

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA
MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

The mission of the Membership Committee is to implement a comprehensive membership campaign designed to identify best practices to aid Departments and Units in retaining, increasing and reaching their membership goals and to broaden public recognition of the American Legion Auxiliary, its mission and programs. Membership is the foundation on which the program of the American Legion Auxiliary is built, and the success or failure of that program depends largely on how well that foundation is laid. With the start of each new Auxiliary year, we build that foundation even before we plan any of our other programs. No Unit can successfully carry out any large activity without the firm foundation of a strong membership. A Unit, which fails to recruit as many eligible women as possible to its ranks, has not done its full share toward the success of its Department and the National Organization.

AUTHORIZED MEMBERSHIP

The only authorized form of membership is active membership, of which there are two classes --- Senior and Junior. Granting special or honorary membership for any purpose or reason whatsoever is prohibited.

Junior members are defined as that group under the age of eighteen years. Upon reaching eighteen years of age, junior members shall automatically be admitted into senior membership with full privileges. However, a member under the age of eighteen years who is married shall be classified as a senior member.

Once accepted as Senior Auxiliary members, these women may continue their membership from year to year whether or not their veteran relatives continue membership in The American Legion. The fact that a member's service relative is no longer a member of The American Legion does not compel the Auxiliary member to lose her Auxiliary membership.

The phrase "died in the line of duty," applies to all those persons who were killed in action, died of wounds or disease, were killed by accident or otherwise came to their death other than as a result of their own misconduct. In case of doubt, the Adjutant General of the Army, or the Navy Department, Washington, D.C., can advise if the person was considered to have died in the line of duty.

The term "wife," as used in the eligibility clause, does not necessarily mean the wife occupied that status at the time her husband was in war service. Any woman who marries a member of The American Legion at any time is eligible for membership in the Auxiliary. The term "wife" also includes widows.

In 1970, by Constitutional action of The American Legion, granddaughters were first admitted to membership. In 1987, by Constitutional action of The American Legion, great-granddaughters were admitted to membership. In 1995, by Constitutional action of The American Legion, grandmothers were admitted to membership.

UNIT DATA FORM

The Unit Data Form is sent to the Units and usually arrives before the end of the calendar year and is to be returned to the Department Office by a specified date. This document must be filed with the Department Office annually. It should not be assumed that the Department knows of any changes in the Unit dues. Always indicate the amount of dues as stated in your Unit Bylaws. Include the name, address, and phone number of the person to whom renewal membership dues is to be sent. Note: The Department and National do not make any assumptions about this information. If it isn't written on the Unit Data Form National will continue to send renewals with last year's information. It only takes a few moments to fill out the form and send it to Department. Do it every year, even if there are not changes.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Every applicant for membership in the Auxiliary must fill out an individual membership application form as proof of her eligibility. The application must be typed or printed in black ink and must be legible.

Note: *The information requested below should be typed or printed on the corresponding line(s) on the sample application.*

1. Print or type full given name, e.g., Mary Ann Jones rather than Mrs. John Jones.
2. Mark with "X" the appropriate box for Junior or senior member. If Junior, please state date of birth.
3. Complete home address of applicant as well as telephone number. Designate if this is a work (W) or home (H) number.
4. State the Unit number and location where applicant is applying for membership.
5. State the name of the person through whom the applicant is eligible for membership.
6. If the person through whom the applicant is eligible for membership is living, he/she must be a current member of The American Legion. Complete the entire line by marking the "living" box, and by stating the person's Post name, Post number, city and state.
7. If the person through whom the applicant is eligible for membership is deceased, designate by "X" at "deceased."
8. Whether living or deceased, mark with "X" the correct period of military service for the person through whom the applicant is eligible.
9. Mark with "X" the appropriate box designating the applicant's relationship to the veteran. If eligibility is through her own service, mark the "Self" box.
10. Applicant certifies by her signature that the person through whom she is eligible for membership did indeed serve during the period so designated in #8, along with the date on which the application is being certified. *If the application is for a junior member a parent or guardian must sign it.*
11. The signature of the Post Officer should be on every application of those applying for membership by reason of relationship to an American Legion member or a deceased veteran. If the Post Officer's signature cannot be obtained after a reasonable effort, a letter from the Department Adjutant of the Department in which the service relative has his/her American

