

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

New Member Education

VFW Auxiliary to Post 10225, Garner, NC

History & Purpose

The Veterans of Foreign (VFW) Auxiliary, founded in 1914 to help veterans and their families, is an integral part of the VFW volunteer efforts. Our Bylaws calls for our members to:

"...maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism, and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever."

Promoting patriotism and helping veterans in need are just two of the many ways that the Auxiliary serves their Posts and America's communities. The Auxiliary also has its own volunteer programs directed at VA, state and community.

Eligibility

Spouses, widows and widowers, parents, stepparents (who have performed the duties of parent), grandparents, children, grandchildren, stepchildren (who attained that status prior to the age of sixteen and for whom the duties of parent were performed), siblings, step-siblings (who attained that status prior to age sixteen) of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be citizens of the United States and not less than sixteen years old.

Many of our Post members don't realize that all of these members of their families can join. Some believe that it is just their spouses. So, please encourage members that you know whose relatives are not already members to join. They do not have to live in NC to join a NC Auxiliary. We already have many out of state members. Some joined here then moved, and some were signed up by their family member here.

Levels of the Organization

As part of a National Organization, there are several different levels to the Auxiliary. These same levels are used in our Parent Organization (the VFW) as well.

Local Auxiliary

Local Auxiliaries are established as a subordinate organization to the local VFW Post. One business meeting is usually held each month, and some Auxiliaries hold more than one. At least 10 meetings per year must be held. Local officers are elected every April, and are installed later on (usually in May). The new officers assume their duties after the installation of the State (Department) President at the Department Convention (usually in June).

County Council

The National Bylaws allow for a level called the County Council, made up of all Auxiliaries within the County. North Carolina does not have any County Councils, although some states do.

District

Each State may be broken up into Districts. Most States have Districts (but not all). North Carolina has 17 Districts. Our Auxiliary is in District 7, which covers Auxiliaries in Wake, Johnston, Harnett and Chatham Counties. In North Carolina, Districts meet three times per year, with the location rotating to different Posts in the District.

Districts are formed to act as a school of instruction to members. The District President acts as the liaison between the State Officers and the Local members. She visits each Auxiliary in her District each year, and insures that they carry out the business in a proper manner. But she also brings information from State, and carries the concerns of the members to the attention of the State Officers.

Each District President is also considered a State Officer, since she represents her District on the State level. She sits on the State Council of Administration, which votes on the business of the State between annual conventions.

Any member in good standing of any Auxiliary in the District may attend the District meetings and may be a District Officer. District officers are elected at a District Convention at the spring meeting each year. The District Officers are installed at that same meeting, and assume office when the State President is installed.

State (Department)

The Department level refers to the State level. It is not always called "state" since some Auxiliaries are not with a State. We have Auxiliaries in the District of Columbia and VFWs exist in the Department of Europe, Latin American & Caribbean and Asia/Pacific. But in most of the US, the names are synonymous. Our Department holds three meetings each year, a Fall Council meeting, a Winter Council Meeting and the State Convention in June, where the State Officers are elected and installed.

The State Convention is the governing body of the State organization. However, between the Conventions, the business of the State is conducted by the Council of Administration. Members of the Council of Administration are the State Officers, the 17 District Presidents, the four most recent Past Department Presidents, and any Past National President who reside in that state.

Levels of the Organization

Any member in good standing of any Auxiliary in the State may attend the State meetings and may run for Department Officer.

Levels of the Organization

Conference

The National organization is broken down into four different Conferences. North Carolina is one of 14 States which comprise the Southern Conference. The Southern Conference holds two meetings per year, one in the fall (location rotates to each state in order) and one held in conjunction with the National Convention each summer. Conference Officers are elected and installed at the fall meeting.

Elected Officers of the Conference are the President, Vice President, Chaplain and Treasurer. All other officers are appointed by the President. The President of the Conference rotates to each state in order, so each state in the Southern Conference has a Conference President only once each 14 years.

National

To insure that National Officers are not all from the same part of the country, each year, a Conference takes a turn in submitting candidates for National office. Therefore, once each 4 years, the National Guard will be selected from candidates from the Southern Conference. Any member in good standing of an Auxiliary in that Conference may run for National Guard. Once elected as Guard, it is customary that they proceed up through the chairs until they serve as National President. However, according to the Bylaws, any member in good standing of an Auxiliary may run for any elected office.

