

BYLAWS of the GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION, INC.

1. The name of this association shall be: The Great War Association, hereafter called "GWA."
2. The object of the GWA:

To foster and perpetuate the memory of all those who served in World War One from all nations, educating both members and the general population through the sponsoring of living history re-creations and encouraging research into the daily lives and material culture of the armies of 1914-1918.
3. Membership in the GWA shall be open to everyone age 18 or over, regardless of race, creed, religion, sex or national origin, provided the following rules are observed:
 1. The individual shall join either as a unit member or non-unit member. If as a unit member, the individual shall either join an existing unit which is a recognized member unit of the GWA, or join as a member of a unit forming under the rules of the GWA. A member may be on the membership rolls of only one GWA or forming unit at a time. The sole purpose of non-unit membership is for non-combatants and individuals who do not fit in regular member units, such as nurses, chaplains, pilots or medical impressions.
 2. The individual's impression shall be visually authentic for the unit of which they are a member.
 3. The individual shall not be a member of, nor associated with, any organization which promotes the violent overthrow of the United States Government or constitution.
 4. The individual shall agree to abide by the "BYLAWS OF THE GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION," as well as other GWA rules and guidelines, uphold the GWA Safety Regulations, and pay event fees and GWA dues each year.
 5. The individual shall agree to hold the elected officers of the GWA as non-labile individually or as a part of the GWA for any damage to person or property charged against the GWA which may occur during their term in office.
4. GWA member units shall represent actual organizations of World War One. All member units shall observe the following rules to be recognized by the GWA.
 1. A unit shall portray an actual World War One organization which served on the Western Front at any time between January 1, 1918 and November 11, 1918.
 2. A unit shall contain no less than 8 GWA members on its roster.
 3. A unit shall observe all GWA safety rules, the BYLAWS OF THE GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION and rules concerning site construction and field actions.
5. All member units in existence as of November 3, 1990 shall be considered as charter member unit of the GWA.
6. A GWA member unit or individual member may incur disciplinary action from the GWA for failure to follow GWA safety rules, failure to follow or conform to the standards of site construction or field actions, violations of the BYLAWS OF THE GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION, failure to follow authenticity standards or drug or alcohol abuse. These cases shall be brought before the Administrative Committee for action. The decision of

the Committee is binding, with the exception of the removal of a member unit or individual member, which needs a two-thirds vote of all Unit Representatives for action.

7. New units may be formed and join the GWA by completing the following requirements:
 1. Unit Requirements:
 1. A roster containing at least 8 GWA members.
 2. A brief history of the original unit which proves its existence on the Western Front after January 1, 1918. This history shall be supported by at least two verifiable sources.
 3. A brief description of the unit's uniforms and weapons: noting any special items of clothing, insignia or arms which are special to the unit.
 2. After the application is approved by the President, the unit shall be probationary for a period of two years or four National Events. During this period, at least six members of the unit shall be present at all National Events.
 3. The unit shall pass an authenticity inspection to be conducted by the Authenticity Inspector for the army to which the unit belongs.
 4. During its probationary period, a unit shall prove its commitment to safety by observing all GWA safety rules.
 5. After completion of the above requirements, the probationary unit's admission as a member unit into the GWA shall be voted on by the full membership. This vote shall be conducted by a show of hands at the first National Event following the unit's probationary period. A simple majority shall be required for admission of the unit.
 6. Should a forming unit fail to gain acceptance from the GWA, it shall wait two years before it may apply again.
8. Individuals not falling into the normal unit member status may join the GWA as an individual by completing the following requirements:
 1. Individual Requirements:
 1. A brief history proving the existence of that type of individual on the Western Front after January 1, 1918. This history shall be supported by at least two verifiable sources.
 2. A brief description of the individual's uniforms, accouterments and/or weapons noting any special items of clothing, insignia or arms which are unique to that individual.
 2. After the application is approved by the President, the individual shall be probationary for a period of two years or four National Events.
 1. The individual is not a unit in their own right, and as such, does not have the rights and privileges member units do. The individual shall be placed under the protection and guidance of a member unit.
 2. The individual shall pass an authenticity inspection to be conducted by the Authenticity Inspector for the army to which the individual belongs.
 3. During their probationary period, the individual shall prove their commitment to safety by observing all GWA safety rules.
 4. After completion of the above requirements, the probationary individual's admission as a member into the GWA shall be conducted by a show of hands at the first National Event following the individual's probationary period. A simple majority shall be required for admission of the individual.
 5. Should an individual fail to gain acceptance from the GWA, they shall wait two years before they may apply again.

