



Department of Texas

New Member Handbook

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY!!

In the following pages, you will find almost everything a new member needs to know about The American Legion Auxiliary. But, remember, this booklet will not answer all of your questions. **SO ASK YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS!!**

We are all here for the same purposes and we are all colleagues on the same level.

Please read this carefully, as it will guide you through your years of service to our country and its people. At first, you may feel that there are a lot of rules to remember, but in time, they will become second nature to you. Do not feel overwhelmed. Read a few pages at a time. It took many of our members years to handle all of the regulations. Don't try to memorize all of them at one sitting. As you flip through the pages, it may seem a little scary, but we are not in boot camp. No one will put you on Kitchen Patrol if you make a wrong move! So have fun!!

We can all be more productive if we are in high spirits. As you attend more functions and get to know the organization, you will realize that we are all here for the same purpose and united by a common bond—AMERICA!!



SO NOW YOU'RE A MEMBER OF THE AUXILIARY

You've joined the American Legion Auxiliary.

WHY DID YOU JOIN?
HAVE YOU BEEN INITIATED?
DID YOU RECEIVE AN AUXILIARY PIN?
DID YOU RECEIVE A MANUAL OF CEREMONIES?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION?
DO YOU HAVE A COPY OF THE UNIT CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS?
WHAT DO THE MEMBERS MEAN WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT PROGRAMS?

These are only a few of the questions that you, as a new member, might ask. As a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, you deserve the answers to these questions and many more. But, remember, **YOU** as a member have a responsibility, too.

Are **YOU** asking questions? Have **YOU** asked someone in the Unit to explain the programs to you? Nothing is secret. **YOU** have the same rights as any other member to know what is going on and how your organization operates. As a new member, **YOU** will learn faster if **YOU** become involved. Do not be afraid to volunteer to work on the various projects in your Unit, but DO ask to be put on committees where there are experienced members who can help **YOU** learn the ropes.

YOU can learn much about the American Legion Auxiliary by reading the Unit Handbook. If **YOU** do not have one, ask to borrow another member's and then try to purchase one for yourself. They are invaluable in answering questions about our organization and **YOU** will find yourself answering questions about our organization and **YOU** will find yourself returning for the elusive answer many times in the future.

Much can also be learned about the basic structure of the programs by reading the Post Guide. Borrow one from one of your Legionnaires and read it. **YOU** will be surprised at what **YOU** will learn.

Attendance at Unit, District and Department meetings is another good way of learning about the organization. **YOU** also pick up lots of good ideas as to how other Units run their programs and have lots of fun besides.

DO these things and **YOU** will begin to feel like you really belong. To help **YOU** a little further on your way, the following pages detail the A B C's for members and your rights as a member.

THE BASICS

Here are some of the things that you will be expected to know:

1. Three raps of the gavel means to stand up, one rap means to sit down.
2. Always wear your membership pin over your heart.
3. Nothing may be placed above your membership pin except a flag pin or corsages.
4. The area in front of the President's podium between the American flag and the American Legion Auxiliary banner is hallowed ground. During a meeting you should not step between or reach across this area for any reason. This area symbolizes the unity between America and our organization.
5. When at a meeting, and you wish to speak, stand and address the President, "Madam President", wait to be recognized and then speak.
6. The presiding officer is referred to as "the chair".
7. To speak to another member on a subject in a meeting, rise, address the presiding officer and state, "I wish to speak through the Chair to Mrs. Jones."
8. This organization is divided up into sections. The following is the exact order.
 - a. **UNITS** – the smallest division. UNIT usually refers to a city. (there can be many units within a city)
 - b. **DISTRICTS** – UNITS make up DISTRICTS. There are usually several UNITS in a DISTRICT.
 - c. **DIVISIONS** – DISTRICTS make up DIVISIONS. The American Legion designated DIVISIONS which are several districts in specific areas.
 - d. **DEPARTMENTS** – DEPARTMENT is another word for the STATE. In the DEPARTMENT of Texas, there are 23 Districts and 4 Divisions.
 - e. **NATIONAL** – This is the term used to describe the organization as a whole. There are UNITS in other countries, but they are still referred to as in NATIONAL, and have the same National President.



EXPLANATION OF THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

When the American Legion Auxiliary was formed to aid in the peacetime service of The American Legion to the United States, it was natural and right that the purposes of the Auxiliary be expressed in the same words which set forth the purposes of the Legion. Therefore, the Preamble to the Constitution of the Auxiliary is nearly identical to that of the Legion's Preamble to the Constitution with the addition of the very significant phrase *"to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of the American Legion."*

**"For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:
To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America..."**

The first of the ten principles of The American Legion and Auxiliary is a sacred pledge of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. It is most appropriate that those very persons who have either served in war-time or had a close relative who served dedicate the first ideas presented in the Preamble to the continued defense of our nation. The pledge to uphold and defend the democracy of America is the first obligation of every Legionnaire and Auxiliary member.

"To maintain law and order..."

Law and order must be maintained if freedom is to be maintained. Liberty is not a license. Good government means that all citizens are secure in their lives and property. To this, the Legion and Auxiliary are pledged by the second principle stated in the Preamble.