Legion membership will be accepted in lieu of the Post Officer's statement. Copy of this letter attesting to the relative's American Legion membership must be attached to the application. *If the applicant is eligible in her own right, then the Unit Secretary signs and dates the application.*

12. Applicant specifies program(s) in which she is especially interested.

13. Applicant checks member benefit(s) on which she would like to receive more information.

Back of Application Form

If a member of The American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary has recruited the applicant, complete this line with the recruiter's name, Unit/Post, city and state.

List the names and mailing addresses of other eligible individuals who might be interested in membership information from the American Legion Auxiliary.

Note: The original membership must be forwarded to the Department with the applicant's dues.

Each Unit should retain as part of the Unit's permanent records, the list they receive each year with their membership cards. They should also record on the listing the date a member has paid her dues, and add the name, address and the date a new member has joined the Unit as well.

Recording & Transmitting Membership

In some Units, the First Vice President is the Membership Chairman. This is not a requirement of the office, it is an appointment made by the President. In other Units, the Secretary and/or Treasurer assume the membership responsibilities. There are many aspects to membership including: Renewal, Retention, New, Transfer, Junior to Senior, Lost Contact, and Death.

The membership year begins in July. Although the card year runs from January 1 to December 31, the early membership drive financially fuels the Unit, Department and National. The targets and goals are established by the National and Department Membership Chairmen to generate enthusiasm. Dues are considered payable prior to the card year. Membership is considered delinquent if dues are not paid by January 31 and the member is suspended from all membership privileges.

Each Unit is mailed a Unit roster and membership cards for the coming year. The roster includes the membership number, last year paid, number of years of continuous membership, name, and address for each member of the Unit. It is suggested that the column on the left be used to note when the member pays her dues. The next column is used to indicate when the dues is transmitted to the Department Office. The membership cards are in three parts. Parts A & B are not to be separated. They are used by the Department and National Offices. The last section is the membership card.

Renewal — The National Office sends the first renewal notices in July to all embers. (Note: In some cases a VIM member will receive a notice. This may be confusing to the member. The

Unit may request that renewals are not sent to VIM members. Send the request to the Department Office.) The notice will include the name and address of the person responsible to process the membership. (See Unit Data Form) The members will send their checks or money orders to that person. Once received, the membership chairman records the dues, prepares the membership card, and sends the signed card to the member.

Retention — If the member does not respond to the first renewal notice from National another is sent in November. By now the Unit should be attempting to contact the member personally by phone, mail, or in person. Remind the member of the many benefits of membership. Let her know how important she is to the Unit. A third renewal notice will be sent in early in the new year. It will only be sent to those members who have paid their dues in the previous year, and are considered delinquent for the present year.

New — If any organization expects to survive, it must continually seek new members.

Transfer — Any member in good standing may request to transfer into another Unit. The Unit has the right to accept a transferring member. Refer to Article XIII, Section 8 of the Department Constitution, Article III, Sections 3 and 7 of the Unit Bylaws, and page 27 of the Unit Handbook. Once accepted, the transferring member must sign a Member Data Form. The form is completed by the Unit Secretary and sent to Department Office. The transferring member is then considered a member of the new Unit. However, she will continue to be counted for the purpose of goal with the previous Unit until the end of the membership year.

Junior to Senior — The goal is to retain the Junior member by offering her membership as a Senior once she reaches eighteen. Advise her of the benefits of membership as a Senior. Complete a Member Data Form and return it to the Department Office.

Lost Contact — National Headquarters will automatically drop a member whose dues is eighteen months or longer in arrears. The Unit does not have to do anything to generate the drop.

Death — Notify the Department Office of the death of a member by completing a Member Data Form. The Department will notify National. Remember that advising the District and/or Department Chaplain will not serve as notice to the Department Office. Use the Death Notice to notify District

MEMBER DATA FORMS

Member Data Forms are available through Department Headquarters and should be used to report name changes, address changes, continuous year changes, Unit transfers and deceased member(s).