9. Member units which field less than "6" members at a National Event shall be brigaded with another similar unit. If a member unit fields less than "6" members at three National Events in a row, it shall appear before the Administrative Committee to explain how it intends to get its membership up. The Administrative Committee and the unit shall make an arrangement to bring this unit back to strength. If the unit remains under minimum fielding standards after the period specified in the arrangement, the unit shall be disbanded and its members put in another unit.
10. Member units may participate in a variety of GWA sanctioned events during the year. Events held at Newville, PA unless otherwise specified by the Administrative Committee, shall be designated as "National Events" and are the only events at which votes or changes to the structure of the GWA may take place.
11. Events at locations other than Newville, PA, unless otherwise specified by the Administrative Committees, are designated as "Regional Events." To be a GWA sanctioned Regional Event an event coordinator shall be appointed by the President of the GWA who shall be the liaison between the GWA Administrative Committee and the running of the event. The GWA Regional Guideline Rules and the BYLAWS OF THE GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION shall be adhered to at these events.
12. A bank account shall be maintained by the Treasurer of the GWA with all funds accurately accounted for. The purpose of the treasury is to provide operating funds to correspond with members of the GWA, promote the goals of the organization, provide insurance and build/maintain event sites. The President of the GWA is solely responsible for the distribution of any GWA moneys or assets.
13. The GWA may charge fees for events and an annual dues. It also has the right to engage in any number of fund-raising efforts. Any request for a fee change or charge, however, shall first be brought to the Administrative Committee. If warranted, this request shall be brought before the Unit Representatives at the next National Event for a vote. The vote shall be conducted by a show of hands with a simple majority of those voting required for passage. Sanctioned GWA events may charge an event fee within the directions of the GWA Regional Guidelines.
14. All assets in the GWA's possession, whether money or material, are solely at the disposal of the GWA. Should the GWA ever disband, all assets become the shared property of the members of the GWA at the date of the disbanding. These assets may be sold and all moneys evenly disbursed among the members. However, any liabilities of the GWA shall be resolved before any other disbursements are made.
15. The officers of the GWA shall be:
 1. President
 2. Vice President
 3. Secretary
 4. Treasurer
 5. Allied Representative
 6. Central Powers Representative
 7. Allied Combat Commander

8. Central Powers Combat Commander
 9. Unit Combat Commanders or Unit Administrators
16. The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer are elected by a vote of the general membership. They each serve a "2" year term of office and may be re-elected for one additional consecutive "2" year term. The Allied Representative and Central Powers Representative and also serve a "2" year term and may be re-elected for one additional "2" year term, but are only voted on by their respective side. Allied and Central Powers Combat Commanders are elected for two year terms (by their respective sides) and may be re-elected for an unlimited number of terms.
1. All elected officers of the GWA (commonly referred to as the G-8) shall abide by the terms of the Great War Association (GWA) Conflict of Interest Policy. All G-8 officers shall receive, read, and understand the said Conflict of Interest Policy, and agree to comply fully with its terms and conditions at all times during their service as a GWA officer. Annually, each G-8 officer shall review the Conflict of Interest Policy of the Great War Association and provide the signed acknowledgement form to the G-8 Secretary. If at any time following the submission of the acknowledgement form, a G-8 officer becomes aware of any actual or potential conflicts of interest, or if the information provided becomes inaccurate or incomplete, the G-8 Officer will promptly notify the G-8 in writing.
 2. Any and all uses of the GWA site, the use of the GWA name, or sponsorship of any activity in which money or materials are paid to the organization for the use of the site, GWA name, or GWA sponsorship shall be paid to the GWA Treasurer and shall be identified in the yearly audit.
17. Duties of officers:
1. The President shall direct and oversee all the functions of the GWA. He shall be the main spokesman for the GWA and serves as the Chairman of the Administrative Committee.
 2. The Vice President shall assist the President in his duties. He serves as the Chairman of the Safety Committee and is Vice-Chairman of the Administrative Committee. He also appoints and supervises the GWA Military Police Representative.
 3. The Secretary shall oversee all GWA communications (electronic or published) and elections. The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Administrative committee, maintain records of all committee meetings, oversee the maintenance of membership lists, oversee all elections, provide for the safe keeping of all official contracts and records of the organization and publish notices of scheduled meetings as required by these bylaws. The Secretary shall identify those present, record all votes taken, and author an accurate and complete reporting of all issues discussed at Administrative committee meetings. The Secretary will submit meeting minutes within fourteen (14) days of each meeting for distribution, Administrative committee approval and to be filed as a permanent record. Meeting minutes shall be available to the membership. All discussions shall be included in the minutes, with the exception of these discussions which contain information covered under privacy act regulations.

4. The Treasurer is responsible for all the collection of GWA fees and dues and the payment of all expenses. He is required to make an annual Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer shall monitor all revenues and expenses of the organization, approve all payables and shall ensure maintenance of a complete and accurate account of all funds received and disbursed. The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the corporation using acceptable accounting practices. The Treasurer shall have the responsibility to maintain and file all applicable federal and state tax forms. The Treasurer will produce a quarterly financial statement of income and expenses for the Board. The Treasurer shall present the books for audit by the Financial Committee.
 1. Finance and Audits
 1. Fiscal Year – The GWA financial year shall commence on the first of January in each calendar year.
 2. Funds and Property – All funds and property held by the GWA are maintained for the purposes authorized in its charter and only in accordance with the official Missions and Goals. Each officer, employee, volunteer or its agent, having custody of corporation funds or property, is to be covered by an appropriate fidelity and forgery insurance bond carried at the expense of the organization.
 3. Records and Reports – Finances of the GWA shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and its records shall be kept in such a manner as to facilitate the preparation of quarterly financial reports for the G8 and membership.
 4. Deposits & Disbursements – Any and all disbursements greater than \$25 from the organization's accounts shall be documented in the organization's yearly ledger.
 5. Audits – The financial statements of the organization shall be audited periodically as determined by the G8. Such audits shall be by competent members of the organization in good standing who are not officers of the organization. Upon request, audit reports shall be made available to the membership and to any appropriate judicial authority.
5. The Allied Representative serves as the spokesman for the Allied side in all GWA Administrative matters. He and the Allied Combat Commander appoint the Allied Authenticity Inspector, Allied Trench Master and any other Allied administrative officer as needed. Together with the Central Powers Representative, the Allied Representative is the Co-Chairman of the Authenticity Committee and the Site Committee.
6. The Central Powers Representative serves as the spokesman for the Central Powers side in all GWA administrative matters. He and the Central Powers Combat Commander appoint the Central Powers Authenticity Inspector, Central Powers Trench Master and any other Central Powers administrative officer as needed. Together with the Allied Representative, the Central Powers Representative is the Co-Chairman of the Authenticity Committee and the Site Committee.
7. The Allied Combat Commander is elected by the general membership of the Allied side. The Allied Combat Commander is elected to serve a 2 year term and may be elected for an unlimited number of terms.
 1. The Allied Combat Commander shall have unrestrictive command of the Allied

forces during all combat simulations, training exercises and military ceremonies. The Allied Combat Commander shall appoint a staff to assist him in his duties. He and the Allied Representative shall appoint the Allied Authenticity Inspector, Allied Trench Master and any other Allied administrative officers as needed. Together with the Central Powers Combat Commander, the Allied Combat Commander is Co-Chairman of the Scenario Committee.

8. The Central Powers Combat Commander is elected by the general membership of the Central Powers side. The Central Powers Combat Commander is elected to serve a 2 year term and may be elected for an unlimited number of terms.
 1. The Central Powers Combat Commander shall have unrestrictive command of the Central Powers forces during all combat simulations, training exercises and military ceremonies. The Central Powers Combat Commander shall appoint a staff to assist him in his duties. He and the Central Powers Representative shall appoint the Central Powers Authenticity Inspector, Central Powers Trench Master and any other Central Powers administrative officers as needed. Together with the Allied Combat Commander, the Central Powers Combat Commander is Co-Chairman of the Scenario Committee.
9. The Military Police (MP) Representative shall have the tasks of implementing both the procedural rules and the safety rules of the GWA at both National and Regional Events. He shall appoint an Allied MP Representative and a Central Powers MP Representative. These two representatives shall in turn appoint a number of MPs to implement their duties. The MP Representative is appointed by and reports to the Vice President.
10. Unit Commanders and/or Unit Administrators are chosen by the members of their unit in the manner most convenient to that unit.
18. Member units may have a Unit Combat Commander who serves as both Combat Commander and Administrator or divide these duties. In units with one leader the Combat Commander shall act as spokesman for their unit to the GWA Administrative Committee and shall be responsible for implementing GWA policies in their units. In units which have a Unit Administrator and Combat Commander, these duties are divided and only the Unit Administrator may represent their unit to the GWA Administrative Committee. Each unit shall notify the GWA who their current representative is. At certain times the unit's representative may be called on to vote for their unit in GWA matters.
19. The GWA shall contain committees in order to provide necessary functions for the efficient operation of the GWA events. Committees are established by the President of the GWA. Certain committees, however, are a permanent fixture of the GWA. These standing committees are:
 1. Administrative Committee -- "G-8"
 2. Safety Committee
 3. Site Committee
 4. Scenario Committee
 5. Authenticity Committee

The committees shall be made up of a chairman and a certain number of members,

established by the committee chairman.

