



FRA

PUBLIC RELATIONS  
MANUAL

UPLIFTING OUR IMAGE

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## **FOREWORD**

This handbook is published for the benefit of all branches of the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) by the National Committee on Public Relations, in keeping with the responsibilities expressed in the Section 816, C&BL, FRA.

The committee is indebted to the original author, Shipmate Charles E. Holland. Shipmate Holland's simple, straight-forward guidance, if followed, is certain to improve the public relations program of any branch. It should also have the advantage of encouraging shipmates to begin a public relations program in those branches where none currently exists.

The National Committee on Public Relations publishes this handbook with a sincere hope that it will be instrumental in truly "uplifting our image," increasing our membership, and guaranteeing our future.

This handbook, with minor changes since originally published in 1981, is promulgated by the National Executive Director. Recommendations for changes and or corrections should be addressed to the Chairman, National Committee on Public Relations.

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook was written for those shipmates who want to take their appointments as public relations chairmen or public relations committeemen seriously. In no way will this handbook tell you everything you need to know in order to run a successful public relations program for your branch. It will, however, point you in the right direction, give you some basics, and list references for learning more about the application of public relations for the overall benefit of your branch and ultimately, the Fleet Reserve Association.

Experts in the field of public relations are normally those people who have graduated with a Bachelor's degree in journalism, communications, the media or related fields. It's seldom a branch will be fortunate enough to find within its membership a shipmate with this academic background. However, with a little effort, any dedicated shipmate can successfully operate an effective branch public relations program. If, as the title of this handbook indicates, we are to uplift the image of the FRA in our communities, then we must develop an active and on-going program for public relations.

There are many terms relating to the field of public relations. You've heard of Public Information, Public Affairs, Public Relations, and just plain publicity. Through the image we give to others as members of the FRA and the things we do and say as shipmates, we can create a positive or negative image of the FRA. Through public relations, we try to create a favorable image of the FRA and erase misconceptions so we can increase our membership and aid in promoting our common causes and goals. Publicity normally means information given to the news media in some form. Through good publicity, we can gain public attention, recognition, understanding and public support for the FRA, or an individual cause sponsored by or supported by the FRA. Good use of public relations principles will win friends and influence people for the FRA. Public Relations can also be defined as the overall way of developing and maintaining a favorable image in the public eye. Publicity is nothing more than telling about what we do, how we do it, why we do it, and how it benefits the community.

## BENEFITS OF A GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

1. You can gain recognition of your good deeds in the community. You can develop greater community awareness and goodwill. For example: Sponsoring sea service recruiting events, sponsoring scout groups, giving awards, sponsoring baseball teams, sponsoring a blood donor program, assisting with the NJROTC or NROTC program in your area, scholarships, essay contest, and if the SOY, EPOY, etc. is from your branch, seize the opportunity.
2. When the work our shipmates are doing is publicized, they receive the personal satisfaction that what they are doing is noticed, understood and appreciated.
3. Good publicity can make our membership proud to belong. It will encourage greater participation in branch activities, and increase the interest of prospective members and encourage them to sign up.
4. If the community is aware of what the local FRA branch is doing, it will give greater financial support to fund-raising projects.
5. Your news is important to your local newspapers. The activities of local people and local organizations are what news is all about.
6. The Branch Public Relations Committee can provide ideas as well as press releases to local newspapers for articles or feature stories about the FRA or individual branch members.

Don't expect your local newspapers to print everything you give them or to use any idea you propose. Don't give up hope either. If your press releases are interesting to the public and well prepared, they will eventually be printed.

## **HOW TO TACKLE THE JOB**

Start by knowing the “ins and outs” of your organization. Read the recruiting literature published by the National Headquarters, i.e. Naval Affairs, On Watch, FRA press releases, and the FRA’s Web site, [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org). Be familiar with the C&BL, Rituals, and Standing Rules on national, regional and branch levels. If your branch has an Activities or Program Committee, be sure to attend that committee’s meetings. Consult constantly with the branch officers so you are informed of upcoming events – plan public relations efforts around them. You can’t succeed in public relations without a thorough knowledge of your Association.

One of the primary objectives of any branch is to recruit new members and reduce the suspension rate. Many branches set up displays and man membership booths in shopping centers, commissaries, or base exchanges. If you are setting up such a booth, call the base paper, the master chief, the sergeant major, etc., and tell them about the Association. Suggest they visit [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org). This is very much a part of public relations. Remember that even though your main purpose may be to obtain new members, you’re in the public eye when you hold a membership drive. It goes without saying that shipmates participating in such an event should present an outstanding appearance, be cordial and helpful to both prospective members and non-prospective members alike, and be outgoing enough to be able to intelligently provide answers to the numerous questions people will inevitably ask. Some thought should also go into the making of displays or floats entered in parades which represent not only the local branch but the FRA as a whole. In this regard, many branches concentrate too much on just the Navy. Whenever possible, be sure to include display materials on the Marine Corps and Coast Guard as well as the Navy. Your local sea service recruiters can normally be very helpful in providing materials for display and/or parade floats. The good Public Relations Committee will always be looking for ways the FRA can assist with or participate in Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard functions.

There must be definite guidelines established by each branch governing how the Public Relations Committee is to operate. In any case, only one person should be authorized to handle press releases or radio/TV public service announcements. Your credibility with the local newspaper editor or broadcasting executive will vanish quickly if those people receive press releases for the same event from more than one contact, especially if the information about the same event is different in multiple releases. It may be the policy of your branch that the Board of Directors must approve press releases, but once approved, insure that the Public Relations Chairman or a committee member designated by him, is the only member who makes contact with the press or broadcasting media. Because press releases are normally faced with deadlines in order to retain their news value, it is a better idea to give the Public Relations Committee the sole responsibility for press relations. By the time a press release is approved by the Branch Board of Directors, it may be too late to submit the release to the press. As long as the Public Relations Committee realizes that it has a great responsibility to maintain a favorable image about the FRA and its members, there should be no problem in granting that committee the authority to speak for the branch in matters of public relations. At the same time, any contact the press or media make with a branch should be referred to the Public Relations Chairman and not be handled by members other than perhaps the President or Secretary.

