

# Polish Falcons of America

## Legion of Honor Rules and Regulations

The Polish Falcons of America, by a resolution adopted at a Special Convention held on November 26th, 27th and 28th, 1925 in the City of Detroit, Michigan, created a meritorious decoration known as the “Falcon Service Cross.” The members thus honored would form the “Legion of Honor” of the Polish Falcons of America.

The purpose of the Falcon Legion of Honor is the preservation and fostering of the noble ideals, principles, traditions, precepts and customs of the Falcon Order, as defined by its founders and originators. Those members entitled/qualified for the honor are the deserving men and women who by their untiring sacrifice have worked within the Falcons and among Polonia gaining respect and esteem. They have also shown integrity and an unimpeachable character to obtain the finest reputation amongst the Falcon members.

### **Rights and Privileges**

Members of the Legion of Honor shall receive all rights and privileges regardless as to whether the award was presented by the Nest, District or National Headquarters.

As long as they are benefit members of the Polish Falcons of America, Legion of Honor members have the right to actively participate at District Plenary Meetings, and can attend and participate in District or National Conventions as a delegate.

Recipients of the Legion of Honor Cross, who are not benefit members of the Polish Falcons of America, are entitled to all Falcon Honors, but do not have a vote at meetings or conventions.

### **District Legion of Honor Circle**

The purpose of the District Legion of Honor Circle is an association of unity among the Legion Members; assistance to the District in the application of its philosophy and beliefs; elevation of prestige; and promotion of activities associated with the Falcon Program.

Legion of Honor members of individual Nests in a District unite to form a Legion of Honor Circle in the District. At the District Convention, Legion of Honor members select among themselves a Chairperson and Secretary/Treasurer of the Circle. These Officers remain in Office until the next District Convention. The Legion of Honor Circle shall hold meetings before or after District Plenary Meetings. Special Meetings can also be called by the Chairperson.

### **Legion of Honor Commandery**

The Legion of Honor Commandery is composed of the most worthy members of the Polish Falcons of America who, through their work for the Falcon Order, the Community and the Nation, have gained for themselves the designation of first among the best. Their qualities of heart and unimpeachable character led to their being elevated to this honor.

The Commandery is composed of a representative from each District Legion of Honor Circle. Each representative shall hold office for a term of four years. Candidates to the Commandery are chosen by the District Legion of Honor Circles at least one month before the National Convention. The name of the candidate, results of the election and comments and suggestions are submitted to the National President. The National President then submits the names to the Grand Master prior to the National Convention.

The Grand Master presents the candidates to the Legion of Honor Conclave for confirmation. The newly-confirmed Commandery representatives are sworn in by the Grand Master.

### **Meetings of the Commandery**

Meetings of the Commandery are called from time to time by the Grand Master. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss proposals for the Good of the Order, approve recommendations for changes to the Legion of Honor rules and regulations.

The Commandery shall also meet prior to the meeting of the Conclave at the National Convention. During this meeting, the Commandery meets to discuss any Legion of Honor business. Newly-elected Commanders have the right to attend the Legion of Honor Commandery Meeting at the National Convention. They shall have no vote at the Meeting.

### **Duties of the Commandery**

- The Commandery carries out the elevation from one rank to the next on the recommendation of the National Administration or the National Convention Delegates as described in the Section “Procedure for Awards”.
- The Commandery has the authority to take away an award in the event of any court decision.
- The Commandery recommends changes to the internal rules and regulations for granting awards.
- After the adjournment of a meeting of the Commandery, the Grand Master reports to the

National President on the work completed by the Commandery. Any recommendations for changes to the Legion of Honor rules and regulations are presented to the National President for consideration by the National Board of Directors.

- The Grand Master maintains a list of the Commandery and of all persons awarded the Legion of Honor Cross.
- An accurate record of decorated persons is kept at National Headquarters, under the supervision of the National First Vice President. He/she keeps the seal of the Commandery.
- The Secretary of the Commandery takes and accurately prepares the minutes of the Commandery and Conclave meetings. Within 30 days, the Secretary submits copies of these minutes to the Grand Master and the National President. The Secretary also maintains a list of attendees at the Conclave and carries out the assignments directed by the Commandery.
- Each member of the Commandery is committed to observe the confidentiality of his office. It is forbidden to announce the candidates that were presented for awards or the results of the elections.

### **Commandery Vacancies**

In the event of a vacancy on the Commandery due to resignation, death or expulsion, the District Legion of Honor Circle of that particular District, notified to do so by the National Administration, shall select a new representative to fill the vacancy. The National President or the Grand Master or any other high ranking National Officer shall administer the Oath of Office to that representative.