20. The Administrative Committee -- "G-8" members shall include the eight elected officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Allied Representative, Central Powers Representative, Allied Combat Commander, and Central Powers Combat Commander. The Administrative Committee shall efficiently deal with the functioning of the GWA at National and Regional Events. The committee shall also serve as an advisory body to the President and a place to bring problems and situations for resolution. The Chairman of the Administrative Committee is the President.
 1. Finance Committee shall have a responsibility to advise the G-8 on appropriate budgeting and accounting practices as a nonprofit corporation. Other functions of this Committee shall be to propose an annual budget and to monitor income and expenditures and conduct an audit as directed by the Administrative committee. The Treasurer of the organization shall serve as Chair. The Financial Committee shall be composed of at least three members who, with the exception of the Treasurer, shall not be members of the Administrative committee, and shall equally represent both the Allied and Central Power. The members of this committee shall be nominated by members of the Unit Representatives for each side.
21. The Safety Committee shall supervise all ammunition, small arms, machine guns, edged weapons and pyrotechnics used at GWA sanctioned events. It shall oversee inspections at each event to determine the safety of participants and shall set safety guidelines. The Chairman of the Safety Committee is the Vice President.
22. The Site Committee shall authorize all construction work to ensure its authenticity. The committee shall also oversee the layout of parking areas and any modern or non-period camping areas or construction. The committee is Co-Chaired by the Allied Representative and Central Powers Representative.
23. The Scenario Committee shall develop realistic combat situations where the strategy and tactics of the two combat commanders can be employed at National and Regional Events. The Scenario Committee is Co-Chaired by the Allied Combat Commander and the Central Powers Combat Commander.
24. The Authenticity Committee shall develop and implement a set of standards for authentic uniforms, equipment and weapons for the GWA. The committee shall also review all newly forming units and determine their historic correctness for the GWA. They shall make their recommendation directly to the GWA President. The Authenticity Committee is Co-Chaired by the Allied Representative and the Central Powers Representative.
25. Process for Proposing Bylaw Amendments:
 1. Submission Requirements
 1. Any member(s) in good standing may propose an amendment to the bylaws of The Great War Association by submitting a formal amendment proposal using the *Great War Association Bylaw Amendment Proposal Template*.
 2. The template shall include the following sections:

1. **Name of Amendment:** A descriptive name or nickname to be used to reference the proposed amendment throughout the process.
 2. **Proposal Sponsor(s) and E-mail Address:** This will enable communication with the Sponsor(s) if needed.
 3. **Current Verbiage:** This section will contain the exact wording of the current bylaw(s) the member wishes to amend.
 4. **Desired State Verbiage:** This section will reflect the exact proposed wording, detailing how the bylaw(s) would read if the amendment were adopted.
 5. **Purpose and Objective:** A brief explanation outlining the purpose and rationale for the proposed amendment, including how it benefits the organization or addresses an issue with the current bylaw(s).
 6. **Additional Information:** Any further details or explanations that the proposing member believes will help other members fully understand the reasoning behind the amendment.
 7. **Signature Pages:** The proposal template contains blank signature pages where at least 50 members in good standing must sign and date to indicate their support for the proposed amendment. These pages shall not contain any other text or information beyond the amendment title and rows for date / member name / member unit /signature. (A submitted proposal may contain as many partial signature pages as is necessary for the required number of signatures, to allow for collection of scanned or facsimile signatures separately from an event.)
2. **Submission and Review Process**
 1. The sponsor is encouraged, but not required, to submit a draft of the proposed amendment to the G-8 at any time for pre-signature review, to determine whether any additions or revisions are necessary for implementation of the amendment. The G-8 will review the draft at the next scheduled monthly meeting, after which the Secretary will inform the sponsor of any recommended additions or revisions.
 2. The proposed amendment, complete with all required sections of the template and all signature pages, must be submitted to the President and the Secretary of The Great War Association Inc. at least 14 days prior to the next national event.
 3. The GWA Secretary shall ensure that the amendment proposal complies with all requirements of this Article, including proper completion of the template and member status of the supporting signatories.
 3. **Voting Procedures**
 1. Provided that at least 50 signatures belong to members in good standing (i.e. dues paid for the calendar year), the proposal will be presented to the membership for a vote at the next national event, by secret ballot during registration/check-in hours. A 2/3 majority of all members voting will be required for a proposed amendment to pass.
 2. In the event that an amendment passes which conflicts in any way with existing GWA bylaws or applicable state and federal law, or poses risk of legal or financial jeopardy to the organization, the pending amendment shall be tabled to allow for necessary revisions and repeat collection of signatures in support of the revised version. If no sponsor for the proposal was identified, the pending amendment shall remain tabled indefinitely.

