



Historian & Media Relations

VFW Auxiliary Department of Maryland

*If we aren't sharing the stories of our Auxiliaries
by using as many means of media as possible,
including both traditional and social/digital, then
those are missed opportunities for us all!*

Kristin Digiacomo, National Historian



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Historian & Media Relations

Article VIII Sec. 821

The Historian shall collect the authentic material pertaining to the history of their Auxiliary, carefully compile the same, and submit a report at the end.

The word *historian* brings up images for many of us of a dusty library with bookshelves to the ceiling. Our VFW Auxiliary historians have a dual role, neither of which keeps them closed up in a dimly lit room. Our historians are not just trusted to documenting our past to preserve traditions. Auxiliary historians are also tasked with *media relations* – communicating our story as events happen today as we work to fulfill our mission of helping veterans and their families. Both are equally important if we are to move forward successfully as an organization.

Auxiliaries and Districts are asked this year to focus on communicating in three ways:

- 🧸 By keeping your members informed to strengthen their feelings of being valued as a member of the VFW Auxiliary.
- 🧸 By communicating with other VFW auxiliaries in your district, in our department, and nationally to share ideas to better fulfill our mission.
- 🧸 By telling our story of support and service to our communities.

The circle is a reminder that each moment is not just the present, but is inclusive of our gratitude to the past and our responsibility to the future.

-Japanese Artist Takahashi



MALTA Media Resources

Have you heard of the phrase *don't reinvent the wheel*? When you need resources for your Media Relations Program, don't go searching all over the Internet. MALTA can provide a variety of valuable tools to save you time.

To easily access these resources:

- ★ Go to the VFW Auxiliary National website and enter your information to get open the Member Portal.
- ★ Click on *Member Resources* in the top ribbon.
- ★ Choose *Historian & Media Relations* from our National Programs listed on the left.

There are 32 links to awards, press releases, and other publicity tools.



What is Newsworthy?

Active auxiliaries will have a multitude of projects and fundraisers throughout the year. With so much going on, how does a Media Relations Chairman decide what should be given time to publicize?

Newsworthy? See if you can answer *yes* to these questions.

- ? Does this involve local people?
- ? Will it interest non-members?
- ? Is it timely?
- ? Does this event or fundraiser help the community?
- ? Is the story unique and new?



If you can answer *yes*, your time will be well spent to send out this story showcasing your Auxiliary's hard work and accomplishments. Reach an even larger audience by learning the names and how to contact reporters for local newspapers and TV stations who cover veterans' issues.



Keeping in Touch with All Your Members

Be certain to keep in touch with all your members. Although using social media is the easiest and quickest form of communication, not all of your members use email or Facebook. Ask your Auxiliary Secretary to provide the list of members in MALTA with emails on file. The list will also show members not using email.

Here are some suggestions for how your auxiliary could keep members not using social media and digital technology informed and feeling a part of your auxiliary.

PREPARE to take time to mail copies of your auxiliary's monthly or quarterly newsletter to members without emails. This will be more costly than the e-newsletters sent to most of your members.

POST copies of your newsletters and calendars on Post bulletin boards.

PARTNER with local banks, pharmacies, and doctor's offices to place extra copies of your newsletter on tables in their buildings to share your information with members using the business and also with the community.

PHONE members without email to share information and upcoming events. Phone buddies would also provide social contact for many of your members who may be shut-ins, which is truly appreciated.


RECOGNIZE members celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and those being honored for their work in other organizations. Keep communications open with your local schools, fire department, or police station, especially where some of your members work.

Reporting monthly or quarterly to your Department Program Chairman is essential if Maryland is to be recognized for all the volunteer work we do. Take time to share your story!

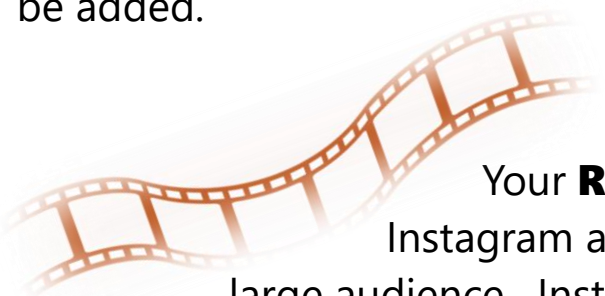


Let's Get Reel-ing!

How can you reach over 1.3 billion people with one project? **REELS!** National is asking auxiliaries to focus this year on using **REELS** to spread the word about our Programs and what your auxiliary is doing to help our veterans and your communities. So, what is a **REEL**?



REELS are brief 90 second videos meant to entertain or educate or inspire your viewers. They are full-screen vertical presentations. With **REELS** you can add captions and enrich interest in your presentation with backgrounds and even stickers. Polishing your **REEL** is easy with the many editing tools available. For even greater interest, an audio track can be added.



Your **REEL** can be posted to Instagram and on Facebook to reach a large audience. Instagram alone has 1.3 billion viewers.....yes billion! Easy to follow directions are available in MALTA Resources and online. There are also videos that will take you step by step. Be sure to add descriptions and hashtags.

The steps to create a **REEL** for your Auxiliary are simple, but the media rewards are monumental! If the process seems beyond your skills, canvas your membership for someone tech-savvy who is willing to take on creating a **REEL** for your Auxiliary. Maybe he or she would teach a workshop, and you can all get **REEL-ING**. Be sure to report the **REELS** you create so your Auxiliary can be considered for National awards this year.



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2025 - 2026 Report Form

Dorothy Swigon, Department Chairman

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Auxiliary _____ District _____ Chairman _____

Reporting Period: From _____ To _____

This month - Hours _____ Projects Cost \$ _____ Mileage _____ Volunteers # _____

Historian

Did you communicate with your members via email, printed mail, text or phone call during this reporting period?

Yes _____ No _____

Did your auxiliary visit MALTA *Member Resources*?

Yes _____ No _____

Did you or one of your members create a **REEL**?

Yes _____ No _____

Media Relations

Do you have a Facebook page?

Own Auxiliary Facebook Page: _____

Joint Facebook with the Post: _____

Do you have a website?

Own website: _____

Joint website with the Post: _____

Did your auxiliary hold a Media Relations "how to" training to educate your members?

(example: how to log in to MALTA, create a REEL, email, navigate Facebook and other social media.) Explain briefly: