to the Department of Maryland and the National Organization within ten (10) days following the installation of newly elected or appointed Chapter officers or in case of any subsequent change in Chapter officers during the membership year. A Department of Maryland Chapter Supplemental Report must accompany the Chapter Officer Election Report submitted to the Department.

Section 2: Duties of Elected Officers

Paragraph 1: The Commander shall preside over all regular or special meetings of the Chapter. The Commander shall maintain order and efficiently handle any business that legally comes before the Chapter. All checks or vouchers issued by the Chapter Treasurer shall be co-signed by the Commander or, an individual selected and approved by the chapter who are recorded on the financial institutions signature authority cards. The Commander shall perform all other duties that are reasonably considered incidental to the office, including those outlined in this Constitution and Bylaws and the Official DAV Ritual, as well as any other duties lawfully delegated by the Chapter.

Paragraph 2: The Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Treasurer, and Chaplain shall perform the duties of the Commander in the order listed in the event of the Commander's absence. If the Commander should die, resign, or be removed from office, the same order of authority shall remain in effect until the next Chapter annual election.

Paragraph 3: The Senior Vice Commander shall perform the duties of that position as outlined in the Official DAV Ritual. The Senior Vice Commander shall foster friendship among the members of this Chapter, discourage discord, and promote harmony. The Senior Vice Commander shall serve as chair of the Membership Committee, provide monthly membership reports, and act as the Chapter's new members' orientation mentor.

Paragraph 4: The Junior Vice Commander(s) shall perform the duties of that position as outlined in the Official DAV Ritual. They shall assist with publicity, public relations, and Chapter fundraising activities as approved by the Chapter. This Chapter shall not sponsor or participate in, directly or indirectly, any fundraising or financial project without prior approval from the Department of Maryland. The Junior Vice Commander(s) shall also be responsible for securing guest speakers for Chapter meetings and special events.

Paragraph 5: The Treasurer shall receive and immediately deposit all Chapter funds into a bank account in the name of the Chapter without deductions or offsets. Authorized disbursements shall only be made

by checks signed by the Treasurer and co-signed by the Commander or authorized individual. No disbursement of Chapter funds shall occur without a completed Chapter voucher and attached receipts. The Treasurer shall provide a monthly report of receipts and expenditures at each regular Chapter meeting. The Chapter's fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30. The Treasurer shall serve as chair of the Budget and Finance Committee and prepare a budget for presentation to the Executive Committee and membership at the May meetings for review, and for approval by the membership at the June meeting. The Treasurer's financial records shall be available for audit annually, and an annual financial report shall be submitted to the Department of Maryland and the National Organization, if required, within ninety (90) days after the close of the Chapter's fiscal year. This report shall be audited and approved by the Chapter Audit Committee. The Treasurer is responsible for filing the appropriate IRS Form 990-N annually based on the Chapter's financial status no later than November 15, and Maryland Form I by April 15. All motions for expenditures not included in the budget shall be referred to the Budget and Finance Committee for recommendations.

Paragraph 6: The Chaplain shall perform the duties of the Chaplain's station as outlined in the Official DAV Ritual. The Chaplain shall visit the sick and comfort the families of those members called to the Great Beyond. The Chaplain is responsible for encouraging attendance at DAV-conducted funerals and ensuring proper conduct during them. The Chaplain shall also serve as chair of the Welfare Committee and, with the approval of the Chapter, may appoint one or more members to assist.

Section 3: Appointed Officers

Paragraph 1: The Commander shall appoint, subject to approval by the Chapter, the following officers: Historian, Service Officer(s), Judge Advocate, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Officer of the Day.

Paragraph 2: The tenure of appointed officers shall be at the pleasure of the appointing authority, provided that no term of office shall exceed that of the appointing authority, except as otherwise explicitly provided elsewhere in these Bylaws.

Section 4: Duties of appointed Officers

Paragraph 1: The Adjutant shall keep a true and complete record of all business meetings held by the Chapter, including the minutes of each Chapter and Executive Committee meeting. The Adjutant shall handle all necessary correspondence, maintain an up-to-date list of the Chapter's members, both current and former, record all motions approved by the Chapter along with the name of the member who made the motion and the vote results, ensure that all delegates attending the Department and National Conventions have proper credentials, and be responsible for forwarding the names of delegates to the Department and National organizations, respectively.

Paragraph 2: The Historian shall keep a brief history of the Chapters activities as a permanent record. The Historian shall serve as the Chapter's Publicity Officer and shall regularly provide appropriate publicity materials to local newspapers, radio stations, and the official DAV National and Department publications with the approval of the Commander. No other member shall promote publicity for the Chapter and its activities without the Commander's approval,

Paragraph 3: Chapter Service Officer(s) shall advise and assist any veteran and their dependents in preparing and processing claims for veteran benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Paragraph 4: The Judge Advocate shall serve as the Chapter's Parliamentarian and shall have a working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR). The Judge Advocate shall also serve as chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and as a consultant to the Commander, officers,

Executive Committee, and Chapter members on parliamentary procedures. Upon request from the Commander, the Judge Advocate shall give an opinion on parliamentary questions, disputes on the assembly floor, or interpretations of the Chapter's Constitution and Bylaws or those of the National and Department organizations. After receiving the Judge Advocate's opinion, the Commander or presiding officer shall announce a ruling or decision, which need not follow that opinion. The ruling shall be final and binding on the Chapter unless overruled by a two-thirds vote of the members at the meeting when the decision is announced.

Paragraph 5: The Sergeant-at-Arms shall carry out the duties of this office as outlined in the Official DAV Ritual,

Paragraph 6: The Officer of the Day shall carry out the duties of that office as outlined in the Official DAV Ritual. The Officer of the Day shall greet all visitors and ensure that each is properly introduced.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

Section 1: The regular meetings of this Chapter shall be held on the date, time, and at the location designated by the Chapter. Members may participate virtually in general membership meetings of the Chapter. The active membership status of any member participating virtually must be validated at the beginning of each meeting and documented in the Chapter's meeting minutes. Voting during the election of Chapter officers is limited to in-person participation and will not permit virtual participation by members. There shall be no form of voting by proxy or by absentee ballot. Members who experience difficulty, or who are unable to connect virtually, for whatever reason, will not have any recourse to challenge prior decisions made during the Chapter meeting. The chapter virtual meeting can include telephone, Teams, Zoom, Skype, or any other platform or software approved for virtual participation, which must be recorded in the Chapter's minutes. The Chapter is responsible for purchasing equipment necessary to facilitate virtual participation during meetings and shall not buy equipment, services, or subscriptions for individual members.

Section 2: Emergency or special meetings may be called by the Commander whenever necessary or upon written request by ten or more Chapter members. The notice for these meetings must include the date, time, location or method of the meeting, and the business to be addressed. Such notice should be provided in a way that reasonably ensures members receive it at least forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting.

Section 3: The yearly meeting for officer elections shall be held in person.

Section 4: In cases of bad weather or other emergencies that make traveling to the meeting site difficult, the Commander may cancel or reschedule a meeting with at least four (4) hours! notice, The Commander may set a new date, time, and method within forty-eight (48) hours.

Section 5: A quorum shall consist of five (5) members, including at least two (2) elected Chapter officers.

Section 6: The full official DAV Ritual shall be performed at every Chapter meeting. All members are encouraged to purchase and wear the official DAV lapel emblem and uniform hat. The wearing of ball caps at Chapter meetings is discouraged.

Section 7: No visiting member, except for Department or National officers, shall speak on any subject under debate without the permission of the Commander or the approval of the Chapter by a majority vote.

Section 8: Chapter meeting will be held each month throughout the calendar year.

Section 9: Personal grievances will not be discussed on the floor unless introduced by the Chaplain or the committee authorized to handle such matters.