For larger branches which operate on annual budgets, the Public Relations Committee should be an item on the budget. Stationery, postage, paid advertisements, photographic supplies, equipment and required office supplies would be items for the budget. The cost of display materials and the construction of floats for parades could also be items for the Public Relations Committee budget.

The next step on your way to an effective Public Relations program is to prepare an organizational fact sheet which you can give to your contacts at the local newspaper offices and the radio and TV stations. This fact sheet can be used by editors to add background to a story, by speakers who may be talking about the FRA, or for your own use when preparing press releases. A sample fact sheet format is included as Appendix I to this handbook.

## **ESTABLISH A MEDIA LIST**

Now that you have all the facts and figures about your branch, and the FRA in general, your next step is to investigate what possibilities are available in your area for your publicity program. The easiest way to prepare a master list

is to visit your local public library. Consult the N.W. Ayer & Sons Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals or look it up on the Internet to find the names of all publications in your area. Keep in mind you want to cover the entire area your branch serves. List the titles, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses for all the daily newspapers, weeklies, semiweeklies, and shopper weeklies which cover your area. Although most of your publicity will be concentrated on newspapers, it won't hurt to list the information on all the radio and TV stations in your area as well. If you can't find this information in your library, the telephone yellow pages normally list all broadcasting stations. Branches in large cities will normally find that the large city newspapers are not too receptive to FRA news unless it is really unusual or spectacular. Nonetheless, list the large daily newspapers on your list, as well.

## ANALYZE YOUR LIST

Most of the news publications you have on your list should be in the reading room of your public library or on the Internet. You can use the computers in the library if you don't have one of your own. What you want to find out as quickly as possible is which publications are more apt to use the type of press releases you will prepare. In most cases, you will find that the smaller newspapers, shoppers weeklies, or weekly newspapers will be more receptive to news of FRA branch meetings and/or functions. Naturally, you will want to send your press releases to the papers where they'll stand the greatest chance of being published. Study editions of all the papers in your area over a period of time. Find out the differences or similarities among the papers. What kind of stories does each paper use most of the time? What style are they written in? (See book entitled Associated Press Style Guide, available in local book stores.) What kind of pictures do you see most of the time? Is there a certain day each week, or a certain week each month, when the paper contains a special column with club news or certain kinds of community activities?

Once you have decided which publications will be the most help to you in your public relations efforts, start a folder on each of them. Make clippings of various types of articles which you can refer to when preparing press releases. Read these publications regularly to see if you can develop ideas or feature stories with an FRA twist.

## CONTACT YOUR SOURCES

Now you're ready to meet the media people and to have the media people meet you and become familiar with the FRA. Call the newspaper and radio/TV station to set up a personal appointment with the person you want to deal with. Find out specifically who will handle your branch press releases. Is it a particular editor or person; is it a certain desk such as the City Desk; or is it a department of the paper? A personal call on media people is preferred but if that can't be arranged, attempt to get all the information you need over the phone. Find out what the paper's deadlines are for various types of releases. Determine what format and style the paper uses. This is discussed further in this handbook under the newspaper style section. Does the editor want to know in advance of special branch functions or does he just want a press release after the event? Are there times when the editor would want one of his reporters at an FRA event? Are there any special interests which the paper is concerned with? If so, is there a way the FRA or your branch can tie in with them? Make sure each editor or reporter you deal with has a copy of your branch's fact sheet with your name, address and phone number(s) on it. And by all means, keep the fact sheet up-to-date. If you can't accomplish the mission with a personal visit or a phone call, mail or e-mail the information to the paper, but make sure you have an exact address so your information will reach the contact you want.

Media people are very busy and work with a great deal of pressure and constant deadlines. Keep your association with them businesslike. After a personal visit, it's nice to drop them a brief note or thank you card to tell them you appreciate their cooperation and that you look forward to working with them. **Never ask an editor or reporter when a release will be published. Never ask why an article was not published UNLESS you don't ever want your releases published.** And don't expect them to print your press release if it contains no information of interest or of benefit to the general public or a large segment of it. For instance, a press release containing nothing more than the fact that Branch XXX, FRA, will hold its usual monthly meeting on a certain date, has little news or interest value to the general public. Such a release would never be published in a large daily city newspaper but might very well find itself in print in a smaller weekly community paper. On the other hand, if a local dignitary or an FRA national officer will be the guest speaker at your branch meeting, it is quite possible that even the larger papers would carry

your story if your release is well written and perhaps accompanied by a photograph and some background information on the featured guest. You'll never know unless you try. In this regard, your Branch Public Relations Committee should have in its files short biographies on the current FRA national officers including, of course, the regional president.

## **WHEN SHOULD YOU WRITE PRESS RELEASES?**

Newspapers editors have the job of publishing news about current events or feature stories which will interest and inform the general public. About 90% of what editors receive goes into the nearest wastebasket. The other 10% qualifies as news or features with interesting information. Therefore, the FRA Branch Public Relations Chairman should write press releases only when what he has to offer is newsworthy. On face value, this might seem that seldom would a typical FRA branch have a press release of sufficient news value to offer to an editor. However, there are many occasions which can be made into newsworthy events.

Recognize achievements. Did your branch have an Americanism Essay Contest winner? Did one of your shipmate's sons or daughters win an FRA/LA FRA scholarship? How about the winner of the "Shipmate of the Year?" Any time a member of your branch is recognized for some type of achievement, even if it isn't directly FRA related, it can create the chance to submit a press release with a dash of FRA thrown in.

