

## ***Who Has the Power at VFW Auxiliary Meetings? (From our Nat'l Chief of Staff)***

When this question is asked at workshops and or training sessions you will almost always hear, "The President", or "The Treasurer" or "The Trustees"!

In Truth, you, a member in good standing, has the power.

Contrary to belief, some members believe "title holders" such as Past National Presidents, Past Department Presidents, National District Council Members, and Department Officers hold the power. Sadly, some, of these "title holders" feel this way, too. They may influence, but they do not have the authority to rule you, the member. Remember, one of our guiding principles is one person, one vote.

**\*\*As a card-carrying member in good standing, you are entitled to all the fundamental membership rights and privileges associated with that membership:**  
To attend all Auxiliary meetings.

To make a motion, which is to move a formal proposal that the body takes some kind of action on as an Auxiliary group.

To participate in debate.

To vote.

While these rights apply to the majority of members, different levels of membership can and do carry with them varying privileges as the bylaws and standing rules allow.

**\*\* (excerpts from Roberts Rules for Dummies)**

We all have our "Why's" for wanting to join and Serve Our Veterans with Aloha. We take our time away from our family and friends, we use our own out of pocket monies to belong to this profound veteran's service organization that is now 105 years old. We have expectations of how we want to feel at your Auxiliary meetings.

Our meeting places should offer a feeling of being in a place of refuge:

Safety: Protected space from the outside and inside

Well lit, Ample parking, Clear space to meet in.

Security: Freedom from fear which allows you to flourish

A well-controlled canteen area providing a safe and friendly environment

Civil treatment of members and comrades

Bullying tactics on the premises and during meetings must not be tolerated

Significance: Allows you to being confident in your place as a member and

Appreciated for your positive contributions of support, as a member, as an officer, as a volunteer and as a member

Provision: Having your physical emotional needs met

Being heard

Feeling support in your ideas

Have attitudes checked at the door

Belonging: Knowing you are part of something bigger than yourself

No matter how small or how short of time given, to know you contributed to the whole of an event or program mattered

Being respected for you as a person, a member matters

Leadership: Expecting a President that has knowledge of the Auxiliary

A President that delegates rather than micro manages or dictates

Follows the ritual of a meeting

Represents the Auxiliary and not just his or herself

Is a good listener

Manages a meeting for a fluid flow

Dresses appropriately for a meeting when conducting a meeting or presenting in public.

What does all of this add up to? When all is in place, meetings are productive and respect for each other is shown - It would be like when you wake up every day, it's like a new birthday! It's a new chance to be great again and make good sound decisions.

Having knowledge of who we are, what we are about and what we want is powerful because by being a member in good standing, we affect the lives of Veterans and their families of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

We as an Organization, We as Auxiliaries, CANNOT survive by losing members out the front door or just allowing Auxiliaries to close because:

We did not put the power in the hands of our members.

We did not provide a place of refuge to allow our members to grow in their knowledge of the Auxiliary as a Member, Chairman, Officer.

We did not lend support in training for Leadership.

We did not provide tools for members to help themselves become productive members.

We now have a mentoring program that together with Extension, empowers members with tools, knowledge, and encouragement to be the best they can be and to grow into a member that could one day be a leader.