Twice each year, members from all over the nation gather. Just like at the State level, the delegates to the National organization meet to promote programs, give awards and elect National officers. But in addition, they vote on proposed changes to the National Bylaws, and see special people being honored as outstanding achievers. The Mid Year Conference is held in the spring each year in a location selected by the National President. The Auxiliary National Convention is held in conjunction with the VFW National Convention, with the location being selected by VFW National Headquarters.

The National Convention is the governing body of the National organization. However, between the Conventions, the business of the organization is conducted by the National Council of Administration. Members of the Council of Administration are the National Officers, the National Council Members which represent each National District, and the most recent four Past National Presidents.

North Carolina and South Carolina make up National District 9. Each year, one half of the National District Council Members are elected for a 2-year term - the odd-numbered Districts being elected in an odd year, and the even-numbered Districts elected in an even year. Since our District has two states (North and South Carolina), each takes a turn electing the Council Member who will represent them. Therefore, North Carolina gets a turn every four years to elect a Council Member to serve a two-year term.

The VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters is located in Kansas City, MO, in the same building as the VFW National Headquarters. The Auxiliary National Secretary-Treasurer is located in that Headquarters office, along with a support staff and the Auxiliary Supply Department.

Why So Many Programs?

The VFW and Auxiliary sponsor many National and State programs which further the aims of the organization. There are awards for outstanding participation in these programs, and judging is based on reporting what we do in the programs to our State Chairmen.

Many members feel that we do the work for the sake of our military and our veterans. They are not interested in receiving awards for their efforts. However, reporting our work is an important function, since information from all units are combined into the annual Auxiliary Fact sheets which are used as a membership tool. The numbers are also used to prove to the IRS that we are indeed a valid veteran's service organization, and not a social club.

The following are the current National and State programs:

Americanism - This program is all about promoting patriotism. Members foster love of America, by teaching young people, and new citizens about our heritage. Each year, Auxiliary members present flags to schools and civic clubs, hold essay contests in schools, participate in parades and other displays on holidays, hold POW/MIA awareness ceremonies, get out the vote programs, patriotic parades, citizenship classes, etc.

Extension - The Extension program is set up to extend our membership. It consists of starting new Auxiliaries and in working to strengthen weak ones. It also includes promoting healthy Auxiliaries – for healthy Auxiliaries are the ones which actively promote our goals in their communities thus gaining exposure and new members.

Hospital - The VFW and Auxiliary supports hospitalized veterans, by visiting them at the VA Medical Centers, as well as in local community hospitals and nursing homes.

Legislative - This purpose of this program is to urge our legislators to preserve veterans' rights and entitlements and to advocate a strong national defense.

Membership - This is where we grow our numbers. Awards are offered to Auxiliaries and to members for signing up new members each year.

- **Mentoring** - Mentoring to new members (or newly active members) is an important part of our organization. Any member who works to teach others about the workings of the organization is a Mentor. Mentors are needed at all levels, to share the information we have learned over the years, and to help new members understand our workings.

Veterans and Family Support - This program includes assistance to veterans who are not in hospitals or nursing homes, and to Military families. It includes financial assistance, bringing meals to shut-ins, and providing support during times of illness and bereavement. It can involve driving people to the doctor's office or to church, mowing their lawn, helping with shopping, or any type of assistance. It also includes support for the Military, such as funding or donating to the National Military Services fund, adopting a Unit, or providing assistance to Military families.

- **Buddy Poppy** - Since 1918, this small red flower, inspired by the poem *In Flanders Field* has been adopted by veterans' organizations around the world as reminder of what our veterans have sacrificed. Donations raised from the distribution of these flowers are used solely for the purpose of helping veterans in need.
- **VFW National Home for Children** - This home, located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, is the home of approximately 100 families of veterans who need a place to stay and rebuild their lives. The children attend local schools, while the parents are taught to be self sufficient.

Why So Many Programs?

Scholarship – This program includes National scholarship for students. The Voice of Democracy is a speech writing competition, which has been around since 1947. It is opened to High School students, who write and record an essay on an announced topic. The Patriot's Pen competition is opened to middle school students, who submit a written essay. The Patriotic Art competition is opened to high school students who express their patriotism through art. The Auxiliary also offers a scholarship to members for their continuing education.

NC Scholarship - The North Carolina VFW and Auxiliary offer scholarships each year to High School seniors who are children or grandchildren of NC members. Applications are made by Feb. 15 each year. (See attached for more information)

Special Project - Each year, the State President designates something as her special project. This is usually something which is especially meaningful to her, and varies each year.