Is your branch about to celebrate an anniversary – especially the 25th or 50th? These are good occasions to prepare publicity releases announcing the events planned to celebrate the anniversary. Each November 11th, the FRA gets a year older, as does the Marine Corps. Why not a feature on a shipmate who is a retired Marine? Why not a feature story on the FRA and a little of its history to use in conjunction with Veterans Day?

Has a member of your branch been appointed to a national committee; been elected to a national or regional office? Send in a press release, especially if that shipmate is well known for other contributions to the community. Don't forget a photo. Does your branch give annual awards to the Sailor of the Year, to a graduating NROTC midshipman, to a sponsored Girl or Boy Scout Troop? How about any special youth activities projects sponsored by your branch? All of these can qualify as the basis for good press releases.

What does your branch or unit do to contribute to the community? Does it make any special contributions to education, church, youth, senior citizens, minority groups, or the handicapped? How about gifts, monetary or otherwise, to the local VA or PHS hospital? Publicize it.

In the case of a community emergency such as a flood, hurricane, or tornado, if your branch played a large part by providing some special service, tell the community about it by writing a press release. Mention the FRA's Disaster Relief Fund.

Is your branch going to host a mid-year meeting or a regional or national convention? If so, it can be the reason to submit several press releases. Publicize the key-note speaker, the appointments to various convention committees, important decisions or proclamations made at the convention, especially if they have some relation to local community issues or interests. And even if your branch is not going to host a convention, you can submit a press release about your members who were chosen as delegates to represent your branch.

The annual FRA Americanism Essay Contest is always an opportunity for all branches to conduct a full-fledged publicity campaign. Your targets should include all the junior and senior high school newspapers as well as any youth group publications. Naturally, you will include the entire civilian press in your area. Start as soon as you know the theme chosen for the current year. Issue press releases on the theme and the rules. As the contest runs through the end of March, you have an opportunity to issue several releases from September through March. However, try to make them different, and as always, interesting to the general public. And, as mentioned earlier, if one of the contest winners is from your area, another golden chance to publicize the FRA is yours. A sample press release for the Americanism Essay Contest is included in Appendix III.

Many smaller newspapers will gladly publish a press release announcing your newly elected officers. Such an article can be made even more interesting if, for instance, the branch and unit president are husband and wife, or if any of the elected officers are well known persons in the community. The annual installation of officers could also qualify for a press release or at least a good photograph. If any of the outgoing officers received any special recognition for their past performance, submit a press release.

Branches who reach certain stages in membership growth should find that a publicity release is worthwhile. For instance, a branch reaching the 100th member, or 1000th member could be the occasion for an interesting story about the history of the local branch and its work in the community.

FRA branches are encouraged to take part in all patriotic holidays. These special observances are often good occasions for publicity releases. The trick is to submit a good story with good photography and beat the competition to the nearest newspaper. If your branch observes any holiday in any unusual way, tell the public about it. Placing wreaths upon the water in a Memorial Day Ceremony would be unusual because most Veterans groups don't do it.

To summarize, press releases should be prepared whenever a branch has newsworthy material to report on any item in the following list:

|                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Achievements          | Contributions      |
| Anniversaries         | Conventions        |
| Appointments          | Elections          |
| Community Emergencies | Membership         |
| Contests              | Patriotic Holidays |

Members of the Branch Public Relations Committee should keep a copy of this list handy so they can be constantly reminded to look for occasions to increase the branch's publicity.

## **WRITING PRESS RELEASES**

Your press releases will be divided into news stories or feature stories. News stories, of course, are those concerned with current events – what your branch is doing now, has very recently done, or will do in the near future. A feature story can be written on any subject which will interest or inform the general public, normally with an unusual twist. A feature story can be submitted to the press at any time as it has no particular time value.

Let's deal with news stories first. The first thing you must do is write the "lead." This is usually a one sentence, opening paragraph which will directly answer most or all of the six questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? The next two don't always need to be in the "lead" first sentence. But, should be addressed in the very next sentence. For some good examples, go to [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org) and look under "Press Releases." After writing the lead which contains the major points or facts of a story, develop the rest of your story, keeping in mind to write about the most important details first and the least important last. This is referred to as writing in the "pyramid" or "inverted pyramid" style. Go to the Defense Information School (DINFOS) Web site for helpful information, [www.dinfos.osd.mil](http://www.dinfos.osd.mil). The important reason for writing your stories in this manner is to allow an editor to chop your story at the end if he doesn't have the space to publish the entire article – often the case.

Use short words and simple sentences with concrete nouns and active verbs. Use the active rather than the passive voice. For example, write "The branch will meet..." and not "A meeting of the branch will be held..." Don't use fancy adjectives or adverbs, slang, cliches, or current fashionable expressions. Above all, be accurate. Make sure all names are spelled correctly. Be specific about when an event happened or will happen. Avoid using a.m. or p.m. in your releases. It's better to write "on Wednesday night at 8." Check the newspaper you're writing for to determine the style it uses. Normally dates are written in figures such as March 12 – not March 12th or May 21st. Again, check your paper's style to see if it abbreviates months. If you're writing about the current year, it's unnecessary to use it as part of the date. In short, keep your releases as brief as possible. When you're finished check very carefully for accuracy in names, addresses, titles, dates, figures and grammar. Eliminate superfluous words.



Feature stories can be written about anything your branch or one of its members has done which is interesting or unusual. Things like branch anniversaries, unusual hobbies of a member, or a surprise twist in any situation all make good feature stories. If you have an idea for a good feature story, contact the editor of the paper you have in mind to see if he is interested. He may want to have one of his reporters develop the feature or he may give you the go-ahead to do it yourself. Read the style section of your local paper to see what type of features they prefer.

An important thing to remember with any type of press release is that editors like to have an exclusive. You should release your stories to only one paper at a time. Take turns giving one paper an exclusive one time and then another paper the news the next time. That way you won't find your branch unwelcome at the editorial offices.

