



VFW Auxiliary

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary National Headquarters



Membership Eligibility



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What Is Being Covered

- Review of the By-Laws covering eligibility
- The three pillars of VFW Auxiliary eligibility
- What to look for on a DD-214 or other documents



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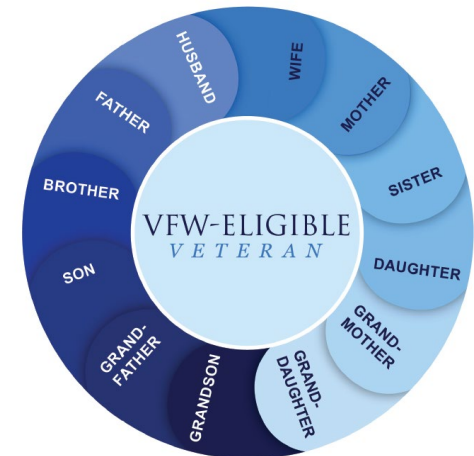
Section 101 of By-Laws

An eligible person for membership is anyone that:

- 1) Professes a belief in God and;
- 2) Is not less than sixteen years old and;
- 3) Is related to VFW eligible veteran within two degrees of kinship

- Husband / Wife
- Father / Mother
- Son / Daughter
- Brother / Sister
- Widower / Widow
- Grandfather / Grandmother
- Grandson / Granddaughter

VFW AUXILIARY ELIGIBILITY WHEEL





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Section 101 of By-Laws

A VFW Eligible Veteran is one that has:

- (1) Served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States **and**:
- (2) served in a foreign war, insurrection, or expedition, which service has been recognized as campaign medal service and is governed by the authorization of the award of a campaign badge by the Government of the United States; **or**
- (3) served on the Korean peninsula or in its territorial waters for not less than 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 days, after June 30, 1949; **or**
- (4) while a member of the armed forces serving in an area which entitled the individual to receive special pay for duty subject to **hostile fire** or **imminent danger**



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Pillars of Eligibility

Relationship

Honorable Service

Foreign Conflict



All three must be met!



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Relationship

Section 101 restricts membership to closely related relatives of VFW eligible veterans.

Must be related to VFW eligible veteran within two degrees of consanguinity. Must be:

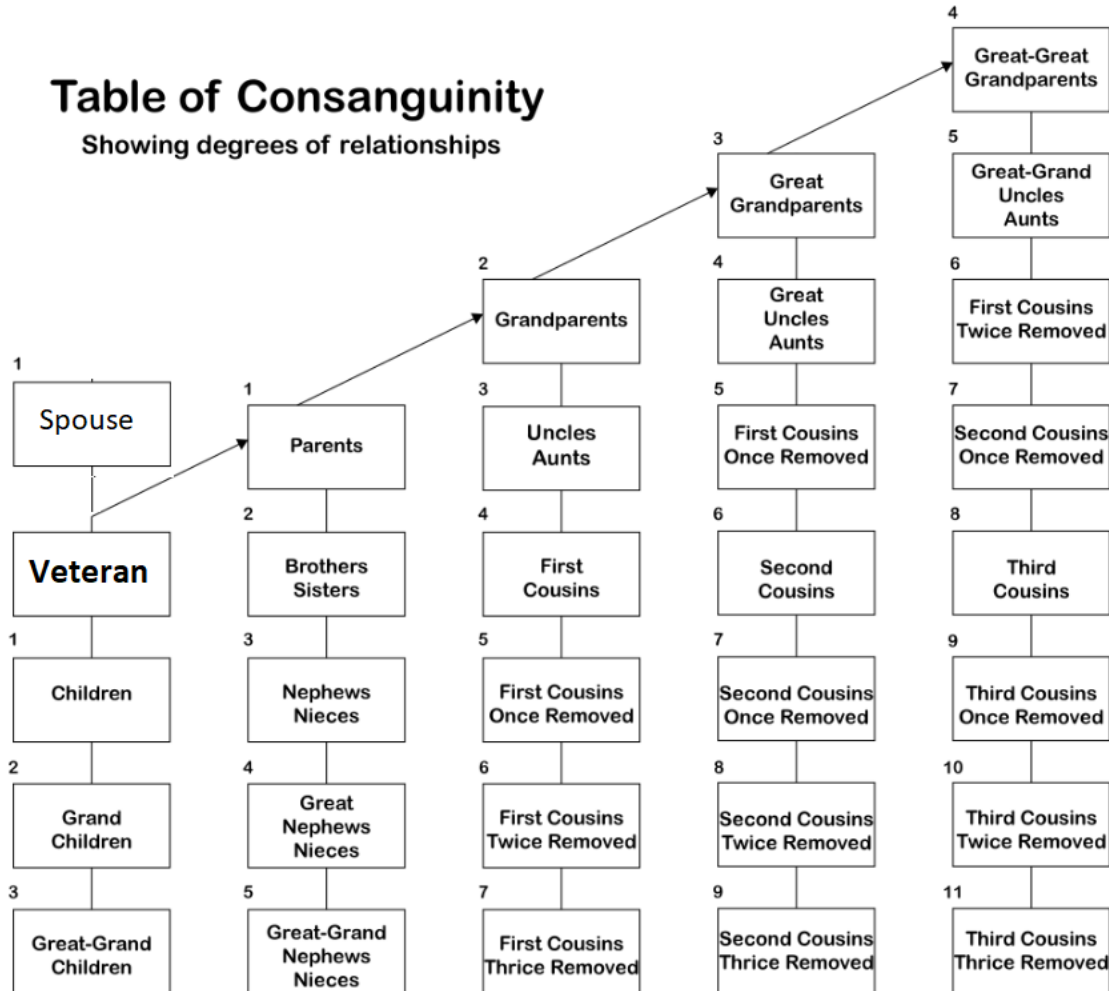
- Husband / Wife *(anyone who is already an Auxiliary member and obtains a divorce shall not have their entitlement to membership questioned as long as they continue to be a member in good standing)
**(a person who obtains a divorce from an eligible veteran may not join or rejoin the Auxiliary under that veteran's eligibility)
- Father / Mother (in-laws are not eligible)
- Son / Daughter (no distinguishment of step-children)
- Brother / Sister (no distinguishment of half-siblings)
- Widower / Widow (a person who was widowed from an eligible veteran may join the Auxiliary even if they have remarried)
- Grandfather / Grandmother
- Grandson / Granddaughter



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Relationship

Table of Consanguinity
Showing degrees of relationships





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Honorable Service

Types of military discharge:

ACCEPTABLE

Honorable

General

General (Under Honorable
Conditions)

NOT ACCEPTABLE

Other Than Honorable

Bad Conduct

Undesirable

Dishonorable

Entry-Level Separation

Clemency

Uncharacterized



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Service in a Foreign Conflict

Must have either:

- Campaign Ribbon or Medal from those listed in the Bylaws
- Have received Hostile Fire Pay or Imminent Danger Pay
- Have served in Korea for at least 30 consecutive or 60 total days



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Campaign Ribbons or Medals

Common mistakes:

- World War II Victory Medal (*nonqualifying*)
- Global War On Terrorism *Expeditionary* Medal (*qualifying*) vs Global War On Terrorism *Service* Medal (*nonqualifying*)
- National Defense Service Medal (*nonqualifying*)

Make sure to *always* verify the correct awards!



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Hostile Fire & Imminent Danger Pay

- Not the same as Hazardous Duty Pay!
- Hostile Fire Pay = was physically under enemy fire or in the vicinity of an exploded enemy munition. (Event-Based)
- Imminent Danger Pay = was in a location where enemy action was occurring or likely to occur. (Location-Based)
- Started in 1971 (Cambodia) and 1973 (Vietnam), anything prior is not the same thing



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DD-214, What to Look For?

1. Character of Service

- If not shown, request Copy 2. May request this from the National Personnel Records Center (www.archives.gov).
- Narrative reason for separation does not matter. Only the character of service.

