



Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Department of Maryland FROM CHIEF of STAFF CATHY GISTEDT Be *A Force For Veterans* in October



Check It Off....Getting Things Done



Don't let time slip by without checking off the following:

- ✓ Work with your Post on the *Patriot's Pen* and *Voice of Democracy* youth contests.
- ✓ Order your Buddy Poppies.
- ✓ Auxiliaries that complete their own 990's for the IRS should get them ready.
- ✓ Send your donations for the Hospital Fund (assisting veterans with their needs) and the Hospital Treat (to purchase gifts given veterans on the Department's visit) to Jackie Kimball.
- ✓ Begin planning for a Veterans Day Observance.

Needed: Good Communication

Teamwork is all about sharing ideas and tasks to get a job done. But to be an effective team, our auxiliaries and districts need to be more than just a collection of members. Good teamwork needs effective communication. In communication, silence is not *golden*. It is *deadly*.

This month, ask yourself: How is the communication in my auxiliary and in my district?

- Are members afraid they'll be criticized when they participate at meetings?
- Are only a few members making all decisions before ideas are discussed at meetings?
- Are meetings not interactive but the constant talking of the President?

Be open to the opinions of all your members.



THE CHALLENGE

Auxiliary and District Presidents, this challenge is for you! Many meetings are held in limited space so seating is very casual, often at tables around the room. At your next meeting, seat officers on the floor in their assigned Ritual positions. Don't let your members forget those special positions for our leaders.

Conducting Good Meetings: Officers' Duties

To conduct good meetings, Auxiliary and District Officers must do their part as outlined in our VFW Auxiliary *Bylaws & Ritual*.

- The **President** should stand when conducting meetings whenever talking. When reports are given or another member is talking, the President may be seated.
- When any member does not have their membership card at a meeting, only the **Treasurer** should determine if dues are paid.
- The **Conductor** should make sure the meeting room is set up correctly. The **Patriotic Instructor** is responsible for checking the proper positioning of flags in the room.
- To approve Auxiliary and District spending, **Trustees** examine bills presented at meetings for spending already approved and for pre-approved spending for upcoming projects.
- The **Secretary** informs the President of any unfinished business from the last meeting so the issues can be addressed.
- Each **Program Chairman** should provide updates from their Department Chairman or provide information on a current project. Chairmen saying "*No Report*" should not be acceptable at your meetings.

When each officer and chairman know their part, Auxiliary and District meetings will be more productive.

GOOD MEETINGS = BETTER ATTENDANCE

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From Cathy Gistedt, Chief of Staff Be *A Force For Veterans* in October p2



Mentoring: Helping New Members

New members! The pride of every Auxiliary's Membership Chairman. But is that all a new member is? Just a way to reach 100%? New members can be your auxiliary's **revitalization**. Mentoring is the key to preparing our new members to become confident future chairmen and officers. Ask your new members:

? Why did you join the VFW Auxiliary?

? What do you enjoy doing?

Use their responses to find a place in your auxiliary that will fit each member's personality and interests. Remember to ask new members for their help as soon as an opportunity arises.

Consider:

- Creating a brochure with basic information about your auxiliary practices and also volunteer opportunities for them.
- Using a sign-up sheet rather than just appointing chairmen to give all members a chance to volunteer.

Don't let your new members be just a name on your roster. They can **revitalize** your auxiliary.

Understanding Our Bylaws

An Auxiliary may only spend money after a motion is made and passed at a meeting with the exception of:

1. Membership dues
2. Expenditures allowed in the Auxiliary's Standing Rules.



From our National Chief of Staff Karlene Beams:

"The District President or Auxiliary Representative must be honest in the assessment when completing the [official] visit form. They must communicate any concerns to the Department President."

Challenges Facing Auxiliaries: Dissention Between an Auxiliary and Its Post

We know how people living together have disagreements. Each Auxiliary is in a similar partnership with their Post. But ours is a unique pairing because without our posts an auxiliary cannot continue. What are the most frequent challenges faced by Auxiliaries and Posts? And, when we disagree, what can we do to improve our relationship?

Challenge: There always seems to be bickering between your Auxiliary Officers and Post Officers?

- Auxiliary members should always be respectful when voicing their opinions.
- Make your Auxiliary so helpful to the Post that they can't imagine working without their auxiliary volunteers next to them.
- Avoid discussing controversial topics in your VFW's social areas, especially when alcohol may affect responses.

Challenge: The Auxiliary and Post are always acting independently without communicating.

- Set up monthly meetings with Officers and Chairmen of the Auxiliary and the Post to plan upcoming events together and to discuss any concerns in this small group before they become big issues.
- Work together on a joint newsletter to keep all Auxiliary and Post members focused on our goals of assisting veterans, their families, and our communities.

To Be a Force For Veterans we must face differences and challenges by respectfully working together.





From Cathy Gistedt, Chief of Staff *Be A Force For Veterans in October* p3

EXTENSION: *How many does it take to form a new auxiliary?*

You may be surprised to know that the answer to this question is just **15**. To obtain a charter for a new auxiliary, you must collect a list of at least 15 applicants eligible for VFW Auxiliary membership. How can you find these possible charter members if you would like to establish an auxiliary near you at a VFW that is currently unaffiliated.

