

# MEMBERSHIP AMBASSADOR

MIKE MARUSZAK

7423 Terrace Drive  
Justice, IL 60458-1186  
708-935-6610  
michael-j-maruszak@  
outlook.com

*I am the Ocean.*

**I am the ocean** because our National President Lois Callahan's theme is ***From Sea to Shining Sea, Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free.*** The ocean can be calm or filled with storms. Our Auxiliaries are the lighthouses in the ocean that cover a large area. The ocean can be calm as well as rough. When our membership is prospering things are calm. When membership is down, we face rough times. Tides and waves come in different sizes; Auxiliaries come in all different membership sizes.

Having a strong membership base is what draws someone to become a member of that organization. Our membership is the core of our organization. As members, we have the responsibility to help the families of our veterans and foster true patriotism. To make sure that our elected government officials both locally and nationally stand up for our veterans and their families.

## Recruiting New Members

How are we going to carry out what our organization was chartered to do? By recruiting new members and assuring our current members stay a vital part of our Auxiliary. If you look at the VFW membership number versus the Auxiliary, we can do better. We joined to give **Honor to our Veteran(s).**

We have an easy tool to figure out who is eligible by using the Membership Eligibility Wheel. It's quick because the wheel shows family members

who qualify to join. Your prospective members may have question about the Auxiliary. We have a quick solution. Almost everyone has a smartphone or tablet with them or within reach. Our newest Membership tool is our QR code (located at the end of my Program page). All your prospective members will need to do is scan the QR code, which will direct them to the VFW Auxiliary website. They will be welcomed with a history of our Auxiliary. As they scroll, they will come upon a downloadable Fact Sheet, Membership Application and Membership brochure. They will then be able to enter their location to find an Auxiliary nearest to them.

In MALTA, find a fillable and downloadable business card template that Membership Chairmen, or anyone who wants to assist with recruiting, can fill out, download and print. The recruiter could give the business card to the potential member. Always remember to gather the name and contact information of the potential member for follow up within two weeks. Remember to sign the application, so you get credit for recruiting the member. The application goes to the Investigation Committee to confirm the candidate's eligibility. Auxiliaries have several members trained in the applications review process. Remember that a VFW member can also recruit an Auxiliary member. They are also given credit for recruiting that member.

I'd like every Department, District and Auxiliary Officer to ask their VFW counterpart if their spouse and family members are members. If they are not members get them to join. Here are some ways to recruit new members.

- Joint VFW/Auxiliary open house
- Exclusive Membership drives
- State/County fairs (with prior approval)
- Patriotic gathering (with prior approval)
- Newspaper article
- Partner with your Program Chairmen from Extensions & Revitalization, Youth Activities, Scholarships, etc.

## Retaining Members

We also have a responsibility to retain our current membership. Each member we have has something to contribute to our existence. Sometimes our members may experience a time in their lives where they face a financial concern. When this occurs, our seasoned members may delay paying their dues or even forget. We get it, but we do not want to lose these valuable members. We can assist these members in several ways. Consider adopting this member and paying their dues. Consider having a fundraiser or raffle in your Department, District or Auxiliary which will be used to pay dues or purchase a Life Membership for a member or members. The ultimate way of keeping a seasoned member is member-to-member(s) gifting. Remember, if you choose to pay for a member or members, this must be voted on by the Auxiliary or included in the standing rules, i.e., the standing rules state that Auxiliary 1234 will pay dues for every member age 85 and older. These are just a few ways to retain membership. Within your Departments, Districts and Auxiliaries, you know what works.

## Resources

Utilize the Membership tools you can find on MALTA, they will assist you with recruiting and retaining members. Always remember we Joined to **Honor Our Veteran(s)**. When recruiting a new member share a tidbit on your veteran who allowed you to join. My eligibility was a two-step process. The first was my amazing father, PFC Anthony Maruszak, who served in the 8th Army Engineer Corps in the Korean War. My second opportunity came when the Auxiliary allowed males to become members. When recruiting, say your veterans' name as a way of letting the prospective member know you let them live on through you as a proud member of the VFW Auxiliary. Who is your veteran you honor?



## CONFERENCE COACHES

### BIG TEN STATES

Nancy Ustruck  
3812 S. 57th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53220-2051  
414-327-2754  
mothernanc@wi.rr.com

### SOUTHERN STATES

Carol Feters  
13218 Three Rivers Road  
Gulfport, MS 39503-4905  
228-596-5014  
cafeters48@gmail.com

### EASTERN STATES

Margaret Russo  
15 Grant Street  
Sewaren, NJ 07077-1207  
732-887-7947  
vfwadeptnjsec@aol.com

### WESTERN STATES

Betty Decker  
4705 Baltic Avenue  
Farmington, NM 87402-1716  
505-801-1183  
bldeck@live.com

**Conference Coaches** have the responsibility to ensure our membership prospers. These Coaches know membership and will work with each of their states Membership Chairmen. They will get to know each of them on a personnel level so they can achieve our membership goal.

