

# DEPARTMENT/CAMP MEDIA GUIDE



SONS OF UNION  
VETERANS OF  
THE CIVIL WAR

National Marketing  
and Promotions  
Committee 2023



# Department / Camp Media Guide

Certainly this guide is not all-encompassing and is not designed to address every possible media-related interaction. Nevertheless, this will give you a good starting point in building a solid long-term relationship. Remember, even if your event only attracts a handful of attendees, the media allows us to reach a huge number of folks with our message – for free!

## Media attention to our public events



Each year our Order either hosts or partners with other community organizations in numerous public events. Be it Memorial Day ceremonies or other patriotic observances or special, unique occasions, they are worthy of public attention far beyond those who are able to attend in person. This is where having a good working relationship with the media, in advance, pays great dividends to our organization **and** our communities.

## Establishing a relationship with media outlets



Establishing a good relationship with the media is an effective tool in promoting the tenets of our Order and attracting and holding community interest. However, in building this relationship it is important to remember that very, very few of our activities are seen by the media as “news.” Most often media coverage of our events is considered public service and covered as “feature” stories. Always keep the following in mind – newsprint, air time, even online media, etc. are at a premium and newsworthy items rather than public service stories typically demand the most attention. This leaves us competing with every other community organization for limited coverage. So, make the most of it!

## Projecting professionalism



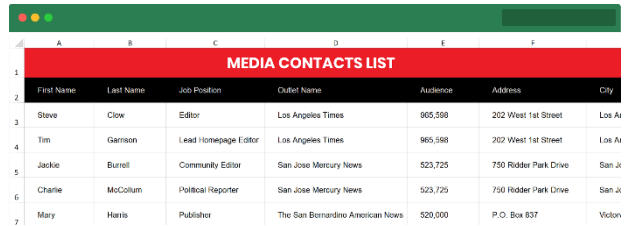
Regardless of the level of sophistication of the media in your area, the work of our Order demands nothing less than a professional effort on our part – and that includes media interaction. If forced to choose between covering two community stories – one where the local group is disorganized or one where the group is well-prepared, you can guess which event will most often get the most attention.

# Making The Most of Media Opportunities

Here are several tips on how to “be prepared” and make the most of the public relations benefit media can provide:

## Media Contact List

Make a contact list of all the media in your area: newspaper, radio, television. If your Camp is in a rural area with one local paper, chances are you will know the newspaper's editor or staff reporter(s) by name. If you live in a larger metropolitan area, there may be dozens of media outlets: tv and radio stations, newspapers, dailies, weeklies, etc. In each case, expect there to be turnover in staffing. Seek out the email address and other contact information for the outlet's assignment editor and take the time to introduce yourself – not when you have an upcoming event – but now! Keep the contact list **current**.



MEDIA CONTACTS LIST						
First Name	Last Name	Job Position	Outlet Name	Audience	Address	City
Steve	Clow	Editor	Los Angeles Times	965,568	202 West 1st Street	Los A
Tim	Garrison	Lead Homepage Editor	Los Angeles Times	965,568	202 West 1st Street	Los A
Jackie	Burrell	Community Editor	San Jose Mercury News	523,725	750 Ridder Park Drive	San J
Charlie	McCollum	Political Reporter	San Jose Mercury News	523,725	750 Ridder Park Drive	San J
Mary	Harris	Publisher	The San Bernardino American News	520,000	P.O. Box 837	Velon

## Media Advisories



Develop a standardized “Media Advisory” (a one-page document that announces an upcoming event), and a “Media Release” (a **short**, compelling news story about the event and what happened) in template form. (Customizable samples are provided to get you started.)

## Media Deadlines

Find out each outlet's requirements and deadlines for submission of “Media Advisories” and “Media Releases” and **stick to them**.



