

Historian & Media Relations

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Historian Media Relations is a fantastic program that touches every other program we have and everything we do as an Auxiliary. This year, as we promote “Peace, Love, & Patriotism” within the Department of California, we also aim to “Embrace the Waves of Change” in every aspect of our work as historians. Every member is a Historian, and every Historian helps keep the tradition and history of our organization alive. While we hold onto our history with one hand, we want the other hand to reach forward into the future and come up with new ways to share our story.

Primary Program Goals

- **Utilize social media:** The fastest way to reach people and get the word out
 - **Reels:** What is it? How do you create it? Where do you post it?
 - **What's newsworthy:** The questions to ask and what outlets to use
 - **The 5 W's:** Who? What? When? Where? Why?

Media

Using social media is important to organizations for several strategic and operational reasons. Here's a breakdown of why it matters:

Awareness & Visibility

- Social media platforms allow organizations to **reach large audiences** quickly and consistently.
- It increases **exposure**, helping even small local posts compete with larger community organizations.
- Visual content (videos, graphics) enhances “**brand**” **recognition**.

Community Engagement & Relationship Building

- Organizations can **interact directly** with potential members through comments, messages, and polls.
- Builds trust, loyalty, and a sense of community.
- Real-time engagement helps improve **community satisfaction**.

Cost-Effective Marketing

- Compared to traditional advertising, social media is **more affordable** and often provides **better reach** in the community.
- Allows **targeted marketing** based on demographics, behavior, and interests.

Member & Community Insights

- Social media analytics tools offer valuable data about **audience preferences, behavior, and sentiment**.
- Listening to conversations provides **real-time feedback**.

Traditional media remains as essential to our organization as it ever has. Newsletters, whether in digital or printed versions, are an excellent way to disseminate information to your members. Not everyone has an email address, but they are still entitled to the information and can still be a great help to the Auxiliary if they know what is going on.

PREPARE a monthly or quarterly newsletter to be both mailed and emailed to the members. **RECOGNIZE** those members who are celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, or just going above and beyond with volunteering, etc. **UPDATE** your social media pages regularly to help with outreach and creating your algorithm.

Reels

This year, our National Ambassador would love for us to create reels to spread the word about our Programs and what we are doing out in our communities. For those of you who don't know what a reel is but have ever seen a short video on TikTok, Facebook, or Instagram that's a reel!!

A **reel** is a short-form video, typically designed to be engaging, entertaining, or informative. Reels became popular on **Instagram** and **Facebook** as a response to the rise of TikTok.








They're usually **15 to 90 seconds** long and often include music, voiceovers, text overlays, and visual effects.

What You Can Use Reels For:

- **Showcase** skills, products, or information
- **Tell** a story or **teach** something
- **Share** funny or relatable content
- **Highlight** moments from your day or events

How to Make a Reel (Step-by-Step)

On Instagram (the most common platform for Reels):

1. **Open Instagram App**
2. Tap the '+' icon and select **"Reel"**
3. **Record or upload** a video:
 - Hold the record button to capture clips live
 - Or upload pre-recorded clips from your gallery
4. Use tools on the left:
 -  **Audio:** Add music or sound effects
 -  **Timer:** Hands-free recording
 -  **Align:** Seamless transitions between clips
 -  **Speed:** Slow down or speed up clips
5. Tap **"Next"** to preview
6. Add:
 -  **Captions**
 -  **Stickers & text**
 -  **Cover image** (from the video or gallery)
7. Tap **"Share"** to publish your reel to your feed or Reels tab

*Instagram is a great platform to use because if your Auxiliary Instagram and Facebook are connected, you can post on both platforms simultaneously. * More information on how to create a reel can be found on Malta under member resources, Historian Media Relations.

Tips for a Good Reel

- Hook the viewer in the **first 3 seconds**
- Use **captions** (many people watch without sound)
- Stick to a clear **theme or message**
- Use **trending audio** to boost reach
- Use Hashtags # that relate to your reel to make reel more accessible.
- Keep it **vertical (9:16)** format

Newsworthy

Consider the following 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 to any of the above questions is yes, then your event or topic is newsworthy, and you should consider sharing it on your social media and local news outlets.

The 5 W's

Whenever you are sharing information from your auxiliary or advertising an event, make sure you are using the Five W's so that the information being published is completely understandable and helpful to those seeing it.

Program Awards for Historian & Media Relations

Awards for Auxiliaries

Most outstanding social media reel highlighting the VFW Auxiliary in action.

-Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the most outstanding social media reel highlighting their VFW Auxiliary in action.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form and the social media reel to the Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman by **March 31, 2026** for judging. Instructions on how to make a social media reel are in MALTA Member Resources under Historian & Media Relations, Website & Social Media – Websites, how to create a Facebook reel.

The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department winning entry form and the social media reel to the National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador by **April 30th, 2026** for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2026 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 and/ or education promoting how to use social media reels.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, NV.

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 the promotion of the Program goals listed at the top of Page 32.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, NV.