

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS AMBASSADOR



TERESA STEVENSON

509 Woodland St.
Eufaula, OK 74432-3609
(918) 429-2418
tmstevenson@outlook.com

The National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador enjoys a unique perspective on the members of this amazing organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliaries, as we document our work together. I am honored to assist you all for the 2026-2027 Program Year and help guide you with the knowledge and resources our organization has in preserving your Auxiliary's memories.

A Framework of History

The Historian & Media Relations Program keeps the Auxiliary's history alive. We have been taught throughout the years when recording Auxiliary history we must include the five W's: who, what, where, when and why. Answering these questions is crucial because they provide a structured framework to gather, organize and report information comprehensively and clearly. This will ensure all key details are covered, provide context and give an understandable narrative that goes beyond just the basic facts.

Your Auxiliary Historian, along with members, compiles and places in chronological order the memories and events of your year in several formats, including photographs, memorabilia, newspaper articles, videos and more. The Historian also assists with promoting events and projects that your Auxiliary is participating in to show your communities the unwavering support for veterans, service members, their families and your communities.

New Technology

For years, we have all been learning about modern technology. It has become our way of life. Today there are myriad ways to make social media content including reels, videos and digital slideshows to chronicle your Auxiliary's history for years to come. With all these technological advancements we can archive more events than ever before. This means you can become a detective and go back in time to learn about the origins of your Auxiliary.

Have you thought about past years' history? Do you know who your first Auxiliary President was, the second, the third and so forth? Since the VFW National Auxiliary launched MALTA, it records who your past Presidents and Officers were, starting less than 10 years ago. Use this platform. Do you know when/how your Auxiliary got started? How have past members shaped the culture in your Auxiliary? So many Auxiliaries throughout the states have decades of history. It is time to start thinking about preserving the past for all the future generation members. This will give them an understanding of why the Auxiliary has been in existence for so long.

Not long ago, I was shopping in a small town in the southeastern part of Oklahoma. While there I went into an antique store and to my surprise I came across plaques and memorabilia for sale that had a VFW Auxiliary listed on them. This same Auxiliary is still in existence. Why would they do this? Come to find out, this Auxiliary lost their Post home due to extensive repairs that needed to be made. They did not have enough funds to get the repairs done and had to relocate. When moving, these boxes of items were accidentally taken to this antique shop. Auxiliaries that have been in existence for many years may have gone through a comparable situation. Auxiliaries run out of room keeping all of the past years' history items or they have thrown them out or fires/natural disasters have destroyed keepsakes. Has this been an experience your Auxiliary has had? With the risk of past items being lost or destroyed it makes it clear the importance of preserving your Auxiliary's history

digitally. Having access to this history is convenient and also a beneficial talking point when recruiting new members.

It is up to the members of the Auxiliaries to do the physical research, digitization, use proper storage and promote your history to the community. This will all be worth it in the long run. Preserving your Auxiliary history helps preserve the traditions and values within your Auxiliary.

Research

For the Auxiliaries that have been established prior to MALTA, it will take some investigation to find information. There are places to do research to gain this information. Here are several ways:

- Ask your Auxiliary members: interview them about when they joined the Auxiliary to obtain information to record about their years of membership.
- Connect with your Department, they may have archives and records.
- Your local newspaper: most have archived news articles from years ago.

Digital Platforms and Proper Storage

When an Auxiliary has been established for 20-plus years, displaying or storage becomes an issue. A digital platform such as a computer or tablet will condense materials and save space.

When choosing a storage platform, consider factors such as storage capacity, accessibility, security features and integration with other tools. Each platform has unique advantages tailored to different user needs, ensuring there's likely an option that fits your requirements perfectly. It is always a smart idea to have more than one storage platform. Here are a few ideas:

- Storage platforms: iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive
- Flash Drives
- External hard drives

Social Media

Social media plays a significant role in the younger generation today. Social media is used to communicate through feeds, profiles, groups and different forms of content such as photos, text and videos. By creating a Facebook account, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube channel or TikTok you can share your Auxiliary experiences, stories, events and programs. It even helps you to retain and gain members.

If you are still learning about media platforms, continue learning, as they are adding different platforms every year. Ask your children and grandchildren how to start using these if you are not sure how to use them. This is the way of the world today to keep history for the future generations to come.

For more information see the Historian & Media Relations Program Awards on page 25.



HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM

Historian Duties • Media Relations

The Historian & Media Relations Chairmen is a memory keeper and collector of the five W's: the who-what-where-when-and-why of your VFW 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 Chairman captures the narrative of the Program Year.

The Historian & Media Chairman is also the member who gets the word out about the VFW Auxiliary to our communities. They inform the public about activities, events and our valuable National Programs.

VFW Auxiliary and District Historian & Media Relations Chairmen

This member keeps a written report of the history of their VFW 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 VFW Auxiliary events.

Department Historian & Media Relations Chairmen

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 VFW Auxiliary Historian & Media Relations Chairman, this position also compiles photographs and newspaper and/or video clips of VFW Auxiliary news.

The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman 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 Ambassador

This National Ambassador documents the travels and activities of the National President. Department-level reports and photos are essential for this job.

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 VFW 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.

Who Should you Contact About VFW 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 VFW Auxiliary events. Feel free to send a reporter or editor a personal email and be sure to include your contact information.

Historian & Media Relations Resources

MALTA Member Resources is a great place to find valuable information including:

- The VFW Auxiliary Publicity Guide
- Local and National talking points
- Adult & youth photo releases
- Sample speeches
- Website and social media/Facebook information
- Emblem Branding Center information
- Sample press releases
- PowerPoint and letter templates
- Photography tips

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that creates the most unique digital record of their VFW Auxiliary history since being established and publishes it to a digital platform for future members of their VFW Auxiliary.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best training and/or education promoting how to preserve the history of their VFW Auxiliary.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

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 Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.