## **PREPARING YOUR COPY**

As a general rule, go by the sample press release contained in this handbook or study books written about newspaper style and format, some of which are listed in the bibliography.

Some of the basics include: Try to use a computerized word processing system, utilizing a "Times New Roman" style 12 point font; always double-space your copy; never use all capital letters; use a good quality paper; don't use the "erasable" bond type; always submit an original copy – never a carbon; use normal type faces – never use "script" or other fancy type faces; leave ample margins for the editor to write instructions; never type on both sides of the paper; never use staples or "dogear" the pages; use "more" to indicate additional pages and "-30-" or "end" or "# # #" to indicate the conclusion of an article.

Joseph Pulitzer, the well-known publisher and founder of the Pulitzer prizes, offers some excellent advice on writing publicity:

"Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it and, above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light."

If you follow these words, the editors you deal with will appreciate your fine work and your branch will be pleased with the results you are achieving in public relations.

A Few Words About Grammar [The Associated Press (AP) Style Guide includes all of this info.]

Nothing disturbs newspaper editors more than news releases full of errors in noun-verb agreement and misplaced apostrophes in possessive nouns. Is it its or it's? Do you use their or there? Do you say "The Branch Board of Directors gave its consent." or is it "The Branch Board of Directors gave their consent."? Here are a few basics to use as guidelines when preparing press releases.

Always use the active voice rather than the passive voice. Write "the branch will meet" not "a meeting of the branch will be held." Watch out for collective nouns. They represent numbers of people but they are singular in construction with pronouns and verbs. For example:

Right: The Board voted 9-12. It decided...

Wrong: The Board voted 9-12. They decided...

Be very careful with the use of adjectives and adverbs. What you describe as "beautiful" or "delicious" may very well be ugly and bland to another person. Your best bet is to just report the facts and leave the reader to supply his own adjectives. Your goal is to keep each story as objective as possible. Keep your opinions out of news or feature stories. If you or your branch desires to express an opinion, the place for it is in the Letters to the Editor or a similar column.

Learn how to punctuate quotations if you use them in your news releases (and you should). Here are some common examples:

“I agree,” he said. He said, “I agree.” Will the membership respond to the president’s request for “better attendance?” The president asked, “Are all members here?” The branch members attended “South Pacific,” “Hello! Dolly” and “Mr. Roberts.” Remember, a period and comma are always placed before ending quotation marks. The question mark and exclamation point are placed before quotation marks when they refer to the quoted material, or after when they refer to the entire sentence. The semicolon and colon follow ending quotation marks unless they are part of the quoted matter. When in doubt, refer to the AP Style Guide or other reference guide. Your grammatical expertise will impress the newspaper editor and enhance your chances for publication.

## NEWSPAPER STYLE

Earlier in this handbook you were told to check out each newspaper’s style. Style simply means the way a particular paper chooses to use the language. Although there is not one style universally followed by all publications, the following examples are generally acceptable.

There is an “up” and “down” style in the use of capital letters. Most newspapers follow a “down style” which indicates they use capital letters only when absolutely required. Capitalize a title when it precedes a personal name, but use lower case when a title stands alone or follows a name. For example: “National President John S. Doe of the Fleet Reserve Association....” but “John S. Doe, national president of the Fleet Reserve Association....” or “the national president issued a report....”

The names of all holidays, historic events, or special events are normally capitalized. Political party names are capitalized but not the word “party.” Thus, “Republican party” or “He is a Democrat.”

Capitalize specific geographical regions such as Midwest, Southern California, Chicago’s South Side. The incumbent President of the United States always takes a capital “P” whether or not the title appears with his name.

Closely examine the newspaper you are writing for to determine its style. If you can, obtain a copy of its style book. Check specifically to find out what words it capitalizes, how dates and times are written, what forms of addresses are used, and how abbreviations are used.

When used before full name, military titles are usually abbreviated as follows: Navy and Coast Guard - Adm., Rear Adm., Capt., Cmdr., Lt. Cmdr., Lt., Lt.(j.g.), Ens.; Marine Corps - Gen., Maj. Gen., Col., Maj., Capt., Lt., Pfc. Also use Seaman, Petty Officer First Class, Chief Petty Officer. Do not abbreviate the following titles at any time: general manager, secretary-general, secretary-treasurer, president, secretary, treasurer, vice-president. And remember, these titles are capitalized only when they are used before names. Spell out all titles when used with only a person’s last name.

Spell the name of a person as he or she spells it. Do not use a comma with Jr. or Sr. or II, III, etc. Check your paper’s use of Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., etc. Generally Mr. is never used with a man’s full name. Many papers identify a male initially as John Doe and then refer to him as Doe afterwards in the article. Miss and Mrs. are commonly used because they give information about a woman’s marital status. Ms. is rarely used because it tells us nothing about the person. Mr. and Mrs. are used when referring to a husband and wife together.

Use the title “Shipmate” sparingly when writing releases for the civilian press. It is better usage to write “President Jones” rather than “Shipmate President Jones.” A good reason for this is the scarcity of available space in a typical newspaper. You don’t want to use unnecessary words. It is better to write “a large number of members attended” rather than “a large number of shipmates attended.” Again, keep in mind that what you write must be clear to the reader. He or she may or may not be familiar with the term “Shipmate.”

A common error for branch publicity releases is the statement “President John Smith presided.” “President” means “presiding officer” and thus to say the president presided is superfluous. Likewise, to say that “Vice President Joe Green presided in the absence of the president” is also superfluous because most people know that it’s the vice president’s duty to do just that.

When writing addresses you will usually abbreviate St., Ave., Blvd., and Ter. Spell out: circle, plaza, place, drive, oval, road, lane, point, and port.

Write out the name of the association the first time it is mentioned in a story and thereafter use the abbreviation such as: "George L. Carlin Branch 1 of the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) will meet Tuesday evening at 8.... Local FRA members are currently sponsoring...."