Section 10: Matters solely concerning an individual member's personal interest shall not be permitted but may be addressed by the appropriate committee.

ARTICLE VI - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1: The Chapter Executive Committee shall consist of the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander(s), Treasurer, Chaplain, Adjutant, and Judge Advocate.

Section 2: Meetings of the Chapter Executive Committee will be scheduled by the Commander or upon written request of a majority of its members submitted to the Commander. Other Chapter members may attend these meetings without voting rights.

Section 3: A majority of the Chapter Executive Committee members shall be required to constitute a quorum.

Section 4: The Chapter Executive Committee may act on behalf of the Chapter when it is not in session.

Section 5: All fundraising projects, agreements, and contracts must be referred to the Chapter Executive Committee for its recommendations before the Chapter takes any action. All non-standard fundraising projects (excluding Golden Corral and Forget-Me-Not), along with agreements and contracts, need approval from the Department and the DAV National Executive Committee.

Section 6: If the Chapter Executive Committee fails to make recommendations on any matter referred to it within forty-five (45) days, the Chapter, by majority vote, may take action on that matter without the Committee's recommendations.

ARTICLE VII - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: The Chapter shall elect a Nominating Committee during the January meeting. The committee shall consist of no more than three (3) Chapter members who will identify qualified nominees for each elected position and report their findings at the February membership meeting. After the nominees are presented to the body, the Commander will open the floor for nominations.

Section 2: A member nominated for office must accept or decline the nomination. If a nominee cannot appear in person, they may accept or decline in writing to the Adjutant before the March election. If a nominee does not accept or decline as described above, the nomination will be considered declined, and the nominee's name will be removed from the ballot.

Section 3: Nominations and elections of officers shall be conducted in the order specified in Article IV, Section I of these Bylaws, and each candidate may be allowed one nominating speech and one seconding speech at the March election.

Section 4: During the March membership meeting, the Chapter shall elect members to serve on the Department Executive Committee. According to the Department of Maryland's Constitution and Bylaws, each Chapter is entitled to three (3) Department Executive Committee representatives (DECs) and three (3) alternate representatives (ADECs). The names and addresses of those elected must be submitted to the Department at least thirty (30) days before the Department Convention begins. Within budget limits, the Chapter may provide financial assistance for the Commander and at least one delegate to attend Department and National meetings, with reimbursement limited to mileage or economy airfare, lodging, and per diem at applicable government rates, supported by receipts and vouchers submitted within the Chapter's required reimbursement timeframe.

Section 5: Officers shall be elected by ballot. If only one candidate runs for an office, they may be elected by acclamation.

Section 6: There shall be no voting by proxy or absentee ballot, except as expressly permitted by Article V, Section 1 regarding validated electronic participation.

Section 7: The presiding officer may vote like any other member when the vote is by ballot. In all other cases, the presiding officer can, but is not required to, vote whenever the outcome could be affected; that is, to either break a tie or contribute to one. When a two-thirds vote is needed, the vote can be used to either achieve or prevent the necessary two-thirds.

Section 8: All nominations for either Department or National Convention delegates must be made at the meeting prior to the one where they are to be elected. Election for National Convention delegates shall be held at least sixty (60) days before the opening of the convention.

ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES

Section 9: Standing Committees

Section 1: The standing committees of the Chapter, in addition to those otherwise specified in this Constitution and Bylaws, shall include the Membership Committee, Welfare Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, Audit Committee, Legislative Committee, and Constitution and Bylaws Committee. The Commander will serve as an ex-officio member of all standing committees.

Section 2: Unless explicitly stated otherwise in this Constitution and Bylaws, the Commander shall appoint and designate the chair of each standing committee. The Commander, by virtue of their office, shall serve as an ex-officio member on all committees except the Nominating Committee.

