

# VFW Auxiliary Question & Answer Guide

## **Q. When do the Auxiliary amendments take effect?**

A. August 21, 2015, which is 30 days after its adoption by the delegates of the 116<sup>th</sup> National Convention. The By-Law amendment allows Ladies Auxiliary units approved and chartered prior to the adoption of these provisions up to 5-years to replace the unit's seal, uniforms, emblems, badges, and insignia. The VFW Store will offer select items needed for meetings at a discounted price during the transition period.

## **Q. Will Men's Auxiliary members automatically become members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary?**

A. No. Each Men's Auxiliary member will be required to make application in accordance with Section 102 of the Auxiliary By-laws and pay dues.

## **Q. Can a Men's Auxiliary member belong to both Auxiliaries?**

A. Yes, provided he is accepted to membership in both (as provided for in Article XI and XIII of the National By-Laws.)

## **Q. Eligibility criteria?**

A. Basic eligibility criteria require auxiliary members to be related to members of the parent organization within two degrees of consanguinity [kon-sang-gwin-i-tee]. This means that there must be a familial relationship within two generations. This includes parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren, but does not include nieces or nephews of the member. We believe step, half, and adopted family members meet the "two degrees of consanguinity" standard of the IRS. We do not believe it is necessary to include those terms in the eligibility criteria; those who are step, half, or adopted are members of the immediate family. The eligibility for "foster" relations has previously been removed from the eligibility criteria of the Ladies Auxiliary and does not meet the two degrees of consanguinity standard.

## **Q. I noticed that VFW amendment removed the age, and U.S. Citizenship or US National requirements from Auxiliary membership, does this mean spouses and family members of all ages and nationalities can join?**

A. No. Auxiliary members must be at least 16 years old and U.S. Citizens or US Nationals. VFW By-Laws section 1103 allows the Auxiliary to adopt By-Laws, a Ritual and such Rules and Regulations as are deemed necessary. Each additional requirement for membership in the Auxiliary has been previously adopted by its National Convention and deemed not to be in conflict with the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, or Ritual in previous determinations.

## **Q. Is an Auxiliary member's spouse or family member automatically eligible to join the Auxiliary?**

A. No. Each and every Auxiliary member must be related within 2 degrees of consanguinity of a VFW eligible veteran, which is verified through the VFW Auxiliary application process.

## **Q. Will VFW members (or VFW eligible veterans) be eligible for Auxiliary membership?**

A. The amendment allows those who are currently members of the VFW and Auxiliary to retain membership in both; after August 20, 2015, that no longer applies. It is important to remember that the goal is to create a gender neutral Auxiliary. In doing this, we want to ensure the unique qualities of the Auxiliary are maintained. To that end, all options were considered. Some have asked for a dual membership provision which allowed for a certain segment of members (which included current dual membership holders and future auxiliary members, who in the future would gain VFW eligibility through their own service). Others have asked that we allow dual membership for all eligible members. These options were fully explored but rejected as both could and would eventually saturate the Auxiliary with VFW members. One of the most important contributions of the Auxiliary is the unique perspective it brings through the diversity of its membership. That diversity, and the unique perspective, would be lost if both organizations were filled with substantially the same membership base. To ensure that the VFW and the Auxiliary are complementary, but completely separate organizations, we need to maintain that diversity. Under the provisions of this change, future Auxiliary applicants eligible for the parent organization (VFW) will be ineligible for Auxiliary membership. Taking into consideration current VFW members who are members in good standing of the Ladies Auxiliary, members who obtain dual membership prior to August 20, 2015 and maintain their membership in good standing with the Auxiliary shall be able to hold dual membership. This is, in our view, the best way to work together for a common cause.

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**Q. Why not allow for a dual qualified veteran to choose between the VFW and its Auxiliary?**

A. Our primary goal is to establish a gender neutral Auxiliary. We have considered allowing members the option to choose between the parent organization (VFW) and its Auxiliary. However, this also would allow for future saturation of the Auxiliary, which remains a concern for the Auxiliary. We want to be responsive to those concerns while still presenting a solution that will ensure the VFW's success.

**Q. Are VFW Auxiliary members eligible for a refund of their Life Membership Dues if they become VFW eligible in the future?**

A. Yes. Under the provision of section 105 of the VFW Auxiliary By-Laws, Auxiliary Life Members would be due a prorated refund on his or her Life Membership.

**Q. Does the adoption of the Article XI amendments automatically revoke the charter of a Post's Men's Auxiliary Unit?**

A. No. Men's Auxiliary units are established by the Post and permitted to exist through Article XIII of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. An amendment to Article XIII would need to be considered to effect such a change, unless similar action is taken under the current provision of Article XIII by a Department or Post. Before any changes are made to Article XIII, we need to ensure that Posts and Departments are given an opportunity to establish a gender neutral Auxiliary.

**Q. Can an Auxiliary Unit (former Ladies Auxiliary Unit) and a Men's Auxiliary Unit consolidate or merge?**

A. No. There are no provisions in the National By-Laws to allow two separately chartered units to consolidate or merge.

**Q. If a Men's Auxiliary Unit surrenders its charter as part of becoming VFW Auxiliary members, what happens to their property?**

A. There are no specific provisions in the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, or Men's Auxiliary Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for a Men's Auxiliary to surrender its charter; however, it has been deemed appropriate for a Men's Auxiliary to vote to surrender using VFW guidelines outlined in section 210 of the VFW Manual of Procedure. The procedure would read:

A Men's Auxiliary may surrender its charter in accordance with the procedures herein set forth as follows:

1. A motion to consider surrendering a Men's Auxiliary charter shall be made and approved at a stated meeting of the Post. If approved, the Auxiliary President shall immediately provide to the Post Commander a list describing all assets and liabilities of the Auxiliary.
2. A Men's Auxiliary Unit may then, after at least twenty (20) days written notice to the Post Commander, Department Commander and members of the Men's Auxiliary Unit, vote to surrender the charter upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a stated meeting.
3. The Post Commander shall be notified immediately after the meeting, in writing, of the outcome of the vote to surrender the charter of the Men's Auxiliary Unit. If approved, the Post Commander shall within thirty (30) days, notify the Department Commander and Commander-in-Chief.

Disposition of Property would be in accordance with section 1301(c) of the VFW Manual of Procedure, which states "In the event of a surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of a Charter of a Men's Auxiliary, all official records, money and other property shall immediately become property of the Post."

**Q. If the Post votes to cancel a Men's Auxiliary Charter in accordance with section 1301 of the National Manual of Procedure, or the Men's Auxiliary votes to surrender its charter, can the Post, during the disposition of property, transfer the assets to the VFW Auxiliary?**

A. Yes. Members of the Post may vote, in accordance with the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, to transfer Men's Auxiliary assets to the VFW Auxiliary. This is encouraged as the VFW Auxiliary will incur expenses associated with the new branding of its Auxiliary.