Conference Coaches will work within their Conference to provide the necessary support needed to strengthen our membership with new members. Revitalize our current members with mentoring opportunities. We will work to increase our membership. They will attend their respective Conference meetings to promote Membership. Your Membership Ambassador might even attend these meetings.

Continue your veteran(s) legacy by retaining your membership and recruiting new members so your veteran(s) will continue to live on through you as member of the VFW Auxiliary.



## MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

### **Invite New Members • Include Current Members • Invest in the Future of the Organization**

The VFW Auxiliary started with a small group of women who wanted to serve veterans; it has grown exponentially and now includes both males and females as members. There is only one way to add members: ask someone to join. And once they join, ask them to participate.

#### **Invite Someone to Join**

There are numerous places and times to ask someone if they want to join the VFW Auxiliary. Your approach will look different depending on who your audience is.

In all cases, the potential member should have some knowledge of what the VFW Auxiliary is and what we do before they ever receive an application.

Remember to reach out to your VFW Post members periodically to see if they have family members who may want to join.

#### **What We Do**

Our programs are designed to bring needed services, information and assistance to improve the lives of veterans, service members, their families and our communities.

**When someone joins the VFW Auxiliary, they will have the opportunity to:**

- Support veterans, service members and their families.
- Develop new skills.
- Network and develop friendships.
- Enjoy member benefits.

#### **Follow Up!**

The first time you talk to someone new about the organization, that person may not be ready to commit. It's important to ask for their contact information and then follow up within a week.

#### **Include Them in Meetings and Events**

The key to keeping members is getting them involved. Call or email a new member within a week with the next meeting date and time, or the next possible event or project. Offer to pick them up or invite them to get coffee before or after a meeting.

Put a team of members in charge of contacting new members or members who haven't been to a meeting recently. The team should be friendly and knowledgeable about the Auxiliary.

#### **Ways to Encourage Participation**

- Provide a monthly sign-up sheet for regular events.
- Send emails and make phone calls for special events.
- Public recognition of current volunteers. (Consider posters at your VFW Post Home, if permitted, that spotlight member involvement.)
- Be specific about what they will be doing, including the time commitment.
- Find out how that person communicates best, whether by phone, email, Facebook or texting.
- Have another member stay with them for the entire length of the activity or event.
- If they say "no" to the first invitation, be sure to ask again!
- Plan family-friendly events! Members with children in the home want opportunities to do things with their family.

## Invest in the Future

- New members can bring new life to your Auxiliary.
- New members provide additional volunteers.

## Have a Plan

Every Department and Auxiliary should have a Membership Plan. This plan should include:

- Contacting current members.
- Reaching out to former members.
- Recruiting events for new members.
- Picking a mentor for a new member.
- Before a membership year begins, set your calendar for these events:
  - o Make it as easy as possible for members to renew their dues. They can renew online in MALTA!
  - o Plan recruiting events in your community each year. This can be done by the Auxiliary or in conjunction with your VFW Post.

## Important Tools:

- Fact Sheet, available for free from National Headquarters.
- Business card with contact information/ Auxiliary keychains with Membership QR code. (Order yours from the VFW Store, [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org).)
- MALTA Member Resources.
- Auxiliary Membership Information QR code:



# MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM AWARDS

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES, DEPARTMENTS AND CONFERENCES WILL BE BASED ON THE PAID TOTAL LISTED ON THE CMR-PAID, CANCELED & DECEASED REPORT IN MALTA.

## Awards for Members

1. **5 Member Recruiter Pin.** Each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits five (5) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary will receive a **5 Member Recruiter Pin**. Pin mailed directly to the recruiter.
2. **5 Member Recruiter Drawing.** Each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits five (5) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary will be entered into the **5 Member Recruiter Drawing** to receive a \$100 Visa Gift Card.
3. **“National Membership Achievement” Recruiter Award.** Each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits twenty (20) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary will receive a **“National Membership Achievement” Recruiter Award**. VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award.
4. **“National Membership Achievement” Recruiter Drawing.** Each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits twenty (20) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary will be entered in the **“National Membership Achievement” Recruiter Drawing** to receive a \$400 Visa Gift Card. VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award.