Section 3: The Membership Committee is responsible for all matters related to the Chapter's membership, including recruitment and reinstatement. The committee shall be chaired by the Senior Vice Commander and will also have two (2) or more members appointed.

Section 4: The Welfare Committee shall contact Chapter members who are sick or shut-in, comfort families in mourning, encourage attendance at members' funerals, keep informed of public and private agencies and organizations that can offer temporary or permanent assistance to disabled veterans or their dependents, and assist such persons in obtaining proper and adequate aid and assistance. This committee shall be chaired by the Chaplain and have at least one (1) additional appointed member.

Section 5: The Budget and Finance Committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer. This committee shall prepare the annual budget for presentation to the Executive Committee at the May meeting for input and review. The proposed budget shall be submitted to the membership at the May general membership meeting and for final review at the June meeting. The Chapter's accounting/fiscal year runs from July I to June 30. The Budget and Finance Committee shall also ensure that the annual budget includes provisions for attendance at National and State conventions and that the Commander's discretionary fund does not exceed five hundred dollars ($500.00), depending on the availability of Chapter operational funds and restricted Forget-Me-Not funds. They shall also ensure that funds from DAV National, fundraiser proceeds, and donations are not accumulated as surplus funds exceeding expenses from the previous fiscal year.

Section 6: The Audit Committee shall consist of at least three (3) Chapter members, excluding the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander(s), Treasurer, and Adjutant. The committee is responsible for conducting the annual audit of the financial records kept by the Treasurer after the close of the fiscal year. The Audit Committee shall present a report of the audit findings and any related recommendations to the body.

Section 7: The Legislative Committee shall adhere to current legislation and report on federal, state, and local laws that impact the well-being of veterans and their families.

Section 8: The Constitution and Bylaws Committee is responsible for ensuring that the chapter's constitution and bylaws align with the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Organization and the Department of Maryland. All proposed amendments and changes must first be reviewed by this committee. The committee shall be chaired by the Judge Advocate and shall include as many appointed members as deemed necessary.

Section 9: Other Committees

Such other committees, whether special or ad hoc, as may be necessary to carry out the work of the Chapter shall be appointed by the Commander with the approval of the chapter.

ARTICLE IX - BEQUESTS

All bequests and/or other testamentary gifts, such as IRAs, bank accounts, and life insurance policies. regardless of their size, type, or designation, must be reported to the Bequests Reporting Program (BRP) in order to ensure that distribution aligns with the donor's intent, Chapters are obligated to report bequests promptly upon notification or receipt by submitting an electronic image of all relevant paperwork to the legal department using the link provided below.

legaldepartment@dav.org

ARTICLE X - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) shall govern the Chapter whenever applicable and consistent with this Constitution, Bylaws, and the Constitutions and Bylaws of the Department of Maryland and the National Organization.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

Section 1: These Bylaws shall not become effective until adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Chapter members present and approved by the Department of Maryland Judge Advocate and the National Judge Advocate.

Section 2: These Bylaws can only be amended if the proposed change(s) are submitted and read at two meetings and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at the regular meeting. No future amendment shall take effect until it is approved as outlined in Section 1 above.

Section 3: To the extent to which any of the provisions of this Constitution and Bylaws are, or may at any time become, inconsistent or in conflict with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws and lawful mandates, decisions and regulations of either the National Organization, as now in force or as hereafter amended or this instrument shall be deemed amended as to conform thereto.

ADOPTION AND APPROVAL

First Reading	09/08/2026
Second Reading	10/05/2026

EC Wallace
Chapter Commander

Gerald Rodriguez
Chapter Adjutant

John Patterson
Department of Maryland

John Patterson

I certify this constitution does not conflict with National organization, to that extent is Approved.
Date: 10/16/2026

Michael E. Dobmeier
National Judge Advocate Approval

I CERTIFY that the within constitution and/or by-laws does not conflict with those of the National Organization, and to that extent, is approved subject to my letter of
Date: 10/19/2026
DAV National Judge Advocate