

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS AMBASSADOR



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Are we preserving the history of our Auxiliaries? Does your Auxiliary use social media to let the community and members know who we are and what we do? Social media is the best tool an Auxiliary has to share Auxiliary news, events and projects and for keeping our members and community in the know about what we do and how we help our veterans, their families, our youth and our communities. Historian Media Relations is the Auxiliaries answer to the five Ws: Who-What-When-Where-Why. A picture may be worth a thousand words but the five Ws tell the story behind the picture. Everything our members do to support our veterans and Programs becomes 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.

Media

Social media platforms are continually evolving, and new platforms are constantly popping up. The more we utilize these forms of media, the more people we make aware of the work we do, the lives we change and the veterans we serve. A successful Auxiliary uses all forms of media to promote and educate others about our Programs, our scholarships, our service to veterans, their families, our youth and our communities.

Communication through traditional media is still important, so continue reaching out to the community through traditional media such as:

- Television
- Radio
- Door Hangers
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Newsletters

However, using digital media, we will reach a broader audience that includes the younger generations. For some, social media can be very intimidating, but we can reach out to a tech-savvy friend or relative who can easily teach us how to use social media and create informative videos.

Email along with Auxiliary and Department websites are a great way to reach out to members and communities.

Other social media outlets include:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Pinterest

It isn't necessary to utilize all social media options, however, email and Facebook (Meta) are vital means of communication for Historian & Media Relations Chairmen.

Recording Auxiliary History

It is important to maintain written reports and photos of the history of our organization. These reports and photos will illustrate the changes that time creates. The various ways to keep this information include:

- Digital Photo Albums
- Traditional Photo Albums
- Digital Scrapbooks
- Traditional Scrapbooks
- Memory Books
- Three-Ring Binders

Be sure to include newsletters, event flyers, thank-you notes, menus and other mementos. Use the five Ws and document names and dates with all photos.

Get VFW members involved when the National President visits your Department. This will show the nation that the Veteran of Foreign Wars Auxiliary is working in unity with the VFW. Together we can do great things and accomplish the goals of our Programs while taking pride in serving those who have sacrificed so much for all of us to have what others can only dream about.

Let's make this the year that GREAT changes happen to keep our organization and what we do in the spotlight everywhere and to highlight the selflessness of our veterans and members!



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 Ws: 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. 821 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 promotion of VFW Auxiliary Programs to the community through social media sources.
 - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the most outstanding promotion of the VFW Auxiliary Programs to the community through social media sources.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary 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 training/education on the use of social media sources to promote VFW Auxiliary Programs.
2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded 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 28.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.