In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Grand Master, the Secretary of the Commandery shall call a meeting of the members of the Commandery to take place at National Headquarters in Pittsburgh. The meeting shall take place within 60 days of the date of the vacancy. Travel expenses of the Commandery are covered by National Headquarters.

Before this meeting, the District Legion of Honor Circle from where the Grand Master came, shall fill the vacancy of its representative to the Commandery. This new Commandery representative shall take part in the meeting in Pittsburgh to select a new Grand Master. The Secretary of the Commandery conducts the meeting and election. The election is conducted by secret ballot and the candidate must receive a majority of votes of the Commandery representatives in attendance to be elected. The National President administers the oath of office to the new Grand Master.

### **Conclave**

The Conclave, the Convention of the Legion of Honor Members, is called by the Grand Master of the Commandery to take place during the National Convention of the Polish Falcons of America. The date, time and place shall be announced in the Sokół Polski at least 30 days before the Convention. The presiding officer of the Conclave is the Grand Master of the Commandery.

Every Conclave may be attended only by Legion of Honor Members who for admittance must present a Convention identification badge which indicates Legion membership or Legion identification card, and wear the Legion Cross.

Members of the Legion of Honor attending the Conclave and National Convention do so at their own expense.

The Grand Master may appoint Committees before the Conclave to handle matters of the Legion of Honor. The Grand Master may also request a member of the Legion of Honor to prepare a brief report on the current status of the Polish Falcons of America and the Legion of Honor. This could lead to a discussion stimulating interest in the Falcon Organization. The report should not exceed 15 minutes.

The Conclave can approve recommendations for changes to the Rules and Regulations of the Legion of Honor. These changes are turned over to the National Board of Directors for approval. The changes become binding on every Nest as soon as they are accepted by the National Board of Directors and announced in the official publication — Sokół Polski.

### **Order of Proceedings at the Conclave**

- 1) The Grand Master will open the Conclave.
- 2) The Grand Master shall appoint Marshals for the Conclave.
- 3) The Marshals will confirm that only Legion of Honor members are present in the room.
- 4) The Secretary of the Commandery reads the minutes of the last Conclave.
- 5) The Grand Master will ask for approval of the Committees he/she has appointed.
- 6) The Grand Master, Secretary and Members of the Commandery will give a report on their activities since the last Conclave.
- 7) There will be a report from the appointed Committees.
- 8) Any organizational matters directed to the Commandery by the National Board of Directors, members of the Legion of Honor or the Legion of Honor Circles will be presented to the conclave with recommendations from the Commandery to be acted upon.
- 9) Names of the individuals selected by the District Legion of Honor Circles as representatives to the

Commandery are presented by the Grand Master for confirmation by the Commandery.

- 10) After the Conclave confirms the Commandery, the oath of office is administered by the Grand Master. Representatives who are absent shall assume their office after being administered the Oath by the National President or by someone designated by the National President at a later time.
- 11) The Grand Master shall conduct the election for Grand Master and Secretary of the Commandery. The candidate for each office must be a member of the Commandery. The voting for each office shall be done by secret ballot. The candidate must receive majority of votes of those in attendance at the Conclave to be declared the winner.
- 12) A discussion can be held for the Good of the Order.
- 13) The Conclave is adjourned.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion of members from the Legion of Honor may come as a consequence of dishonorable actions recognized by the Nation's courts or the Conclave, for disrespect of Falcon rules and regulations or for discreditable conduct which would lower the dignity and honor of the Falcon Order. The Conclave in every instance, on the recommendation of the National Administration, conducts an investigation and bases its decision on it.

### **Procedure for Awards**

There are three levels of Legion of Honor Awards: Bronze, Silver and Gold. A period of five full years of service must lapse between awards.

To be eligible for the Legion of Honor Award, the candidate must hold the Falcon Bronze, Silver and Gold Star of Merit Awards. These, likewise, have been awarded by National Headquarters upon the recommendation of the Nest, District or National Organization.

Also, a member qualifies for the Legion of Honor Cross after at least 18 years of uninterrupted membership in the Polish Falcons of America. Work in other organizations, whether political or professional, cannot be the main consideration. Activities within the Nest are the main criteria for being considered for the awarding of the Legion of Honor or an elevation. Outside activities are and can be listed for informational purposes.

### **Awarding the Legion of Honor Posthumously**

Legion of Honor Awards can be presented posthumously.