2. Awards, Decorations, and Medals

- Usually, a large block on the lower half of the form.



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Other Useful Documents

Other useful documents include

- DD-256: Certificate of Honorable Discharge
- Leave & Earnings Statement (LES)
- Travel Orders or Memorandums
- Other official *military* documentation stating the necessary information.
- **MAY NOT** use headstone/gravestone as proof of eligibility



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What About Navy Ships?

<https://goatlocker.org/resources/nav/1650.pdf>

From 1954 through 2003, the Navy would often award campaign medals to a specific ship. Every sailor and marine on board would be eligible for the award.

However, if the veteran was discharged from a shore station, the veteran may not have had the paperwork showing those awards, and they might not have been included on the DD-214.

If the ship name and dates the veteran was aboard, the ship can be researched in OPNAV-1650, the Navy's Operational Document recording all medals awarded to a Navy vessel.



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What About Navy Ships?

This is an example page from OPNAV-1650. It shows the ship, hull number, and the dates for which it was awarded a specific medal.

The beginning of the document shows a list of the medals.

MERCURY T-AKR 10	SA	01-OCT-1990	18-MAR-1991
MERCY T-AH 19	MU	27-FEB-1987	10-JUL-1987
		27-FEB-1987	10-JUL-1987
	OT	27-FEB-1987	10-JUL-1987 D
	SA	15-SEP-1990	21-MAR-1991
MISPILLION T-AO 105	AE	29-APR-1975	30-APR-1975 N
		15-MAY-1975	O
	EM	14-JAN-1979	07-MAR-1979 C
		21-NOV-1979	14-DEC-1979 D
		13-JAN-1980	19-MAR-1980 D
		01-APR-1980	17-APR-1980 D
		01-JUL-1980	21-SEP-1980 D
		13-JAN-1981	11-MAR-1981 D
		27-JUL-1981	23-SEP-1981 D
	HS	29-APR-1975*	30-APR-1975 4
	MU	27-JUL-1982	01-MAY-1984
MISSISSINEWA T-AO 144	AE	11-JUL-1983	16-AUG-1983 Q
		25-AUG-1983	17-SEP-1983 Q
		05-OCT-1983	11-OCT-1983 Q
		24-OCT-1983	07-NOV-1983 Q
		10-NOV-1983	20-NOV-1983 Q
		28-NOV-1983	03-DEC-1983 Q
		20-MAR-1984	30-MAR-1984 Q
		06-APR-1984	15-APR-1984 Q
		17-APR-1984	25-APR-1984 Q
		20-MAY-1984	25-MAY-1984 Q
		22-JUN-1984	30-JUN-1984 Q
	EM	24-NOV-1980	05-FEB-1981 D
		22-MAR-1981	20-MAY-1981 D
		24-JUL-1981	19-AUG-1981 D
	JU	15-AUG-1990	12-OCT-1990
	NE	01-OCT-1988	30-SEP-1989
	OT	01-OCT-1986	30-JUN-1987 B
	SO	10-MAY-1990	18-JUN-1990
	FS	22-SEP-1996	22-SEP-1996 A
		28-SEP-1996	29-SEP-1996 A
		02-OCT-1996	04-OCT-1996 A
MOHAWK T-ATF 170	MU	01-MAY-1995	05-OCT-1995
	

Relevant to VFW Membership are: Vietnam Service Medal (VS), Navy Expeditionary Medal (EM), Combat Action Ribbon (CR), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AE), and Southwest Asia Service Medal (SA).



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Why Check Eligibility?

- It's the law! Not just VFW Auxiliary Bylaws, but IRS regulations as well!
- YOU are responsible for ensuring EVERY member of your Auxiliary is eligible!
- Always confirm eligibility when:
 - Signing up a new member
 - Rejoining any person who let their membership terminate



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Summary

- Three pillars of VFW Auxiliary eligibility: Relationship, Honorable Service, Foreign Conflict.
- Make sure to verify eligibility for ALL members.
- Know how to read a DD-214 or other documents.
- Be familiar with the qualifying campaign ribbons or medals as listed in the Bylaws.