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Transfer from one Unit to another is a privilege granted to any paid-up Auxiliary member ONLY with approval of Unit to which member wishes to transfer.

Note: Transfer decisions are the sole responsibility of the Unit, based upon Unit's regulations. National Headquarters cannot become involved or mediate disputes concerning transferring members.

TRANSFER REGULATIONS

No transfer shall be made unless member requesting transfer has a membership card showing she is a member in good standing at time transfer is requested. Members whose dues for current calendar year are not paid by January 31st of that year are suspended, are not in good standing, and are NOT eligible for transfer.

No charge shall be made to members for privilege of transfer and no dues shall be transferred from one Unit to another. The new Unit may require payment of the difference in dues amounts, on a prorata basis, when dues of new Unit are higher than those of former Unit from which the member is transferring.

An Auxiliary member wishing to transfer her membership must first secure approval from the Unit to which she wishes to transfer. The member may make her request verbally or in writing. The Officer of new Unit must complete, sign and route a Member Data Form as discussed in "2c" below.

When a member transfers from one Unit to another, the Unit to which dues were paid receives and retains credit for the membership through December 31st of that year. The transferring member, however, is entitled to all the rights and benefits of membership in the Unit to which she is accepted as a transfer, including that of voting in the Unit (Opinion of Counsel General, March 24, 1965).

TRANSFERS WITHOUT DUES

When a member has already paid dues for current membership year to her old Unit and wishes to transfer to a new Unit, dues should not be submitted again.

1. Transferring member's responsibilities:
 - a. Submit her membership card to new Unit to which she wishes to transfer.
2. New Unit's Officer's responsibilities after member is accepted:
 - b. and signs all copies of Member Data Form.
 - c. Retains pink copy for Unit files.
 - d. Forwards two remaining copies of Member Data Form to Department Secretary.
 - e. Types a new membership card indicating she is a member of that Unit.
3. Former Unit's responsibilities:
 - a. Mark an "X" in the Transfer box on Unit stub of transferring member.

Note: Verify member signs all data forms.

TRANSFERS WITH DUES

1. Transferring member's responsibilities:
 - a. Present her membership card to new Unit to which she wishes to transfer.
 - b. Provide payment for dues.
 - c. Sign Member Data Form.
2. New Unit's responsibilities:
 - a. Collect dues payment.
 - b. Complete and sign all copies of Member Data Form.
 - c. Forward Member Data Form and dues payment and Department stub marked Transfer to appropriate Department Headquarters.
 - d. Type a new membership card indicating she is a member of that Unit.

Note: Verify member signs all data forms.

WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

A Unit member may withdraw her membership from a Unit. However, upon withdrawal, she shall be prohibited from joining any other Unit as a new member during the remainder of the current year for which said dues are paid. In the event a member wishes to change her membership from one Unit to another during the current year, she may do so by transfer.

REINSTATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP

Dues are collected in advance and are payable annually for the succeeding calendar year. A member failing to pay annual dues by January 31st shall be classed as delinquent and suspended from all membership privileges which include voting on Unit business, holding office, participation in Unit activities, receipt of member benefits and all other privileges of membership.

Payment of current dues after suspension and before December 31st of the dues year shall reinstate the member to active membership. Any member who is still under suspension at December 31st of the year of delinquency shall automatically be dropped from the rolls and the continuity of her membership is broken. A member dropped from the rolls may reinstate her

membership by either of the following methods:

If she is unable to establish eligibility as a new member, her membership may be continued by paying dues for the period of delinquency and for the current year (and by vote of the Unit, where the Unit Constitution requires a vote on applications for membership). By this procedure she may be reinstated even though her service relative is not in good standing in The American Legion at the time of her application for reinstatement.

If she prefers not to pay back dues and can establish eligibility as of the date when she applies for reinstatement, she may submit a new membership application, which is subject to acceptance by the Unit, and payment of dues for the current year only.

Reinstatement of membership by either #1 or #2 above does not count as continuous membership. Continuous membership is the payment of dues annually without interruption. Once continuous membership has been broken, it cannot be reinstated.