The application for the deceased applicant must have been approved by National Headquarters and the Legion of Honor Commandery prior to the date of death.

### **Nest and District Procedures**

Nests with up to 150 members may present four recipients with two being Gold. Nests with 151-350 members may present five recipients with two being Gold. Nests with 351-499 may present six recipients with three being Gold. Nests with more than 500 members may present seven recipients with three being Gold.

A District may present four recipients with two being Gold.

The Nest/District President will appoint an Awards Committee, of at least three members, who will make a recommendation for candidates for the Legion of Honor. The candidate for the Award should not be on the Committee, or sign the application.

The Awards Committee will submit the names of qualified candidates to the Nest/District President. The recommendations of the Awards Committee are voted on at a regular meeting of the Nest, or Plenary Meeting of the District. The Executive Nest/District Officers, plus the Legion of Honor members present at the meeting, will vote for the most qualified members.

A formal application for the award, containing details of Falcon work in the Nest, District or National Organization, must be completed for each candidate. A recommendation in the award application shall define the broader activities of the member or Officer of the Nest, District or National Headquarters. It should mention in detail the specific activities in the area of finances, organization, recruitment, or other activities which resulted in improvement and progress of the Nest, District or National Headquarters.

Applicants for all Awards must be in Good Standing (including National Dues) of the Awards application.

Members of the Executive Committee then vote on the applications. If approved, the applications and ballots are sent to the Commandery.

The Commandery is authorized to seek information in that particular Nest or District. They must protect the confidentiality of the application. The Commandery makes the final decision of the level of the award.

## Approval Process

Voting for all Legion of Honor Awards is done at four different levels.

- 1) Nest or District Awards Committee
- 2) Nest or District meeting
- 3) National Headquarters (Executive Committee)
- 4) Legion of Honor Commandery

The approval of each level is necessary for the approval of all Legion of Honor Awards.

Following are the approval requirements for Legion of Honor Awards:

### Awards Committee, Nest or District, Commandery

Bronze .....62%

Silver .....75%

Gold.....87%

### National Headquarters (Executive Committee)

All Awards...66%

## Nest and District Awards

Nests and Districts may apply for a Gold Legion of Honor after a period of 25 years.

This award does not count against the Nest member count.

When a Nest or District receives a Legion of Honor Award, the Legion of Honor Cross and certificate are placed in a suitable frame for display. If the Nest has a Standard/Flag, it is decorated with a ribbon streamer of Gold.

## Special Awards

It is the right of the National Administration, in time of great historic events in the Falcon Order as well as historic events of Poland or the United States, to present to the Commandery additional candidates for the Legion of Honor Cross. Whenever possible, the Grand Master should be given advance notice that the Legion of Honor Cross is going to be presented to a distinguished person by the National President. The Grand Master will in turn notify the members of the Commandery.

## Award Ceremonies

The Award Ceremony is to be conducted strictly according to the Rules and Regulations of the Legion of Honor. The Awards are presented by the National President of the Falcons, by a person designated by him/her or the highest-ranking National Officer or member of the Legion of Honor Commandery attending the affair. If none are present, then the Nest President shall present the Awards.

The presenter will ask all Legion of Honor members to rise and remain standing. Starting with the Bronze Cross, the presenter will read the Diploma/Certificate and two Legion of Honor Members will escort the recipient to the podium after his or her name is called. Nest Officers should serve as escorts if no Legion of Honor members are present. The Silver

Cross is then presented, followed by the Gold Cross.

The Legion of Honor Cross should be worn with the white portion of the ribbon on top (toward the chin), same as the Polish Flag.

An award to a member consists of: The Falcon Cross of Merit on a Red and White Striped Ribbon, A Diploma/Certificate, An Identity Card, and A Lapel Pin.

## Oath for Members of the Commandery

I, name, having been selected to the Commandery of the Cross of Merit of the Falcon Legion of Honor, promise on my word of honor to uphold the rules and principles of the Falcon Order and to work for the good of the Polish Falcons, so help me God!

## Oath for Grand Master of the Legion of Honor

I, name, having been elected the Grand Master of the Legion of Honor, promise on my word of honor to uphold the rules and principles of the Falcon Order, to faithfully perform the duties of my office and to do all in my power to promote the Polish Falcons, so help me God!

## Oath for a Bronze Legion of Honor Recipient

I, (state your name) having been inducted into the Legion of Honor Circle of District \_\_\_\_\_, promise on my word of honor to uphold the Rules and Regulations of the Falcon Order and to continue to work for the good of the Polish Falcons of America, so help me God.