

Historian & Media Relations Promotion #2| October 2023
Diana Morris
2023 - 2024 National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador
benthere@netzero.net

Today's events are tomorrow's history because every picture tells a story. Make this Program Year the time to refresh your storytelling skills. Our job as the Historian is to capture the Auxiliary year and share it with all our members and our communities through photos and videos. According to Article VIII, Section 822 (722) of the *Podium Edition's Bylaws and Ritual*, "The Historian shall collect all authentic material pertaining to the history of their Auxiliary, carefully compile the same, and submit a report at the end of the year."

Let's begin to learn the art of communication through photos. Our Auxiliaries are well-worth preserving. If we band together to preserve our history while sharing it with new members, our organization will never become irrelevant. The work of your Auxiliaries is important! How does your Department preserve your Department history? Is this task left up to just one person within your Auxiliary or your Department? Where is the best place to maintain those paper and printed pictures for long term preservation? Have you considered looking at electronic record options that can also preserve our history for a long time? This is possibly a discussion to have within your Department. Photographs can open the door to the past as well as our future. The past will take your members back in time, but into the future due to the advancement in technology that changes for the better every day.

Share those stories/interviews of our longtime (Legacy) members. They can bring back the days of old. Consider utilizing your Auxiliary social media. Use it to promote the Auxiliary Programs. Use a newsletter to keep members informed. Get an article published in your local newspaper. Believe it or not, this does grab a non-member's attention toward what your Auxiliary is doing in your community. After your Auxiliary completes a Program project, take a moment to write down the story of your work. Who did you help? Why? What led you to reach out in this project? It is through stories that we stay connected. If you share those stories with others looking to serve, we can multiply our organization's capacity for preserving our Auxiliary memories.

Are you beginning to reclaim your Auxiliary history and heritage? Have you begun doing those video interviews? Many have shared how excited their Auxiliary members are about these interview videos. I am certainly happily amazed at the interest and excitement. However, I must also request that you get a photo release signed by the Auxiliary member whom you will be interviewing.

Remember to document every video interview from your Auxiliaries. The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman should keep a total combined list of every Auxiliary in your

Department that completed a video interview and completed an entry form, which are available in MALTA Member Resources. The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman will email their list to National Headquarters, info@vfwauxiliary.org, by April 30, 2024. National will issue a citation to the Auxiliary for their participation directly.

Since the video interview is a new concept this Program Year, many additional questions have been asked.

WHO SHOULD BE INTERVIEWED?:

Any longtime member in your Auxiliary that has been extremely beneficial as a mentor and/or has a long history of aiding our veterans and their families. Ask them about the experiences. Be sure to ask them what being a member of the VFW Auxiliary family means to them. Be creative, use your imagination. Do a trial run, check the audio and the lighting. Be careful of unflattering shadows. Check the settings on your equipment, make sure it is set up properly before you begin. Be clear when you are speaking; don't talk too fast. Give your member time to answer fully and without interruption; make sure to engage with your member by keeping eye contact, smile and stay interested. This is their story! You are the film director!

HOW DO I RECORD AND SUBMIT THE VIDEO?:

You have several ways to record and submit your videos. The easiest way is to do the videos with your phone or tablet. Using your phone doesn't take a lot of experience. Phones are now designed to serve as multiple devices; just be familiar with your equipment. The audio on many smart phones has also become more advanced. You can also consider posting your videos on **your Auxiliary** social media pages (Facebook, etc). This would allow other members of your Department to see them, enjoy them and learn from them. Also, the use of your Department social media page not only publishes what you do, but gives even a small Auxiliary within your Department a significant voice. They sometimes feel "overlooked."

You should put the interviews on a thumb drive to share with me, but when sending these thumb drives to me, don't forget to also complete and send the National Historian Award #1 Form.

There are many different thumb drives available to purchase, including some that you can plug right into your phone.

Don't forget that the Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman is to capture photos of our National President during her Official Visit. Then, send a PowerPoint presentation to me with a minimum of five photos, and no more than, of her visit to your Department. Please be certain these photos are clear and tell a story. Submit it on a thumb drive to me by April 30, 2024. The PowerPoint from each Department will be combined into a single presentation and shown at the National Convention. A copy of the single presentation will be presented to National President Carla to keep.

I would also like to encourage your Auxiliaries to bring out those old Historian photo albums at one of your Auxiliary meetings. All the reminiscing will surprise you. There will be more laughs

from your younger members and many starry eyes from your older members.

A final thought as this year moves forward...**Take those photos; Do those interviews.** Let's continue preserving our heritage and history, one camera SAVE button at a time. Until later, Happy fall, y'all!