When writing numbers generally spell out numbers from one through nine and use figures for 10 and above. Also use "first" through "ninth" and then 10th, 43rd, 52nd, etc. Use figures for ages of humans and animals. When a number is the first word in a sentence, spell it out or change the beginning of the sentence. For example: "Fourteen members decided..." or "A total of 14 members decided..." Large numbers up to and including 999,999 are written using the figures or by rounding them off such as "almost one million," "a budget of more than \$1 million," "Two and one-half million will be spent..." The dollar sign (\$) is often used but the cent sign (¢) is not used. Spell out "cents."

If writing about percentages write out the word percent. Your best bet is again to check your paper's style. The same thing is true for writing fractions. Fractions should be spelled out when the number is less than one, using hyphens between the words: one-fourth, one-half, etc. Use figures for precise amounts larger than one, converting to decimals whenever practical.

You should either obtain a stylebook for the paper(s) you write for or just get an AP Style Guide. Get in the habit of clipping examples of newspaper styles as you see them. Make a small scrapbook with these samples or put them in a loose-leaf binder. Another suggestion is to keep a copy of each press release you submit. When the release appears in the paper, compare the printed release with your original submission. If you have made any errors in style, just jot them down in your stylebook. You should also consult the references listed in the bibliography to this handbook.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

We've spent a lot of time talking about press releases with no mention of photographs. Good pictures submitted with good press releases will do wonders for an effective public relations program. To begin with, you should consult the references listed in this handbook. Several contain sections on photography. What follows are merely the basics.

You won't go wrong if you submit an 8" x 10," color or black and white, glossy print. Digital images should be e-mailed in JPEG format, and should be at least 300 DPI. The photo reproduced in a newspaper will only be as good as the original print. Unless your branch has a commercial photographer or a talented amateur within its membership, you should consider using the services of a professional photographer. Naturally, you must consider the cost involved and whether or not your branch's membership will approve such expenditures. Some newspapers charge for photograph reproduction. Contact the editor to see what policies are in effect regarding photos. If you have a worthwhile story going, chances are the editor will send one of the paper's photographers to your event at no cost to the branch.

Each photograph must have a caption identifying the individuals in the photo along with amplifying information. Protect your photos with cardboard. Don't fold photos, don't use paper clips or staples. Never write on the back of a photo; rather put your information on a separate sheet of paper and include it with the photo. **Don't ask for your photo to be returned unless the editor is a bosom buddy.**

Good photos are planned; they don't just happen. Once the Public Relations Committee is aware of an upcoming branch function, it should start thinking about possible press releases and accompanying photography. Even if you're using the services of a professional photographer, your photos won't be effective unless you plan them. The photos may be of excellent quality but unless you plan them you will lose out on interest, imagination, creativity, or originality.

The most common photo you see within the FRA is one with a group of branch officers standing in a row, presenting an award or whatever, and more often than not, a great huge emblem of the FRA or other object growing right out of the president's head!

Don't have people stand with their head and body facing the camera. Have them stand at an angle with their head facing the camera. Have them doing something other than stare at the camera. Editors do not want static, flat, uninteresting photos in their papers. Keep the number of people in your photos to a minimum – only 3 or 4 when possible. When you must photograph a larger group, don't stand them in a row. Before taking a photo, look at the background. Keep it unbusy, uncluttered, and plain.

If you are serious about achieving good photography, you must be willing to start getting a background in photography. This is really easier than it sounds. The nearest library has a wealth of information for amateur photographers. You probably have shipmates who are camera buffs. Even your editor will probably be glad to give you a number of tips to enhance your photographic efforts. If you're not willing to expend the extra effort, don't expect your public relations efforts to get very high off the ground. Photographs are nothing more than images. You'll remember our primary goal is to uplift our image.

## **BRANCH NEWSLETTERS**

The most important communications link a branch has with all of its members is the branch bulletin or newsletter. Good newsletters make members proud of the association and their membership in it. Good newsletters will encourage members to seek out new and reinstated members. What makes a good newsletter? Here you'll find a few basic tips.

How much money does your branch have to invest in its monthly publication? This will determine the method you'll use to print it. This will also determine the size, format, and such items as the ability to print photos. With some effort, even the smallest branch with very little funds available, can produce an interesting, well-organized, and informative newsletter. First of all, examine copies of other branch newsletters throughout your region and other regions. Pick out the ones you especially like and ask yourself what it is that makes them better than the others.

Correspond with the editors of other newsletters to find out how they gather their news or other newsletter articles. Many regional presidents publish excellent newsletters which branch editors can use to fill the columns of their newsletters. Contacting the public affairs offices of nearby military installations can result in obtaining news you can use which will interest your membership. Many large cities have Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard recruiting activities which can be of assistance even if there is no sea-service base near-by. There's nothing wrong with using another branch's newsletter article as long as you are courteous enough to give credit to the originator of the article.

Do keep in mind that you are not normally free to copy verbatim articles from Navy Times or the civilian press without their permission. Editors must always abide by copyright laws.

Many of the procedures outlined in this handbook for writing news releases could also be used when writing for the branch newsletter. Keep your information and articles brief, to the point, accurate, and clearly written. You won't impress any of your shipmates if they can't understand the words you decide to throw at them. Shipmates like to see their names in print. Use every chance to publish their names – the more, the merrier – to give credit, express appreciation, or reward achievement to those branch members who deserve it.

There is opposition in many branches to listing, by name, those shipmates whose dues have expired. Many branch newsletters contain this information. This is an item which should be determined by each branch. Never publish derogatory information about the branch, the Ladies Auxiliary Unit, or any member thereof. It's the purpose of the branch newsletter to promote good public relations both within and outside the association.

Some FRA regions have a Newsletter Recognition Committee which gives annual awards to the best newsletter within the region. Contact the chairman of that committee or consult the regional bylaws to see what guidelines are used to determine excellence in newsletter publication.

