

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS AMBASSADOR



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Tradition and history are revered in our organization. Many Auxiliaries proudly celebrate 100 or more years of history. Many of our members treasure long-standing rituals and practices. Unfortunately, we are increasingly finding that some of our Auxiliaries do not necessarily share this enthusiasm or have members wishing to join an Auxiliary that does. Thus arises a conundrum: Can we retain our traditions while also attracting the new members necessary to keep the Auxiliary a strong, vibrant and relevant organization? Our Auxiliaries are well worth preserving and in this coming Program Year my hope is that we will band together to preserve our history with open hearts.

The work of the Auxiliary is important. By sharing our stories, we are doing our part to promote the Auxiliary in our communities. Service is more than something we do; it is who we are. I am always astounded by the service and heart we give to our communities and veterans. This is going to be a year of courage, kindness, service and unlimited possibilities to share the history-in-the-making of our organization.

Be mindful and respectful before you #SNAP (S.N.A.P.): Stop Now Ask Permission. Be certain to print the youth and adult photo releases available in MALTA Member Resources. These releases protect the photographer and the person being photographed, especially children. Be aware of what you are photographing. For many reasons, it is important to have permission to take someone's photo. Remember what kindness looks like. When taking photographs, connect with the subject and the emotion.

Photography opens doors into the past, but it also allows a look into the future. A camera is a SAVE button. Let your Auxiliary legacy members become STARS, for without our STARS, our Auxiliary would not exist. This Program Year, connect with a legacy member and complete a three- to five-minute video interview :

- Ask why they joined.
- Ask about their favorite memorable moment(s).
- Place emphasis on bringing the past to life.
- If your Auxiliary has no legacy members, look to your District or Department.

Submit your video interview to your Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman by March 31, 2024 for judging. The Department Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department winning entry along with the winning video to the National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador by April 30, 2024. The winning video may be shown at National Convention.

Photography tips to avoid:

- Closed eyes.
- Open mouth, a mouth full of food, distracting objects in the picture (e.g. bunny ears, trees popping out of someone's head or from behind the body.)
- People posed in awkward positions.
- Offensive language on clothing.

The Auxiliary and District Historian & Media Relations Chairmen

The job of the Historian & Media Relations Chairmen is to capture the Program Year. At the Auxiliary, District and Department levels, these members are the people who get the word out about the Auxiliary to our communities. The Chairmen promote the Auxiliary through media, Post/Auxiliary newsletters, websites and any other media available to them; they capture special memories and activities through photos and videos and they inform the public about our valuable National Programs. This member keeps a written report of the Program Year for the Auxiliary, District or Department and submits it to their respective President at the end of the year. Consider presenting him or her with a digital scrapbook or photo book.

Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman

The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman keeps a record of the Department President's activities and should include his or her travels, Official Visits and other official functions. They collect material in written form to capture their Department's history in chronological order. They should also compile photographs, and newspaper and video clips of Auxiliary news. They can also reach out to local media outlets to organize interviews and news opportunities for the National President during the Official Visit.

Department Historian & Media Relations Chairmen should capture the National President's Official Visit. Send me a PowerPoint presentation with a minimum of five photos of the National President during her visit to your Department; include clear (not blurry) photos that tell a story. Submit it on a thumb drive and mail to me, your National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador 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 the National President to keep.

Media

For Social Media, a great place to start is MALTA Member Resources. There are many resources here, everything from the basics to setting up a Facebook page for your Auxiliary.

Media is the piece of the puzzle that helps create a successful Auxiliary. Social media may be intimidating, but don't let that stop you from learning something new. Most

of us are very familiar with Facebook and email. Utilize them. If you need help creating a PowerPoint, ask a fellow member to help or recruit a student at a local school or ask your children/grandchildren to assist you.

Get to know your local newspaper, radio and television reporters. Send information directly to those contacts rather than the editor. Send a personal email and be sure to include your personal contact information.