26. Elections of the eight GWA officers shall be held all together every two years. To run for an elected position a GWA member in good standing shall be nominated by a GWA member in good standing at the National event prior to the election. There may be more than two candidates running for one position, but a candidate may only run for one office at a time. The election shall be held by secret ballot at the National Event following nominations with a simple majority needed to win the position. The Secretary oversees all elections.
27. Any member in good standing who cannot attend an event at which the GWA membership shall be voting may vote absentee by requesting and returning a ballot to the Secretary of the GWA before the vote at the event.
28. Any elected officer of the GWA who steps down from his post before his term has expired shall be replaced by a temporary appointee of the President of the GWA. This appointee shall serve the remainder of the former officer's term.
29. Impeachment of GWA elected officers shall be first proposed in writing, along with the signatures of "50" GWA members and submitted to the President of the GWA. The proposal shall then be voted on by secret ballot at the next GWA National Event. A two-thirds majority of those voting shall be necessary to impeach a GWA elected officer. If the vote removes an officer, the President shall appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the removed officer's term. The Vice-President shall become President should the President be impeached.
30. Project Approval in 501(c)(7) Nonprofit Social Organization
 1. Section 1: Project Proposal Requirements
 1. Project Cost Threshold: Any improvement to the property or any building project benefiting membership and costing the organization more than \$5,000 must adhere to the following guidelines.
 2. Detailed Description: A comprehensive description of the project, including the projected cost, must be prepared and presented.
 3. Notification and Review Process:
 1. The proposal and cost details must be published on the organization's website and Facebook page.
 2. Each unit commander must receive the proposal via their respective G8 Representative, who will disseminate the information to their units.
 3. The proposal shall be made available for member review and comment for a period of 30 days.
 4. Funding Confirmation: Prior to presenting the proposal, the President must confirm with the Treasurer that the organization has sufficient funds to cover the project cost.
 2. Section 2: Board Review and Voting
 1. G8 Board Meeting: After the 30-day review period, the G8 will vote on the project at its next scheduled board meeting. If this meeting is more than 30 days away, the President shall call a special meeting of the Board to vote on the project.
 2. Voting Records: The Secretary shall record the vote in the meeting minutes, including how each G8 member voted. This record must be retained for a minimum of 10 years.
 3. Section 3: Contractual Obligations
 1. Contract Signing:

1. If the project is approved, a contract must be entered into within 30 days of approval, signed by the President or another G8 Board Member authorized by the President.
 2. If the contract cannot be executed within this timeframe, the President may grant an additional 30 days.
 3. Cost Overruns:
 1. If project costs exceed the initial estimate by more than 20%, the membership must be notified and given 15 days for review and comment.
 2. If the majority of feedback is negative regarding the additional costs, the project will be canceled.
 2. Project Commencement: The project must begin within 45 days of the contract signing.
 3. Contract Availability: Once signed, the contract shall be made available for review by the membership.
4. Section 4: Amendments
1. Amendment Procedures: Any amendments to this bylaw must follow the standard amendment procedures outlined in the organization's bylaws.
5. This bylaw is established to ensure transparency, accountability, and proper governance regarding projects that significantly impact the organization and its members.

Version History

Ratified at the Fall Event, 1990

Revised by membership vote at the Fall Event, 1995

Additional changes revised by membership vote at the Fall Event, 2001

Additional changes revised by membership vote at the Fall Event, 2022

11/13/2024: Section 16.1 replaced by membership vote at Fall Event 2024

4/7/2025: Article 25 replaced by membership vote at Spring Event 2025

11/9/2025: Article 30 added by membership vote at Fall Event 2025