



**DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY
EST. 1931**

**DISTRICT PRESIDENTS'
MANUAL**

2019 – 2020

**Continuing Our Service to Veterans and
their Families**



Sheila Lee-Eiler

Department of Arizona President

District Presidents,

Congratulations on your election as Department of Arizona District Presidents. I have every confidence that you will mentor the members in your district with patience and respect. This guide is meant to assist you with your duties according to the National Bylaws.

Learn your job well, as you are the liaison between the auxiliaries and Department. Your first duty as District President, is to schedule the inspections of your auxiliaries. Please review the “Guidelines for District President for Auxiliary Official Visit” in this guide.

Our Department program chairman will attend your Schools of Instruction. Communicate with your auxiliaries before District meetings and have questions or concerns ready for the chairman.

Remember you are now on the Council of Administration. Come prepared with 3 months of future events happening in your District with your auxiliaries.

Again, congratulations. I am looking forward to working with each of you. Let’s have a fantastic 2019/2020, Department of Arizona year.

**Sheila Lee-Eiler
Department of Arizona President
2019/2020**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this booklet is to provide information and instruction to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary **District Presidents**. Use this information as a tool regarding your duties and responsibilities in leading the officers and respective auxiliaries in their district as well as provide helpful hints on improving leadership and organizational skills.

RISING THROUGH THE DISTRICT RANKS

Hopefully, if you are newly elected District President, you have had the opportunity to observe the role of District President. And are aware of how others have conducted District business so you may find this manual a helpful review. However, if serving as District President is your first ever office on this level – never fear, you will find this a helpful guide to a successful year.

QUALITY OF A GOOD LEADER

- **COMMUNICATES THE VISION**
- **LEADS COURAGEOUSLY**
- **EMPOWERS**
- **MOTIVATES**
- **DRIVES FOR RESULTS**
- **THINKS STRATEGICALLY**
- **VALUES DIVERSITY**

Praise in Public – Criticize in Privet

COMMUNICATION – A MUST HAVE FOR SUCCESS!

The Department President, Department Officers and Program Chairmen will be keeping you updated. Check your email often. These same officers and chairmen are great resources. Reach out to them for assistance with your questions. Establish a phone tree or a group email of contacts to communicate with your District Officers and Auxiliary Presidents and Secretaries, so that all can be notified in a timely manner.

Communication can start with a planning meeting with the auxiliaries in your district. Keeping all members engaged will help build successful communication. Your planning meeting can include building a calendar with Auxiliary, District and Department meetings and events. This also can include scheduling Auxiliary inspections.

RESOURCES

The **current National Bylaws, Ritual and Booklet of Instructions** are your best resources. Read them and then read them again. Keep a copy with you. Bring to every meeting, inspection, fundraiser, dinner. If you are asked a question that is covered in the Bylaws or Ritual, it's best to show the inquirer where the answer is found. Other resources are:

- **Robert's Rule's of Order**
- National Website – www.vfwauxiliary.org
- Department Website – www.azvfwaux.org
- The current National Program Book
- Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation
- Supplements such as newsletters, blogs, emails

Use your Department Chief of Staff to call on or email when you need their advice to resolve problems. Or just to vent when you've had a bad day.

Contact your Program Chairman to bounce ideas off. Choose your mentors carefully – they need to be knowledgeable, reasonable and trustworthy.

YOUR DUTIES AS DISTRICT PRESIDENT

As a District President, you oversee spreading the “Good Word” about the VFW Auxiliary to the local Auxiliaries – an important and influential task. Have your current National Bylaws Book and read Articles V Districts, Article VI Departments (for your role at Department level) and Article VIII Officers – Sections 810 and 810C. These enumerate the duties of your office.

As a member of the Department Council of Administration it is your responsibility to:

- Attend all Department Council of Administration meets to represent and convey wishes of the Auxiliaries in your District. In your absences only the District Sr. Vice President or the District Jr. Vice President may function as a member of the Council of Administration.
- Act as a liaison between the Auxiliaries in your District and the Department Officers.
- Preside over all District meetings, maintaining order at all meetings and appointing a District Secretary, Patriotic Instructor and committee chairmen, if needed.
- Attend Department functions such as Fall and Winter conference, Voice of Democracy awards events as the representative of the District.

DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS

- Per National Bylaws 810C **The District must hold at least one (1) District meeting each year to promote Schools of Instruction.** Each district meeting will be holding a school of instruction. You may complete those Schools of Instruction during the meeting or as a separate event When you have the Schools of Instruction outside the formal meeting. Your formal meeting doesn't last as long.

- Per National Bylaws 810C. The District must hold an annual convention where the officers for the upcoming year are elected and installed. There MAY be a Memorial Service held at your discretion. The Memorial Service may be a joint service with the VFW.
- Our National Bylaws require Districts to have 2 District Meetings – A School of Instruction and the annual convention. It is suggested this year that there are 4 meetings. The 3rd District School of Instruction will start preparing your auxiliaries for your yearend reports.
- Your attendance at a business meeting of each Auxiliary in your District except for your own Auxiliary or inspection and reporting to the Department President. Request permission from the Department President to appoint another District Officer to inspect your Auxiliary. See National Bylaws section 609 and 907 for more information.
- As District President, you may call other meetings when, in your judgement, it is in the best interest of the members, or call when instructed by a majority vote of the members present at a convention or stated meeting.
- As District President, you **must** enforce strict observance of the Bylaws and Ritual and all orders from proper authority but so be kind and courteous.
- Within thirty (30) days of assuming the duties of your office, you **must** submit to the District Commander an itemized report of the financial and membership of the District.
- Always act in the best interest of the VFW and VFW Auxiliary.

DUTIES OF THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

- Attend Department Convention including all meetings, workshops and Memorial Service. At the Memorial Service please dress accordingly

with the official uniform or the dress requested by the Department President. The Department President will be sending out information about appropriate dress. Be aware you will be participating in the VFW Department Memorial Service with your District Commander.

- Attend Department Voice of Democracy / Patriot's Pen awards banquet. You will be presenting the winners from your District. Please dress accordingly, pictures will be taken. If you cannot attend, your Senior Vice President may take your place. If the Senior Vice President cannot attend. Please notify the Department President who will ask a member to stand in for you.
- Attend all District functions. If you cannot attend it is your responsibility to ask the Sr. Vice President to attend on your behalf. Then notify the Department President and Secretary of such change.
- Only if you going to the National Convention should you register. National VFW Auxiliary is not sending out the National Program Book. It will be available online.

BEHAVIOR

Dress for Success! You are representing the VFW Auxiliary. This means you must be neat and well-groomed at all times. In many cases, you will be wearing the official look (Marine blue blouse). While doing ritual or floor work make sure you have the appropriate dress to project a professional image. It is the call of the National or Department President. Be sure it is neat and clean

Your behavior needs to reflect that you are representing, the VFW Auxiliary. You are an officer and expected to be gracious and complimentary to all. Strive to be inspiring. Remember what we stand for and always watch your language – there is no place in our meetings or events for any type of swearing or derogatory names or comments.

Social Media - We live in a digital world now – Be very careful what you post on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, or any other social media. Ask this question before posting anything – **“Does this reflect positively on the VFW, the VFW Auxiliary, or our members?”** Something negative

may only be posted once but that one time will be more than enough for a black eye on you and our organizations.

Your attitude needs to reflect that you are representing the VFW Auxiliary. You are ALWAYS ON PARADE. Be Positive, be upbeat, be gracious. That one time that something is said in anger, it will resonate so much more than something that is said positively. Watch your tone when you speak to someone. Speaking very monotone is not that upbeat, and people will get bored. If you are to have a speaking part in part of the ritual – PRACTICE, then you won't stumble over your words. Speak loudly and project your voice so everyone can hear you without yelling. Look at people when you speak to them – even when you are in a group, that makes you more personable. When someone asks you a question either by phone or email, respond back to them as soon as possible. If you don't know the answer, tell them you will get back to them as soon as possible. If you are not sure of a rule or bylaw, do not guess a wrong answer. It is better to take the time to look up the answer and get back to the questioner.

Remember the members are “always” watching you. They will be looking up to you to guide them. Wear your Auxiliary uniform properly and proudly. Know your Auxiliary Ritual including the floor work. Always stand at attention and salute when the National Anthem is sung or played. Salute the American Flag (Patriotic Flag) as it passes by. Observe the proper stance when the prayers are offered. Read your podium book, don't guess. Treat members with respect. Remember why we are ALL in this organization.