An “In Memoriam” article once appeared in a branch newsletter, and stated the shipmate had passed away “on or about” a certain date. This certainly is not very good news writing and doesn’t show the survivors that the branch even cared enough to get the date right. To make matters worse, the same article contained the branch’s wish “to extend our utmost heartfelt condolences to the NOK...” Again, it would mean much more to the surviving widow, children, or family to have them mentioned by name. In addition, if other branch shipmates wanted to send their expressions of sympathy, it would be helpful for them to know the exact name(s) of the next of kin.

To be effective, your branch newsletter must be personable, informative and helpful to your branch membership. It may look great; it may be nicely printed and contain photographs; or it might be large enough to paper a room, BUT if the contents do not inform or assist your members, you’ve wasted valuable branch funds.

### **AND THAT’S NOT ALL**

News releases and photographs are not sufficient to guarantee an effective branch public relations program. There are many other ways to increase awareness of the FRA and to uplift our image.

If there is a united or allied veterans organization in your area, your branch should be a member. And being a member isn’t enough. The FRA delegates to that organization should be active ones who are aware of the concerns of Sea Service veterans in your area.

What does your branch do to influence local or state legislators on matters concerning veterans? What relationship does your branch have with the state Veterans Affairs Committee or similar body? If your local or state legislators don’t know who you are, your branch has immediate need of a strong effort in public relations. This may, of course, be the responsibility of the Legislative Service Committee. However, it’s the Branch Public Relations Committee which makes the branch and the local community aware of what efforts the FRA is putting forth in this and other areas.

What is your branch doing to assist in recruiting qualified young men and women for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard? Visit the nearest sea-service recruiter. He or she will suggest many ways in which the branch can participate or assist in recruiting functions.

Is there a high school or college NROTC program in your area? Is there a chapter of the Navy Sea Cadets or any other sea-service oriented group in your area? If so, examine ways and means for your branch to assist them, or in some cases sponsor them. This assistance or participation will lead to good press releases and result in good community awareness of the FRA.

Don’t forget the Letters to the Editors, guest editorials, or similar columns on your paper’s editorial/opinion pages. There are numerous occasions when current issues affect the military veteran. Express the FRA’s position in a well-written article to the press. Of course, check your facts and be careful to accurately reflect only the official FRA position. Consult with branch and regional officers if in doubt.

Another way of putting the FRA in the public’s eye is the use of business cards. A well-designed business card should be given to any contact an FRA member makes. Keep the card simple. It should contain no more than your name, address, telephone number and your FRA affiliation – such as the title of your office or committee. The standard size business card has room for the FRA emblem, the insignia of the three sea services and a short, two or three lines such as:

Fleet Reserve Association  
Representing All Enlisted Personnel  
USN – USMC – USCG

Most people receiving business cards will put them in their wallets or hold on to them in some way. They will serve as a reminder to that person of what the FRA does. For a prospective shipmate, a business card will remind him or

her to send back that membership application or to keep that appointment with an FRA recruiter. As a minimum, the branch president, secretary, membership chairman, and public relations chairmen should carry FRA business cards. The cost of having the cards printed could be borne by the branch as their primary purpose is to promote an awareness of the FRA among non-members.

Many branches fail to realize that the stationery they write their letters on can have a great impact on the recipient. The stationery can do much to create a favorable FRA image or just the opposite. Stationery throughout the Association ranges all the way from the sublime to the ridiculous. You can find the entire FRA Preamble on some branch stationery. On others you get the idea an entire parade is passing by with flags and banners and whatnot. Like a business card, stationery should be kept rather simple but the opportunity to portray a message of what the Association is all about should not be lost. Many branches have created excellent stationery by just using the national headquarters' stationery as an example and revising the address information to that of their own branch. Being simple means leaving room for communication. Having branch stationery printed need not be a costly experience. There are many economical ways to have stationery printed with the results you desire. Just remember that your branch stationery is an important part of public relations and can uplift our image or detract from it.

These are just a few ways to spread the word that the Fleet Reserve Association is a worthwhile organization whose members are active contributors to the welfare of the community in which they live.

## **RADIO AND TV PUBLICITY**

Not much has been said here about news or other releases for the electronic media. It's not that they shouldn't be considered because if you can get air time it will certainly be a large plus in your publicity efforts. As you well know, most air time on radio or TV is taken up with the actual program being broadcast or a "few message." Unfortunately, those messages are almost always paid advertisements. It is rare that a typical FRA branch can get a public service announcement aired. This shouldn't discourage you from contacting the news or program directors of the broadcasting stations in your area. A specific problem with TV announcements is the expense of providing the video portion of the announcement – slides, movies, etc. In any case, several of the reference books listed in this handbook's bibliography contain a section on preparing releases for the broadcast media. Many TV and radio stations will also gladly provide you with a copy of a small pamphlet entitled "If You Want Air Time."

In most cases, you'll have more success in this area with radio stations rather than TV. Many smaller stations will gladly announce upcoming events, meetings, etc., free of charge. All you have to do is contact the stations to see what policies or procedures you must follow.

## **DO-IT-YOURSELF SURVEYS**

Branch Public Relations Committees can examine their efforts or plan their activities by taking informal surveys using the following items:

1. Be alert to misinformation being spread about the FRA and to critical comments being made.
2. Listen carefully to the comments of other members. They have their own opinions and they reflect those of others with whom they come in contact.
3. Contact other branches in your own or other regions to see if they have results from similar surveys. Compare information.
4. Contact the leaders of other veterans organizations in your community. See what they think of the FRA. What is their opinion? What have they heard? If nothing, it's a sure bet you must start a strong PR program.
5. Keep track of the questions you're asked. Do they reveal areas of obvious misunderstanding?

## **THE ANNUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Don't wait until the first of July each year to begin compiling information for the annual report which is to be submitted to your regional chairman as directed on the report form and prior to the convention of the regional convention. A copy of all public relations items should be maintained in a separate file to be submitted as documentation with the annual report.