"To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism..."

The term "Americanism" covers all of the things that have made the American nation great and the American people free. It implies qualities of character as well as principles of government. Under this Constitution's principles, the Legion and Auxiliary have worked, and are continuing to work, to defeat the attempts of subversive organizations to undermine our system, to build loyalty to and confidence in American ideals, and to develop an American citizenship capable of making America's free form of government a constantly greater success.

"To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations during All Wars..."

Every member of the Auxiliary has close personal associations with the sacrifice of war, be it World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada/Lebanon, Panama, and the Persian Gulf War. The associations and incidents of these struggles are to be remembered not only for their heroes, their victories for freedom, but also to remind us of the awful implications and the inevitable tragedies accompanying any war.

"To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation..."

The individual is the basis of the American nation. Unlike other ideals of government, the American ideal places the individual first. The nation belongs to the individual, not the individual to the nation. The government exists for the purpose of serving the individual, not the individual serving the nation. If this ideal is to survive, there must be a voluntary sense of obligation of the individual to the nation and its component parts, the community and state. The American citizen serves his community, state and nation, not as a driven slave, but as a free man guided by his own sense of duty. To inculcate this feeling among all Americans is one of the great purposes of the Legion and Auxiliary.

“To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses...”

If America is to remain “the land of the free,” the government must always be a government of all the people and for all the people. No classes are recognized in America. America must be kept the country of opportunity for all, where every citizen’s first allegiance is to the nation not to some social or economic class or mass. Dominance must not be gained by any such grouping of Americans. This is another basic pledge of the Legion and Auxiliary.

“To make right the master of might...”

The American form of government guarantees equal rights to all citizens. The American Legion Auxiliary, born from a struggle against ruthless might, pledges all their strength to a continued struggle to prevent invasion of the rights of any citizens by any force, no matter of what character.

“To promote peace and goodwill on earth...”

The men and women of the Legion and the women of the Auxiliary know well the ghastly futility of war. We know that war brings only misery to any nation which engages in it, to the victor as well as the vanquished. With the lessons of war constantly in mind, we pledge ourselves to promote peace and goodwill among nations. We have worked steadily in the cause in the face of forces which have sought to sow enmity and war throughout the world.

“To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy...”

These were the principles which inspired America’s great war efforts over the decades, and the Legion and Auxiliary stand determined that these principles should not be lost to America in time of peace. Following this pledge, the Legion and Auxiliary work to safeguard justice, freedom and democracy against the dangers of indifferent citizenship and undermining by their enemies. It strives to give understanding of and devotion to these principles to the younger generations of Americans so that they will endure for the future of our country.

“To participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion...”

Thus, the Auxiliary pledges its full strength to the support of The American Legion, and affirms its character as an auxiliary to the Legion. It has always been faithful to this pledge, never developing programs or policies of its own, but directing all of its activities toward the “accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion.”

“To consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”

In this final phrase of the Preamble is set forth the purpose which has guided the Legion and Auxiliary in all of their vast rehabilitation and youth work; in everything they have done to lighten the burden for those suffering from the results of wars; and to bring full justice to those paying the human price for America’s victory. In this work of mercy and relief, the Auxiliary has made great contributions toward the achievement of the Legion’s purpose.

THE EMBLEM WE WEAR



The emblem of the American Legion Auxiliary is the member's badge of distinction and honor. It stands for God and country and the highest rights of man. It consists of several parts and each part has a meaning.

The rays of the sun that form the background stand for the principles of the American Legion Auxiliary—loyalty, justice, freedom and democracy; dispelling the darkness of violence, strife and evil.

The unbroken circle of blue represents unity and loyalty.

The field of white exemplifies the hope of freedom.

The star of blue is the emblem of service in war; it is no less the emblem of service in time of peace.

The emblem of the American Legion Auxiliary is the emblem of Americanism. It is a badge of service to community, state and nation, obligating the wearer to ever guard the sanctity of home, country and free institutions.

ARE YOU PROUD WHEN YOU WEAR YOUR
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY PIN?

I AM!!!!

INFORMATION GOVERNING THE USE OF THE EMBLEM

The possession of this emblem in this format does not constitute permission to reproduce it. Permission to reproduce the emblems of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of the American Legion is confined to those activities listed below.

“The American Legion emblem is fully copyrighted & patented in the name of the National organization. The emblem is also protected by federal legislation which makes it a criminal offense to use, without formal approval of the National organization, the patented insignia of any veterans' group chartered by Congress, one of which is The American Legion.”

The above restrictions apply equally to the emblems of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion.

The use of the emblem by an individual Auxiliary member is limited to the wearing of the official insignia & to the possession of authorized jewelry of merchandise bearing the insignia. Units are confined to using the emblem or reproduction of the emblem on stationery, Unit publications, notices, posters, or place cards, or matters of similar character used in the ordinary routine and conduct of legitimate Unit business. Departments are similarly limited. Any other use of the name “The American Legion Auxiliary” or the emblem shall be subject to the approval of the National Secretary.