Our Auxiliaries are doing amazing things; let's get that out there. Together we can. Let's put a spotlight on our pride and the work of our organization for generations to come. I believe you will find the inspiration. Let's reclaim the stories of our Auxiliary history and Auxiliary heritage. Let your stories be seen in a kind and beautiful way. Consider your Facebook page and/or Twitter page to be your Auxiliary marketplace.

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM

Historian Duties • Media Relations

The member responsible for Historian & Media Relations duties is a memory keeper and collector of the five W's: the who-what-where-when-and-why of your Auxiliary. These individuals compile and chronicle memories and events in written and digital formats, including photographs, memorabilia, print news, audio and/or video clips and social media posts. The Historian & Media Relations member captures the narrative of the Program Year. At the Auxiliary, District and Department levels, these members are the people who get the word out about the Auxiliary to our communities. They inform the public about our valuable National Programs.

Auxiliary and District Historian & Media Relations

This member keeps a written report of the history of their Auxiliary or District and submits this to their respective President at the end of the year. Supplemental material can include photographs and newspaper clippings that document special Auxiliary events.

Department Historian & Media Relations

This member keeps a comprehensive record of the Department President's activities, and should include travels, Official Visits and other official functions. Collect material in written form to capture your Department's history, in chronological order. As with the Auxiliary Historian & Media Relations Chairman, this position also compiles photographs and newspaper and/or video clips of Auxiliary news.

The Department Historian & Media Relations member also documents and photographs the National President's visit, and may reach out to local media outlets to organize interviews and news opportunities for the National President.

National Historian & Media Relations

This member documents the travels and activities of the National President. Department-level reports and photos are essential for this job. According to Article VIII, Sec. 822 of the National Bylaws, "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."

In addition, he or she may also choose to compile a keepsake pictorial scrapbook, photobook, slideshow or video for the National President, but this is not essential.

For the media relations piece of this role, a great place to start is MALTA Member Resources.

There you will find:

- The VFW Auxiliary Publicity Guide that includes lots of valuable information and ideas to promote your Auxiliary.
- The VFW Auxiliary Elevator Speech/What We Do that summarizes who we are, what we do and how we describe ourselves as an organization to the media.
- Website and social media information – There are a lot of resources here, everything from the basics to setting up a Facebook page for your Auxiliary.

Who should you contact about Auxiliary news?

Learn the names of reporters who cover stories most similar to yours and tailor your own list of media contacts. Send information directly to these contacts rather than the editor—news staff who specialize in relevant areas, like society and calendar page editors, are more likely to be receptive to including Auxiliary events. Feel free to send a reporter or editor a personal email, and be sure to include your contact information.

What's newsworthy?

Consider these questions: Does it involve local people? Does it interest non-members? Is it timely? Does it help the community? Is it unique and new? If the answer is yes, this is a chance for you to pitch a story with an "angle" that will showcase your Auxiliary's hard work and accomplishments. Let's show our communities, and our nation, everything we do to improve the lives of veterans, service members and their families.

Photography tips

Photos should be clear and sharp, at least 1 MB (megabyte) in size and taken with attention to detail. Avoid the following photo faux pas:

- Closed eyes
- Mouths open or full of food
- Distracting objects in the frame or awkward placement of people or things (e.g., trees popping out of someone's head, bunny ears, etc.)
- Offensive language on articles of clothing

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding video interview with a VFW Auxiliary legacy (longtime active) member.
- Citation to every Auxiliary that submits a 3-5 minute video interview with a legacy Auxiliary member. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form and video interview to their Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman by March 31, 2024 for judging.

The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman must email National Headquarters by April 30, 2024 at info@vfwauxiliary.org a total combined list of every Auxiliary in their Department that completed and submitted an entry form and video interview.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences that submits most outstanding 3-5 minute video interview with a VFW Auxiliary legacy member.

The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form with the winning video to the National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador by April 30, 2024 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into Auxiliary account after National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best use of media relations training. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2024 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.
2. Outstanding Performance Award in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on Page 5 and for the promotion of the Program Goals listed at the top of Page 29. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2024 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.