Youth Activities - There are a variety of local programs where students are encouraged to support our military and our veterans. They participate in community events, scouting, assist the VFW in projects, learn citizenship, and countless other projects.

Assistance to VFW programs- There are some VFW programs where the Auxiliary does much to promote and assist the Post. These include:

- **Voice of Democracy (VOD)** - a speech writing competition, where 9th through 12th grade students write and record their speech. Winners at the National level receive thousands of dollars.
- **Patriot's Pen** - where 6th through 8th grade students submit a 300 to 400 word essay. Again, National winners receive special recognition and thousands of dollars.

Why So Many Programs?

The VFW and Auxiliary have so many programs to keep track of. Why do we get involved in so many different programs?

The VFW and Auxiliary are made up of ***Veterans helping veterans***, for if we don't - who will? There are two types of assistance for veterans.

Direct Assistance

Direct assistance is provided to veterans and their families through the following programs:

- Veterans and Family Support
- Hospital/VAVS
- Scholarship

Legislative Assistance

Legislative assistance is provided for veterans' issues through the following programs:

- Legislative
- Membership and Extension (because a **strong membership** gives a **strong voice** when we approach our legislators)

Why So Many Programs?

Organizations which do positive things in the community and publicize them - grow. That's because everyone loves a winner. Everyone wants to be associated with an active team which is doing positive things.

But as you recruit new members, remember that the type of activities you publicize has an effect on the type of members you attract. If you want to attract members who will work in the community, you must start by being visible in the community. Let your city or town know that the VFW and Auxiliary are interested in helping those around them. When they associate you with parades, scholarships, voter registrations, etc. they will think of the VFW as a place to join, and not just a place to socialize. **And that builds membership!**

Community Service

Activities in your community are worked through the following programs:

- Americanism
- Youth Activities
- Voice of Democracy, Patriotic Pen & other competitions

Plus Publicity

Publicize these activities and you'll find new members coming to you!

Equals Membership!

Tips For New Members

1. Each member is expected to respond to any call for relief or assistance of any member of the Auxiliary or any member of the Post who may be in need.
2. One rap of the gavel means stand or sit at ATTENTION (straight like a one), two raps means RISE (on your two feet), and three raps means BE SEATED (make a three-point landing).
3. The Auxiliary now offers different types of meetings. Depending on the formality of your Auxiliary, you can use any of them. A formal, traditional meeting has defined floor work, and officers in sit in a Cross of Malta pattern. An informal meeting can consist of members sitting around a table, and no floor work is done. Whichever option you use is up to your Auxiliary. But regardless of which format you use, there are some items which must be included (reading of minutes, roll call, treasurer's report, pledge of allegiance and opening and closing prayer).
4. As roll call is taken, each officer should rise as their name is called and remain standing until the roll is complete. Then the President gives 2 raps of the gavel to seat the officers.
5. During a meeting, you will always rise or raise your hand to be recognized before speaking, or take part in any debate.
6. You are not to pass between the Altar and the President, except as the Ritual directs.
7. When a salute is called for, the Heart Salute (or for members who also served in the military, a military salute) should be used. The heart salute is done by placing the palm of the right hand flat over the heart when the flag passes.
8. When the flag is displayed, and the National Anthem is played and/or sung, all present should face the flag and give the proper salute.
9. PARADE REST: This is a Military Parade Rest, where the left foot is moved to the side while bringing the arms to the small of the back. The head is bowed slightly during prayer.
10. PROPER WAY TO RECITE THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: (Emphasis is given to the words in capital letters) I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE to the flag of the United States of America and to the REPUBLIC for which it stands, (pause) one nation under GOD (pause) , INDIVISIBLE (pause) with LIBERTY and JUSTICE FOR ALL.
11. No smoking or drinking alcoholic beverages during an Auxiliary meeting at any level.
12. Membership dues should be paid no later than December 31st of each year in order to attend meetings and to not jeopardize your possible need for a Cancer Grant or Cancer Insurance. However, in our Auxiliary, we encourage all members to pay their dues early, so that we can take them to the State Convention in June, and participate in the Parade of Transmittals, where Auxiliaries transmit their first dues for the new fiscal year. If not paid by June 30, your membership is canceled, and you must reapply for membership.
13. All new members are urged to familiarize themselves with the National Bylaws & Ritual.

Uniforms

The VFW Auxiliary has an official uniform. It is a black skirt or slacks, black jacket, and blue blouse. It is the option of each state to have a "State look." North Carolina uses the black slacks, white blouse and a patriotic scarf or tie. These are worn at the Department Convention and National President's visit each year.