- Always dress and act as if you're on parade. You never get a second change to make a first impression.
 - ✓ Neatly groomed
 - ✓ Gracious
 - ✓ Complimentary
 - ✓ Diplomatic
 - ✓ Positive attitude
 - ✓ Dress appropriately for each event
- **Smile** – It is not always what is said that is hurtful, but how it is said.

- **Meetings** – Be firm but courteous
- **Be Positive**
- **Be Non-Absolute**
- Use “I” and limit “you” statements. “I” statements reduce defensiveness and fosters communication. “You” statements can make a person feel criticized and feel the need to defend themselves.
- Remember that social media is just that. Be careful of what you post to your own personal Facebook account; others Facebook accounts, and be careful what you tweet or twitter. Basically, you are shouting from the rooftop for all the world to hear and once it’s out there it’s impossible to take back. You can let your opinions be known without bad language or explicit pictures. Always remember that you are a representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.
- As District President you may be asked by the Department President to speak at dinners or other functions. For best results, be prepared by finding out in advance if you will be speaking and on what topic.

Then prepare –

- ✓ Have a definite purpose to your speech – Loyalty Day, Awards assembly, etc.
- ✓ Use the inflection of your voice and hand gestures that are comfortable to you
- ✓ Use a conversational tone but speak loud enough to be heard
- ✓ Look at the audience
- ✓ Use correct grammar and pronunciation
- ✓ If asked to read something like a biography or a proclamation, ask to read and practice it out loud before you read it in front of your audience. If unsure how to pronounce a name, find out the correct

pronunciation before you speak. It will be less embarrassing for both you and the person you're announcing.

- ✓ If you're addressing a banquet room and need to acknowledge other leaders, write down their offices and names in the proper order. If you're not sure, always start with National Officers or Representatives, then Department officers, then District, then local VFW Auxiliary. When in doubt, always ask!

Your Role and Goals

Appoint District Officers and provide instruction from National and Department to them and the members of your District.

- Explain the role that the District plays in a successful Department
- Mentor your District officers. Take your Sr. Vice President to inspections in your District. They will one day be in your shoes.
- Disseminate information from National and Department to the Auxiliaries in a timely manner. This is not done at the next District Meeting!
- Set and explain expectations for meetings.
 - ✓ Make your meetings informative, meaningful and worthwhile
 - ✓ Dress
 - ✓ Floor Work
 - ✓ Day and Time
 - ✓ Attendance
- Strive for 100% Auxiliary representation at all District meetings and trainings.

- ✓ Call or email in advance of meetings and offer rides.
- ✓ Coordinate meetings with the District Commander and together plan an activity with the VFW to benefit the town hosting the meeting.
- ✓ Be sure to inform the Department Officers and Chairmen for any necessary arrangements or equipment they may need.

Be prepared and run the meeting per the Ritual. Use different color highlighters or tabs for your parts of the Ritual.

- Confer with the District Secretary in preparing an agenda and share it with the other officers and chairman. In your podium book are examples of an agenda.
- Ask for questions often, especially if an issue seems unclear.
- Find out all facts and announcements to be made.
- Notify all who are expected to speak and give them an allotted time – 5-10 Minutes is acceptable.
- Plan a District “SWAP” Sharing Wonderful Auxiliary Projects
- Plan a District Family Freedom Festival
- Emphasize the important of installation, bonds, inspections and delegates to conventions. Don't forget timelines and due dates.
- Make sure you and the other officers have the necessary tools for the meeting:
 - ✓ Prepared Agenda
 - ✓ Current National Bylaws and Ritual
 - ✓ District Charter, flags, stands, Bible Altar Cloth, gavel, watch District/Department calendars, paper and pen, etc.
 - ✓ List of District Officers, Program Chairmen (if any), Past District Presidents, Auxiliaries

National Program Book (this is now online).

- ✓ National and Department Chairmen's promotional material (newsletters, blogs, etc.)
- ✓ Current membership report and donations report
- ✓ Hospital Guide
- ✓ Roberts Rule

MEETINGS

Strive to have your District meetings remembered as: Informative, fun and lively, energized, encouraging, appreciative, sensitive, veteran and family centered, caring passionate, enthusiastic, warm, open and friendly.