Obtain a copy of the previous year's report. Study the information contained on the form so that you will understand what is required of each branch in order to enjoy a successful year in the field of public relations. If you have questions about the report or any procedures to be followed, feel free to contact your regional chairman at any time.

### **THE BASIC B'S FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**BE THE ONLY PERSON** from your branch to contact the news media. Two members calling the same newspaper editor are bound to bring about conflict or confusion.

**BE QUICK** to establish personal contact with the right people at each newspaper, radio and television station in your area.

**BE SURE** to write everything down. Train your memory, but don't trust it.

**BE PROMPT** in meeting every deadline. Know what your editor's deadlines are.

**BE LEGIBLE.** Type news releases following the format contained in this handbook.

**BE ACCURATE.** Learn how to proofread your copy. Be especially careful to submit correct names, dates and places.

**BE HONEST AND IMPARTIAL.** Be objective. Don't give your opinion in a news release. Opinions are only expressed in the editorial pages.

**BE BRIEF.** Leave out superfluous words. Omit adjectives and adverbs which give your opinion. Newspaper space and air time are at a premium.

**BE BRAVE.** Don't be afraid to suggest something new if you honestly believe you have a workable idea. Media people welcome original ideas when they're practical and logically organized.

**BE BUSINESS-LIKE.** Never try to obtain public relations by pressure of friendship or business connections. Never ask when a story will appear or for clippings.

**BE APPRECIATIVE** of all space and time given your branch public relations.

**BE PROFESSIONAL.** Members of the press are always INVITED guests. Never ask them to pay admission or to buy tickets. Arrange a "press table" for large banquets. Carry and present an FRA business card.

## APPENDIX I

### SAMPLE ORGANIZATION FACT SHEET FORMAT

FROM: (Name) Branch (No.)  
FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
(Name of PR Chairman)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State, Zip Code)  
(Telephone Number)  
(E-mail Address)

(Date)

### FACT SHEET

#### (NAME) BRANCH (NO.), FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION

EARLY YEARS.....(Give information about the founding of your branch. List the name of your branch organizer and the date the branch was instituted. Give a few important facts about the early history of the branch, if available.)

CLUB HOUSE.....(If the branch has a home, give some information about it. When was it purchased or built? Was it donated? By whom? Does the home contain any interesting artifacts or unusual souvenirs or possessions? If so, tell about them.)

MEMBERSHIP.....(List the total amount of members and the area they come from.) Membership in the Fleet Reserve Association is open to active duty, retired and reserve members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Specifics about other membership requirements are available from the Branch Membership Chairman: (List name, address, phone number.)

HEADQUARTERS.....(If the branch maintains an office, list the address, hours of operation, and telephone number. If the branch does not have an office, the same information should be listed for the branch Secretary.)

ACTIVITIES.....Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at the Name of Meeting Facility), (Number and Street), (City or Town), at 8 p.m. (List any organizations the branch sponsors such as scout troops, etc. List any awards the branch sponsors on an annual basis. List any scholarships given. List the annual Americanism Essay Contest. Give information about membership in area veterans councils or any other affiliations the branch has. List any other regular events or programs the branch sponsors or participates in.)

#### PARENT

ORGANIZATION.....(Name) Branch (No.) is one of more than 300 branches of the Fleet Reserve Association located throughout the United States and overseas. Originally chartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 11 November 1924, the FRA subsequently received a Federal Charter on 23 September 1996 and has been granted tax-exempt status under the provisions of IRS Code Section 501(c)(19). The FRA is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, with a membership of 144,000. The FRA is accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance to its members regarding veterans benefits.

– more –



(page 2 – FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION FACT SHEET)

OFFICERS..... President:

Vice President:

Secretary: (Give complete names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers for all officers.)

Treasurer:

Membership Chairman:

Public Relations Chairman:

Special Projects Coordinator:

FOR ADDITIONAL

INFORMATION.....Contact: (Give name, address and phone numbers. Give home and work phone numbers and hours at which persons can be reached at each number.)

(Keep Fact Sheet up-to-date. Give a copy to each editor or media contact you meet.)

-30-

## APPENDIX II

▲  
SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE FORMAT (Go to FRA Web site to see typical formats)

(Ten Lines)

▼  
FROM: (NAME) BRANCH (NO.)  
FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
George S. Jenson  
1234 Anywhere St.  
(City), NY (ZIP Code)  
(123) 456-7890  
(E-mail address)

(Date)

Fleet Reserve Association (Slug – one or two

▲ (3 lines) words to identify the story.)

▼

Exclusive to the Daily Times (distribution line)

▲ (3 lines)

▼

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (release date)

▲

(4 lines)

▼

Start your story. Double space and leave at least an inch margin to the left and right. If your story is only one page, put a “-30-” or “end” or the symbol “# # #” to indicate the story is finished. If your story continues to a second page, put “-more-” in the middle of the page about one inch from the bottom, similar to where “30” is placed on this page.

Remember use a slug to identify your story. Feel free to take a stab at writing a headline. Just don’t take it personal if the editor doesn’t use it. Keep news style in mind when writing your story. Keep it as brief as possible and re-check for accuracy of names, dates, titles, etc.

Also remember the inverted pyramid style of writing which means you start your story with the lead. The lead will answer the questions WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, and sometimes WHY, and HOW.

Always use plain white bond and a black type. Provide the original to the editor and never write on the back of the paper. Keep a copy for yourself and compare it with the article once it is printed. By following this format or other formats suggested by your particular editor, you’ll achieve well deserved success.

-30-

APPENDIX III

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

FROM: (NAME) BRANCH (NO.)  
FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
(Public Relations Chairman)  
(Street address)  
(City, State, Zip Code)  
(Telephone number)  
(E-mail address)

(Date)

Fleet Reserve Association election of officers

Exclusive to The Daily Journal

For release Jun. 15

or

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

James L. Johnson was elected president of (Name) Branch (no.), Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) for 2001-02, on Wednesday, (date), by the membership attending the annual election meeting.