- Many of the VFW members' husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and other family members may already be working with the Post on projects and fundraisers. Obtain a list of the VFW members at the unaffiliated Post to send **invitations** to join you in forming an official group to partner with the VFW.
- **Recruit from the neighborhood** closest to the VFW's Post Home. Hit the streets to place flyers in mailboxes or to knock on doors to find eligibles to join you.
- Encourage those eligibles already interested in forming an auxiliary to **join as a family**. One VFW-eligible member can serve as the qualifying veteran for a multiple of family members. Stress the benefits of being a VFW Auxiliary member found online at National.

Don't forget recruiting those out-of-towners who will be able to participate in auxiliary meetings electronically, but at least 10 charter members must be present in person and willing to accept offices. You may want to submit more than 15 members for the charter if some live a distance from the VFW where you will be meeting.

Is there interest to form a new auxiliary? You won't know until you start to ask others.



HEADS UP! Preparing for Your Auxiliary's Official Visit

As our District Presidents begin their Official Visits to your Auxiliary, be prepared. Here are a few points that your District will be looking at to assure that you are healthy and in good working order.

- **Bonds** – The President should have the original bond and a copy should also be in the Secretary's Minutes.
- **Minutes** –
 - Organized as explained on pp11-15 in the *Booklet of Instructions*.
 - Secretary also has the Treasurer's Reports, Quarterly Audits, and Standing Rules.
- **Treasurer** – Maintains books as required in the Bylaws on pp78-80 and in the Booklet of Instructions on pp18-22.
- **Trustees** –
 - Review bills at the meetings.
 - Have signed the Treasurer's Ledger, Bank Statements, and Secretary's Minutes after conducting the audits.
- **President** –
 - Calls on all Program Chairmen to report information from the Department Chairmen and they also offer new ideas for projects.
 - Auxiliary Program Chairmen are sending reports to the Department Chairmen using forms available at our website.



From Cathy Gistedt, Chief of Staff Be *A Force For Veterans* in October p4



Presidents: The Buck Stops With You!

When you are emailed the monthly promotions from the Department Program Chairmen, share them with your Auxiliary and District Program Chairmen so they receive updated information and those ideas. But be sure to read each of the promotions so that you are ready to share the important points if your Program Chairmen do not. The buck stops with you!



Transferring Members

Members who transfer to your Auxiliary do not need proof of eligibility for your Investigating Committee. Transferring members should attach their current membership card to prove that their eligibility has already been established. An application must still be completed.

Remind transfers that they are responsible to have the Treasurer of their current auxiliary send the year they joined the VFWA to the Treasurer where they are transferring to prove their eligibility to receive future membership pins.

(Bylaws Section 106A and 106B)



Responsibilities of Members Attending Meetings

Officers at meetings are not the only ones to have responsibilities. Members at Auxiliary and District meetings are NOT simply spectators. Every member has responsibilities to fulfill if good meetings are to be conducted.

- ✓ Members approve or correct the Secretary's Minutes from the prior meeting assuring the information is correct. Read or listen carefully.
- ✓ Keeping aware of your auxiliary's finances is an important responsibility requiring that members listen closely to the Treasurer's Report and to any bills read by the Secretary.
- ✓ Elect your Trustees carefully. They will examine the receipts and disbursements of your Auxiliary to assure the finances are being properly managed.
- ✓ When Program Chairmen report, be ready to support our veterans and their families by offering suggestions and volunteering your help.
- ✓ To ensure the eligibility of candidates for membership, all members should understand eligibility requirements and also be able to read a veteran's DD-214 to assure proper service.



Bylaws serve as a foundation helping organizations make decisions by clearly defining roles and responsibilities of members to minimize conflicts so harmony is promoted.



OCTOBER 2025

Strengthening Your Auxiliary



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Check out these suggestions of different ways you can "Be a Force" keeping your Auxiliary healthy and strong. Each and every effort is appreciated.</i>			1 Plan to attend the National Pres Lois Callahan's Visit to MD on the 14 th and 15 th	2 Recruit a new member from your family for the VFW Auxiliary	3 Send a Thinking of You card to a member not at your meetings	4 Plan a Family Fun Event for members & the community like a Children's Bingo
5 Check your personal info on MALTA to update any changes	6 Volunteer at a local senior center as an Auxiliary Outreach project	7 Offer to conduct a Membership Drive this month at a local store	8 Take time to read the e-newsletter from National online	9 Watch <i>Auxiliary Traditions</i> video on YouTube	10 Ask a vet to share his story of military service with you	11 Share a <i>Patriotism Thru Literacy</i> book with a youth group
12 Send photos of your Aux having fun to the Department Facebook page	13 Compliment an Officer at any level on a job well done to thank them	14 Adopt an annual member with health issues	15 Donate unneeded clothing to McVet's or for pick up by the Purple Heart	16 Plan your poppy display for the Department's May Convention	17 Check #AuxinAction for ideas for your Auxiliary	18 Start planning your Veterans Day Observances
19 Collect for Thanksgiving food baskets to give in the community	20 Invite a new member of your Auxiliary to join you at a meeting	21 Volunteer to help at your next fundraiser for the Auxiliary or District	22 Check out the VFW National Home website to learn more of all they do for vets	23 Check National's Pinterest site for many unique projects	24 Review the Bylaws for the proper way to conduct your meetings	25 Review the Audit Package in Treasurer's Resources on Dept. website
26 Act on a Legislative Alert in Action Corps Weekly	27 Ask a <i>seasoned</i> member to share an Aux tradition	28 Carpool to meetings so members not driving at night can attend	29 Present a Thank You flag certificate to a neighbor flying their flag	30 Donate items to a VA hospital food pantry for the homeless vets	31 Hold a <i>Trunk or Treat</i> at your Post for the community	