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership — Honorary Life Membership may be given to any member in good standing upon vote of the Unit. The Unit may purchase an Honorary Life Pin and/or membership card through National Emblem Sales, but the request must first be approved by the Department Secretary/Treasurer.

The Unit will continue to pay the per capita tax on this member for the rest of her life. Life membership may not be transferred from one unit to another, from department to department, or from one member to another.

A Unit may honor a Gold Star Member, a 50-year member, a member in a nursing home, etc. by paying her dues. This is not considered Honorary Life Membership and no Life Membership Pin and/or card is given.

The Unit may indicate an Honorary Life Membership by submitting a Member Data Form. Once this is done, the letter L will appear by the member's name on the Unit roster.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Created for Units who confer Honorary Life Membership on outstanding members. Each Department shall establish its own rules for conferring Honorary Life Memberships and certification of these memberships. Special Note: Honorary Life Memberships may not be transferred from Unit to Unit; nor Department to Department; nor from one member to another member.

PUFL Membership — Any member in good standing whose membership dues are paid for the current year may become a Paid Up For Life. The membership status must be verified by the Unit Secretary on the PUFL application. PUFL applications can be obtained through the Department Office.

Since the PUFL membership is paid up for life, the entire payment is made to the National Treasurer. There is no further per capita paid for a PUFL member. In some cases, a small reimbursement is returned from the trust to the Unit each year. The membership card for a PUFL member is pre-printed, and the stubs are sent to Department with a transmittal sheet, separate from other membership cards. No per capita is paid for the PUFL member when cards and transmittal are sent to the Department Office.

PUFL members can transfer to another Unit, and such a transfer is handled as a regular member transfer using a member data form.

Unit 1000 — In this Department, Unit 1000 is handled in the Department Office. The payment of renewal dues is paid directly to the Department by the member. She has no voting rights, and cannot hold any office. She is a member at large and counts only in the total membership of the Department. She is given a card upon payment of the specified dues. Renewal notices are sent to Unit 1000 members. They receive the Department newspaper and the National News.

The purpose of Unit 1000 is to keep members whose Units have surrendered and where there is no other Unit close enough for them to transfer.

Members in Unit 1000 are always encouraged to keep their dues current. They should be invited to join other Units in order to enjoy the voting rights accorded to other members. Currently, the dues are \$25.00 annually.

VOLUNTARY INSURANCE PROGRAMS

The American Legion Auxiliary offers various voluntary purchase insurance plans for members. These include: Life Insurance Medicare Supplement Hospital and Medical Dental Brochures are available from your Department Headquarters with more complete information about the plans.

MEMBERSHIP HONOR GUARD

Proof of continuity of membership in the American Legion Auxiliary for a period of every five years up to seventy-five years entitles the member to wear a special Honor Guard or Shield. This is a Department matter, and the guards must be ordered through the Department Secretary.

Recognition — Units may want to give special recognition to those members who have consecutive membership. This can be achieved in two ways: By purchasing an Honor Guard pin or Continuous Years Citation. The pin is small with a chain that can be attached to the membership pin already owned by the member. It has on it a number and the word years. The

certificate is also available through the Department Office. It is a colorful document with the United States Flag, Auxiliary Flag, and the number of years of membership. Refer to form.

AUXILIARY GRAVE MARKER EMBLEM REQUESTS

In order for an Auxiliary member to have permission to place an American Legion Auxiliary emblem on her grave marker/headstone, one of two conditions must be met:

If the request is for pre-need use, i.e., the Auxiliary member is not yet deceased, she must have been a continuous member of an Auxiliary Unit for 20 years or more (not necessarily the same Unit), or a VIM (Paid-Up-For-Life) and/or Life Member of a Department having its own life membership plan, regardless of the length of her consecutive membership.

If the member is deceased and the request is made by her family, etc., the member must have been a paid-up member at the time of her death.

All requests for use of the Auxiliary emblem on a grave marker must be sent to Department Headquarters. After approval there, it will be forwarded to the National Secretary for consideration. The name and address of the grave marker manufacturer must be included with the request. If the emblem is not to be part of the grave marker, and no manufacturer is known, the name and address of the place of interment must be sent.