New and/or rejoined members must be recruited to the VFW Auxiliary from July 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026. The Department Treasurer must enter membership in MALTA with credit given to the recruiter by June 10, 2026.

VFW recruiters, must complete the VFW Members Only recruiter form to be received at National Headquarters by June 10, 2026.

Membership Award winners **No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4** will be announced and the awards will be presented at the 2026 National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. If the award winner is not in attendance, the award will be mailed directly to winner from National Headquarters after National Convention.

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. \$50 to each Auxiliary that reaches 100% Plus in Membership by June 30, 2026\*.

## Awards for Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Membership Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for most outstanding activity and/or event training and promoting the Membership Program.
2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on Page 5 and for the promotion of the Program goals listed at the top of Page 45.



# MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM AWARDS

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

## **Awards for Departments**

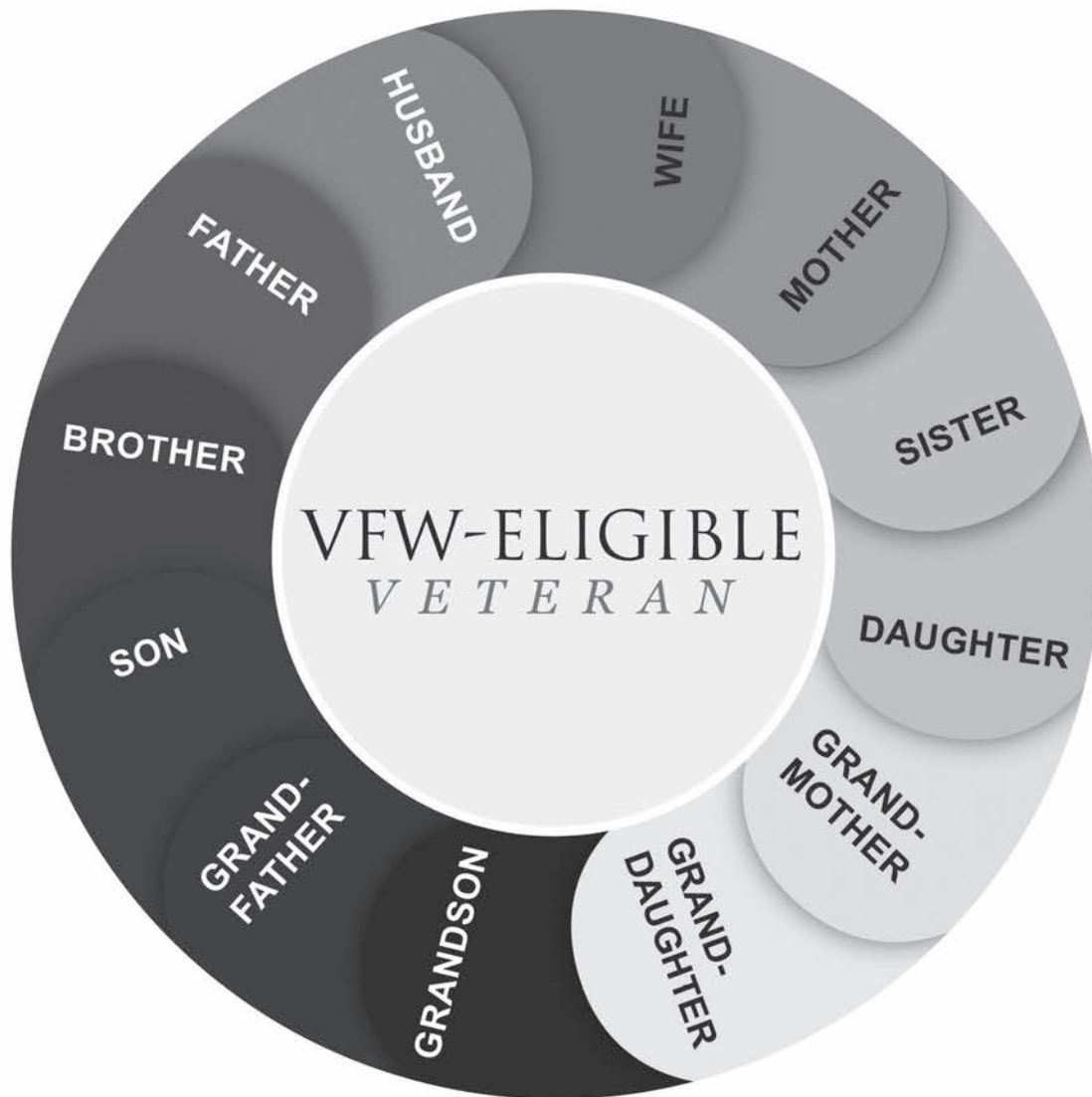
1. Bronze Department Award #1: \$200 to each Department that reaches 95% Plus in paid membership by November 30, 2025\*.
2. Silver Department Award #2: \$250 to each Department that reaches 98% Plus in paid membership by February 28, 2026\*.
3. Gold Department Award #3: \$300 to each Department that reaches 100% Plus in paid membership by April 30, 2026\*.
4. Platinum Department Award #4: \$400 to each Department that reaches 102% Plus in paid membership by May 31, 2026\*.