## Don't Be Afraid of Big Media



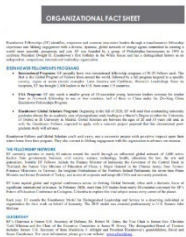
Do not assume a more distant media outlet will have no interest in your event. While they may not send a correspondent, they may incorporate it into a story on an event more local to them. Additionally, they may (at their discretion) post the story onto one of the wire service feeds. If so, you have hit the jackpot!

## Reminders and Follow Up

Always follow up a Media Advisory with a courteous reminder on the eve of your event. **Never** ask the media to **commit** to coverage – they will never commit and asking them to do so creates an uncomfortable relationship.



## Organizational Fact Sheets



Develop a one-page “Fact Sheet” about our Order. (A sample is provided for your consideration.)

## Media Packet

Assemble a “Media Packet” that includes printed copies of the Media Advisory, Media Release, and the “Fact Sheet” of our Order. (In most cases it will be possible to prepare and have at-the-ready your Camp’s Media Release *in advance*



of the event.) Introduce yourself and hand this to the media as they arrive for the event. Doing so helps minimize the chance for erroneous information being reported by a correspondent who may have zero background on the event, who we are, what we do, etc. Most, if not all of the pertinent information will be in the release and they will be VERY appreciative. Always make sure to send out a copy of the Media Release afterward, to each media outlet, (including all the outlets who attended – paper copies gets lost).

## Plan for the event



Many factors may preclude the Brother in charge of running the event from coordinating with on-site media. Things such as setting up public address systems, greeting dignitaries, etc. at the risk of overlooking the media is inviting trouble. Determine in advance the need and designate someone whose **sole task** is handling the media.

## Final Considerations



Many of our events will command interest at only the local level. However, on occasion, a localized event may generate regional or even national interest. While in rare instances it can be a challenge to know in advance if a story about your local event will “get legs” and become “the big story,” almost always there are lots of clues that this can happen. Ask yourself a few questions about the event:

- Will the general public (or our Brothers) in another state be interested in what will happen?
- Will the event change how our Order is perceived by the general public?
- If you were an officer at the Department or National level, would you want to know about the event in advance?

If you answer “yes” to these or similar questions, reach out through established channels well in advance and let the Department and/or National administration know. In many cases they can offer additional support and promotion which can further enhance the success and broaden the appeal of your event.

Remember: A story about an event, no matter how wonderful, loses public appeal and relevance in the blink of an eye and whether we like it or not, old news is not news. Don’t let any opportunity to successfully promote our events to the widest possible audience slip by.



## Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War FACT SHEET



The **Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW)** is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of veteran heroes who fought and worked to save the Union in the American Civil War. Organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, SUVCW is the legal heir and successor to the Grand Army of the Republic.

In 1866, Union Veterans of the Civil War organized into the **Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)** and became a social and political force that would greatly influence the destiny of the nation for more than five decades. Membership in the veterans' organization was restricted to individuals who had served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Revenue Cutter Service during the Civil War, thereby limiting the life span of the GAR. The GAR existed until 1956.

In 1881 the GAR formed the **Sons of Veterans of the United States of America (SV)** to carry on its traditions and memory long after the GAR had ceased to exist. Membership was open to any man who could prove ancestry to a member of the GAR or to a veteran eligible for membership in the GAR. In the 1920's the name was changed to the SUVCW and in later years, men who did not have the ancestry to qualify for hereditary membership, but who demonstrated a genuine interest in the Civil War and could subscribe to the purpose and objectives of the SUVCW, were admitted as Associates. This practice continues today.

Today, the National Organization of the SUVCW, headed by an annually elected Commander-in-Chief, oversees the operation of 31 Departments, each consisting of one or more states, a Department-at-Large, a National Membership-at-Large, and over 200 community based camps. More than 6,000 men enjoy the benefits of membership in the only male organization dedicated to the principles of the GAR — Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty. It publishes "*The BANNER*" quarterly for its members. The SUVCW National Headquarters is located in the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The SUVCW is one of five Allied Orders of the GAR. The other four Orders are: Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

For more information on the SUVCW, please visit: <http://www.suvcw.org/>

