



HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM

Telling Our Story in January - February

As we work to share the histories of our auxiliaries, don't miss opportunities to showcase your many wonderful volunteers giving unselfishly of their time and energy. Consider showing your appreciation for your members who shine in the *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*.

- ❖ Go into MALTA.
- ❖ Enter *Member Resources*.
- ❖ Click on Miscellaneous Resources.
- ❖ Choose *Member Spotlight Template*.



You'll be asked to answer several questions about the member you'd like to recognize. Along with your written information in the form, include 3 to 5 photos. Your Auxiliary member could be in the national spotlight for their great work.

Learning From Carter Woodson:

The Father of Black History

Carter G. Woodson's determination led to the establishment almost 50 years ago of Black History Month. He believed in being proud of your heritage and respectfully accepting achievements of all groups of people.



What can we learn today from Historian Woodson?

By telling the story of the VFW Auxiliary, our work helping veterans and their families, service members, and our neighborhoods will be known. The stories we tell can gain support for veterans' legislation and programs, encourage respect for our nation, and even increase our VFWA membership.

Woodson also encouraged everyone to feel pride in their heritage. The history of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars should be a point of pride for every member. Your Auxiliary has countless stories of the unselfish work that should be celebrated. Consider making your Auxiliary Installation of Officers a salute to your future officers and recognition of your past leaders. Invite your Past Auxiliary Presidents to the ceremony to be honored each year.

Let's learn from Historian Carter Woodson and celebrate our history-the history of the VFW Auxiliary.



They're Telling Our Story

Saluting **Bonnie Carter** from Wells-McComas Post 2678 in District 14! She has emailed an events calendar and list of members with birthdays EVERY month this program year to over 350 Auxiliary and Post members, using Excel to create her communication tool. MALTA was her go to source for birthdays.

THE CHALLENGE

How many holiday gifts did you return? Here's a gift you wouldn't return. Points! For each month that you sent me a Historian & Media Relations report, your Auxiliary received 2 points (as explained in your School of Instructions materials). For February, your program report that I receive by March 1st will earn *double* the points. That's 4 points for one report! Report all you do and don't miss a chance to build up those points for our Convention awards!

We Know This Because....

Historians Told the Story!



Pencils come in all colors, but the yellow-gold is most often used. When pencils went into mass production in the 1890's, the finest available graphite (not lead) to fill pencils came from far away China. Pencil manufacturers in America wanted everyone to know they were using the finest Chinese graphite for their pencils. Painting the pencils yellow was to reflect the color of Chinese royalty to show the quality of their pencils. Thanks to historians we know that story. Keep telling everyone your auxiliary's story.

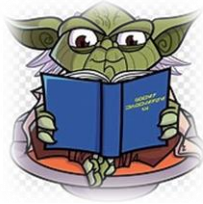
Download the new MALTA App for Android or Apple devices available in Member Resources using the Miscellaneous tab.



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WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT YOUR HISTORY?

Why? Why should each Auxiliary have a Historian? Is keeping our Auxiliary's history really important? Surfing the web for an article on the importance of historians, I came across the Wisconsin Historical Society's website. Below is a section of their article on *Why Your Nonprofit Should Record Its History*. More coming next month.



Your nonprofit may be neglecting an often unappreciated task – recording your history. Your organization's institutional memory – records of lessons learned, old but interesting ideas, potential contacts never pursued, the story of your organization's founding – can be valuable information. Potentially valuable information that is not usually recorded may be lost forever when founders, staff, or board members leave the organization, move, or pass away.

Creating Your Collage of Memories

The word this month is **VARIETY**. Whether your *Collage of Memories* is traditional or digital, why not bring on the glitz. Collect a **VARIETY** of materials from around your house and at Auxiliary events. Buddy poppies, words from programs, and ribbons can all add interest to your collage. Craft stores also offer a **VARIETY** of items like string, yarn, dried flowers, beads, and foils. Look for unique material to add your auxiliary name, number, and our 2024 - 2025 program year. Look for things to add color and texture. Giving your collage **VARIETY** is easy to do...and creatively fun!



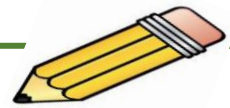
Take Time to Clean Up

How long since you've taken time to *clean up* your auxiliary's Facebook page and website. Here are 5 simple steps your Auxiliary can take to make your social media sites the best!

- ✓ Check that all the information that you have posted is still accurate.
- ✓ Add more recent photos showcasing your projects.
- ✓ Post interesting information so everyone sees that your auxiliary is a place where new members are welcomed.
- ✓ Be sure the names of officers and their contact information is correct for 2025.
- ✓ Insert clipart to make the site more appealing for your readers.

Receive a **National Citation** for your Media Relations work. Describe how you promoted ONE Auxiliary program in the community using a Facebook post. Consider your Veterans Day Ceremony, working with youth, or retiring flags as just a few of your Auxiliary projects that could be highlighted. Complete and send ME the form that's included **by March 31st**.

Pencil This In



1st – 6th – Auxiliary Mid-Year Conference in Cancun
9th – 15th – National Salute to Veteran Patients Week
14th – Happy Valentine's Day

Remember to thank any media partners who helped get your story out to the community with **Communication Awards** in this year's School of Instruction materials and on our National website under "Resources."

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Sailing to the Finish Line

As we sail to the finish of our 2024-2025 program year, response from each auxiliary to the questions on the report form are needed. Please be ready when I contact you for the information below about your auxiliary if you have not yet reported this information.

- ✚ Documenting the times that you communicated with your members by email, newsletter, or even phone calls.
- ✚ Showing pride in our past by creating a Legacy Display of memorable objects or even of photos.
- ✚ Planning to use a scrapbook or collage of photos to document this year's events and volunteers at your auxiliary.
- ✚ Helping your members use social media by holding training sessions.

Information will be compiled by our National Ambassador Tela Harbold to tell the story of America's VFW Auxiliary.



Publicize With a Family Freedom Festival

Are you telling your auxiliary's story to your community? A Family Freedom Festival is a great publicity tool....and will boost your program reporting opportunities with one project! Yes, it is a large undertaking. But, a wealth of information on organizing and executing a Freedom Festival is available from our National Organization in MALTA.

In MALTA's *Miscellaneous Resources* section there are six entries for the Family Freedom Festival explaining what to include, the best way to plan, and the benefits for your Auxiliary. A Tool Kit will take you step-by-step through the process of presenting a Festival. The expense of running the event can also be lessened by requesting donations from community businesses. A donation letter is even available explaining the festival and ways businesses can donate. Help with publicity is also a part of this resource, offering both a media release and a sample social media post. Great for historians to report!

To guide you through the festival, use "Steps to Participate and Event Information." Themes or ideas for your Family Freedom Festival included:

- A safety fair featuring your police, fire, and EMT personnel.
- A talent show.
- A car show or children's bike show.
- An outdoor patriotic movie event.
- Trivia or board game tournaments.

It's time to plan. Start now organizing your committee and planning a Family Freedom Festival for your Auxiliary to be ready to go in Spring.



Example of a Simple Collage



From National Historian Tela Harbold

Everything our members do to support our veterans and programs become part of our history. By preserving these memories, we ensure that future generations understand our patriotic traditions as well as who we are and why we do what we do.

Tips to Brush Up Your Auxiliary's Newsletter

- ✚ Use bullets to help break up information.
- ✚ Include links when it's possible.