Departments that receive the Platinum Department Award #4: \$400 ACH will still receive Gold Department Award #3: \$300 for a combined total of \$700.

## **Awards for Conferences and Conference Coaches**

1. \$50 to each Department within the Conference with the highest total percentage by January 31, 2026\*.
2. \$50 to each Department within the Conference with the highest total percentage by June 30, 2026\*.
3. Keepsake to each of the four (4) Conference Coaches for their hard work and dedication in this Program.

## VFW AUXILIARY ELIGIBILITY WHEEL



*\*Step- and adopted parents, children, siblings (and half-siblings), grandparents and grandchildren are considered the same as biological parents, children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren and may join the VFW Auxiliary under their VFW-eligible veteran.*

# VFW AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP / MEMBER TRANSFER APPLICATION

An incomplete application could delay your membership start date.

**Applicant completes sections A, B, C or D and F. Auxiliaries/Departments complete section E.**

**A** Recruited/Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_ Recruiter Member ID \_\_\_\_\_  
Auxiliary No. \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Member ID (If already a member) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Annual Membership ☐ Rejoin  
☐ Life Membership ☐ Transfer  
☐ Member at Large in Department of \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Member at Large - VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters  
(If not a transfer, skip to B.) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ **LIFE MEMBER TRANSFER** Previous Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ **ANNUAL TRANSFER** ☐ Previous Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Paying ☐ Nonpaying  
☐ **ANNUAL TRANSFER CONVERTING TO LIFE** (Fill out Life Membership information below.) Previous Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_

**B** **THESE FIELDS REQUIRED**  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Female ☐ Male  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**C** ☐ **POST-AFFILIATED** (\*Must be a current member of the VFW Post affiliated with the Auxiliary to which you are applying.)  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ to Eligible Veteran\* \_\_\_\_\_ VFW Membership ID \_\_\_\_\_

**D** ☐ **NON-AFFILIATED** (\*Veteran is not a current member of the VFW Post affiliated with the Auxiliary to which you are applying.)  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ to Eligible Veteran\* \_\_\_\_\_ VFW Post (If applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of campaign ribbons or medals: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**E** Investigating Committee Signatures  
1 ☒ \_\_\_\_\_ 2 ☒ \_\_\_\_\_ 3 ☒ \_\_\_\_\_  
Per Section 102 of the National Bylaws. ☐ Rejected ☐ Accepted Meeting Date \_\_\_\_\_ Obligated Date \_\_\_\_\_

**F** **OBLIGATION** In the presence of Almighty God and the members of this organization here assembled, I do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise that I will never wrong or defraud this organization nor a member thereof nor permit either to be wronged if in my power to prevent it. I will never propose for membership any person not eligible, according to our Bylaws. I further state that I believe in God. I will be faithful to the United States of America, obedient to the laws and loyal to the Flag. Should my membership with this organization cease in any way, I will consider this obligation as binding outside of the organization as though I had remained a member. I do so promise.  
I attest that I am at least 16 years of age. I pledge to comply with the National Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary. I attest I am not eligible for membership in the VFW. I further attest that the above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, including my stated relationship to the Veteran.

Signature ☒ \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Must be signed by all members.)

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP ONLY

☐ Check here if this is a gift.

Credit cards may **NOT** be used for initial payment of Annual Dues.

☐ Cash ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ AMEX \_\_\_\_\_ Life Membership Fee

Name on credit card \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address for card \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ CVV Code \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature ☒ \_\_\_\_\_

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEES

Life Membership fees are not refundable.

Attained age at 12/31 of year applying for Life Membership.

Through 20	\$253
21-25	\$242
26-30	\$230
31-35	\$219
36-40	\$213
41-45	\$201
46-50	\$196
51-55	\$184
56-60	\$173
61-65	\$161
66-70	\$150
71-75	\$132
76-80	\$109
81-85	\$86
86-90	\$69
91 and over	\$58

By signing this, I agree to the stated charges for a Life Membership fee.

Revised February 2024