- Arrive early and make sure the room is ready – It is the responsibility of the Conductress to arrange the room – test microphones, set temperature, set up head table and chairs, podium, altar, officer's stations, etc.
- Start on time! If there is a delay, let the members know the cause of the delay and when the meeting will start.
- Verify that you have a quorum (shall not be less than Officers and/or Delegates representing one fourth (1/4) of the Auxiliaries of the District
- Use your gavel wisely –
 - To open and close the meeting
 - To call attention and maintain order
 - To rise and seat the membership
- If a motion is made improperly, it is the motion that is out of order – not the person. Help the member to make the motion in the proper manner.

- Present a speaker – you do not turn the meeting over to speaker.
- You call on the Auxiliary Presidents for their reports. Encourage them to announce upcoming items (usually the next 3 months) and to distribute flyers with the extra information. Encourage your Auxiliaries to work together on events to share the work and the enjoyment of a job well done.

Guidelines for District President for Auxiliary Official Visit

The Annual Auxiliary Inspection is the Auxiliary “checkup”. Is this Auxiliary healthy?

- Have the new officers been installed?
- Are the President and Treasurer bonded with the sufficient amount?
- Is all banking information current?
- Is the auxiliary recruiting new members?
- Making requested donations?
- Working on Programs?
- Are they being kind to one another?
- Do they mentor new members?

Have a positive attitude and be ready to lead the Auxiliaries in your District to success. It is your responsibility to inspect all Auxiliaries except for your own. Which the District Sr. Vice should do. Request permission for the Sr. Vice President or another officer to inspect your Auxiliary. If you cannot inspect an Auxiliary for any reason, the Department President, must be notified before sending someone else to perform the inspection.

Prior to the inspection –

- Notify the Auxiliary President of your scheduled inspection day and time. This should be done in writing but can be done by email. Attach a copy of a sample letter is included in this manual. This should be done at least one month before the inspection.
- On the day of your scheduled inspection:
 - Be on time.

- Notify the President and Secretary in advance of any guests you're bringing. Such as your Sr. Vice.
- Have a copy of the membership stats, Chaplain report and mandate/donation report.
- Expect to have an exciting, fun, rewarding time with each Auxiliary you inspect. A warm friendly smile warms the room and eases the nerves.
- No two Auxiliaries are alike, treat all fairly and impartially.
- Expect the unexpected. If you are asked a question and don't know the answer, simply say that you will research the matter and get back with the answer. Then follow up and do exactly that.
- Contact the Department President regularly to find out in advance any items she wants brought to the attention of the Auxiliaries.
- Know the Programs and be ready to respond to inquiries from the members if the Auxiliary President cannot. Suggest ways to work as a District and all auxiliaries participating get credit.
- Speak from the heart about our mission to help veterans and their families, not about personal issues.
- Offer advice on programs as needed, offer to help with reports.
- At the end of the meeting the President should call on you for your comments. Always have something positive and complimentary to say first, then address any items of concern, then end with a positive comment. If an officer makes a ritual mistake, take them aside after the meeting and show them the proper action.

- Complete the Auxiliary Inspection Report Form, sign and give a copy to the President for her file. Send copies to the Department President for her review and the Department Secretary. Keep a copy for your records. Be honest in the report and if there is a problem, include suggestions for further action by you as District President or Department Officers.
- Encourage the Auxiliary Officers to keep in touch with you.
- Follow upon any questions the members had – respond personally even if you had someone else contact them with an answer. *“President Sue, I just wanted to make sure that the Youth Activities Chairman was able to help with your question. Do you need me to follow up?”*

PERSONAL GOALS

- Be inspired – have passion – mentor – give tools to work with – recognize and reward achievement.
- Master the art of delegating
- ✓ Delegate when there is a lot of work to be done in a limited amount of time, when someone expresses interest in the task or when a person might benefit from the responsibility of completing the task.
- ✓ Ask for volunteers: Explain the task and ask who is interested: Select people with talents for a task and express confident in their abilities. Ask people directly to help – Then follow up before the event.
- ✓ Spread the good talks around. Never delegate something that you yourself would never do. Never delegate the leftovers.

- ✓ Set Deadlines for completion of the task and trust that the task will be completed. But a nice friendly follow up is always appreciated.
- Return phone calls daily
- Check emails daily and reply the same day if possible. Even if it's to say "I received your email, but I don't have the answer to your question. I'll get the answer and get back to you as quickly as I can."

I know of no single formula for success. But over the years I have observed that some attributes of leadership are universal and are often about finding ways of encouraging people to combine their efforts, their talents, their insights, their enthusiasm and their inspiration to work together

Queen Elizabeth II