Members are not required to purchase or wear this uniform.

A Word About Cooties

What are the Cooties?

The Military Order of the Cootie (MOC) is the Honor Degree of the VFW. The Auxiliary unit is known as the Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary (MOCA). They were founded in 1920 to promote social and reunion features among the members of the order, and to keep alive the spirit of optimism and humor, so characteristic of the American servicemen and women. Today, its objectives of clean fun, harmless frolic, and good comradeship are the hallmarks of the Cooties.

But they're not all fun and frolic! They have a serious side too. For example:

- The Cootie's slogan of "Keep'Em Smilin' in Beds of White" refers to bringing cheer to the hospitalized veterans, whether in VA Medical Centers, community hospitals or nursing homes. Often the Cooties visit as a Clown or other costumed character, designed to put a smile on the faces of our veterans.
- The Blood Program is supported by many Cooties, where life giving blood is donated to blood banks and hospitals nationwide.
- The VFW National Home for Children was started by the Cooties in 1923, and support continues today. Each year, a Cootie Christmas Party is given under the sponsorship of the Grand of Michigan, where each child receives a personal gift. In recent years, a fire truck, a fire station and equipment have been donated to the National Home by the Cooties.
- The Cooties have gathered annually for over 60 years, to pay tribute to those who answered the call of our nation at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, This event, known as the "Tomb Trek", is where wreaths are presented by Cootie units throughout the world.

The local organization is called the Pup Tent and the Auxiliary is the Pup Tent Auxiliary. The state level is called the Grand Auxiliary, the next level is the Supreme District Auxiliary, and the national organization is called Supreme Auxiliary.

Eligibility

Only members of the VFW Auxiliary for at least 6 months (and are at least 18 years old) are eligible for the MOCA. This is because you should concentrate on understanding the workings of the VFW, before moving on to the Cooties.

A rule in the Cooties which says "We pick our company" is intended to mean that you must be invited to join the Cooties. Cootie units only invite members who have proven themselves to be an asset, and one which will not forsake their VFW work after joining. Acceptance includes a discussion of the candidate's worthiness with the local unit members. Therefore, if you are interested in joining an MOC Auxiliary, let a member know so that your candidacy can be sponsored and they can speak on your behalf. So once you get your feet wet in the VFW, if you would like to join our Cooties, just ask!

Membership in the Cootie Auxiliary means that you are joining another organization, and are expected not to neglect your duties as a member of the VFW Auxiliary.

Where Can I Learn More?

Local Post and Auxiliary Publications:

Our Post maintains a web site with information about us, our programs, and upcoming events. Visit it at <http://www.vfw10225.org>. The "*Patriot*", our bimonthly newsletter also contains information about upcoming events. Read yours and come and join us for the activities.

Ritual and Bylaws Book:

Order a copy of the National Ritual and Bylaws book for yourself and read it through. It contains much valuable information. But remember, when you read it the first time, you may not understand all you read. Don't worry, that's natural. But after you're in the Auxiliary for a while, try reading it again. You'll understand more each time you do.

Auxiliary Meetings:

Attend your Auxiliary meetings. Your President and Chairmen should be sharing information on each of the programs each month. Listen to what goes on, ask questions, and participate in a few of the activities. You'll find that you learn by doing. And remember, every member, regardless of the length of time that they have been a member, has the same voice and the same vote in the Auxiliary.

District Meetings:

At District meetings, each program is promoted. And you'll meet sisters from other Auxiliaries who will share new ideas from their Auxiliaries. Each District meeting also has a Department (State) representative who will also keep you informed about what is going on at the State and National levels.

State (Department) Meetings:

Twice each year, members from around the state meet to promote programs, and share ideas. Then, in June at the State Convention, they meet again to elect officers and to give awards to Auxiliaries to recognize their participation in each of the programs. The Convention can be very inspiring to officers and members, and encourages them to reach further and do more.

Conference and National Meetings:

Because of the distance involved, not everyone can take the opportunity to attend the National meetings. But if you ever do have the opportunity, it would be well worth it. You'll be caught up in the excitement, have a great time, and learn a lot about the workings of the Auxiliary.

VFW Auxiliary Magazine:

As a member of the Auxiliary, you will automatically receive the VFW Auxiliary Magazine from National Headquarters. The magazine, issued 6 times per year, contains articles, and suggestions for projects, as well as logo'd items for sale. Take the time to read each issue.

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-- BUT YOU SHOULD NEVER STOP LEARNING.**