Other officers chosen to complete the new slate of officers include: Benjamin Williams, first vice president; Harry Hawthorne, second vice president; Sydney Smith, secretary; and Charles Marshall, reelected treasurer.

The 2001-02 board of directors members, also elected at the meeting, are: Joe Green, William Webster, Frank Frasier, Kurt Joiner, and Tom Thomason.

Johnson, a Milwaukee resident for the past three years, will be serving his second term as branch president. Having retired from the U.S. Navy as a chief petty officer in July 1971, he now works as a boiler inspector for the Smithfield Company.

George Goldfarb, president of the FRA's North Central region, will conduct the installation ceremonies at a banquet and ball to be held Saturday evening July 21 at the (Name of Facility) in (City).

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SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE – AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST

FROM: (NAME) BRANCH (NO.)  
FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
Paul Evans  
1234 Anywhere Street  
(City), NY (ZIP Code)  
(123) 456 7890  
(E-mail address)  
  
(Date)

Fleet Reserve Association Essay Contest

Exclusive to The Daily Journal

ATTENTION: SCHOOL PAGE EDITOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Freedom is not Free” was announced yesterday (give date) as the theme for the Fleet Reserve Association’s (FRA) annual Americanism essay contest by John R. Jones, local branch president. “The contest is open to all students in grades 7 through 12,” he said.

A student may submit only one essay, no longer than three hundred fifty words, and legibly written or typed on one side of the paper. Entrants are to include their name, address, school grade, sponsoring FRA branch, and their own or a parent’s social security number on a separate sheet.

All entries must be postmarked no later than next March 31 and sent to Paul Peterson, Chairman, Americanism Committee, (Name) Branch (No.), 1234 Main St., Anyplace, USA 12345.

In announcing the contest, Branch President Smith said, “Prizes are awarded on both the regional and national levels. Winners at each grade level receive recognition plaques, certificates of appreciation from the FRA, and U.S. savings bonds ranging from \$50 to \$500, with prizes up to \$20,000 at the national level.”

Students entering the contest must be sponsored by the local FRA branch but do not have to be related to an FRA member. Joe Blow, who chairs the

–more–

(page 2 – Fleet Reserve Association Essay Contest)

Milwaukee branch's Americanism committee, offered to provide additional information to interested parties if they will contact him at 000-0000 or 1132 Essay Lane, Anytown, USA 12345.

The federally chartered Fleet Reserve Association is a non-profit organization representing nearly 150,000 active duty, reserve and retired members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard in more than 300 branches located throughout the United States and at overseas military bases. FRA works to safeguard and/or enhance pay and benefits of the Sea Service members it represents. For more information on FRA, visit the Association's Web site at [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org). For more information on Branch \_\_\_\_, visit their Web site...

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SAMPLE NEW RELEASE – FOR USN/USMC/USCG BASE NEWSPAPERS (Long article)

FROM: (NAME) BRANCH (NO.)  
FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
Paul Evans  
1234 Anywhere St.  
(City), XX 12345  
(555) 555-5555  
(E-mail address)  
  
(Date)

Fleet Reserve Association

Exclusive to the Younameit Navy News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Many (Sailors) (Marines) (Coast Guardsmen) often ask, “What is the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) and what does it do?”

The FRA is a non-profit organization of almost 150,000 active duty, reserve, and retired Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard enlisted personnel. They belong to one of over 300 branches worldwide or the membership-at-large roll. FRA works to safeguard and/or enhance pay and benefits by representing the concerns of its members before Congress and appropriate federal agencies. The name Fleet Reserve Association comes from the founders of the association back in 1924. The original members had to be eligible for transfer to the naval fleet reserve – having completed twenty or more years of active service. Today membership is open to all active duty, drilling reserve and retired sea service personnel.

With headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, the FRA’s chief lobbyist works extensively with congressional staff members to insure the “voice of enlisted sea service personnel” is heard. The FRA was the very first military association to represent enlisted personnel before the Congress and it now enjoys an enviable record of more than seventy-five years’ experience in obtaining beneficial military personnel legislation. The following examples

–more–

(Page 2 – Fleet Reserve Association)

are but a few of the rights and benefits which service people enjoy today as a direct result of the FRA's efforts.

The Survivor Benefit Plan; medical care in civilian hospitals at government expense (CHAMPUS); TRI-CARE; uniform clothing allowance; dependents' quarters allowance; commuted rations for enlisted personnel; dependent's travel allowance; accrued leave pay; dislocation allowance; family separation allowance; hazardous duty pay for flight deck personnel; fair rent for military substandard housing; commissary stores; pay reform for mid-career enlisted personnel; Repeal REDUX; and extending the sea pay benefit to junior enlisted personnel.

In addition to its legislative efforts, the FRA funds the annual "Sailors of the Year" program, annual Coast Guard Enlisted Person of the Year program, presents awards annually to the Navy's top recruiters, sponsors scholarships for deserving children of its members, conducts a nationwide annual Americanism essay contest for all young adults in grades 7 through 12, and assists its members with career related problems. The Fleet Reserve Association is fully accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs to represent its members with VA benefits, claims and "red tape."

The local FRA affiliate, Branch (No.) (conducts an annual retiree's seminar) (has a blood donor program) (coordinates the city's annual Veteran's Day/Flag Day/Pearl Harbor Day/Memorial Day activities) (sponsors the annual Americanism Essay Contest) etc.

Leo Leader, local branch president, invites interested personnel to contact him at 202-555-5555 or attend a branch meeting. Branch (No.) meets the first Friday night of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the branch home at 1234 Anywhere St.

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NOTE: This article can also be modified for use in the civilian press as a feature article for Veterans' Day, etc.

FROM: (NAME) BRANCH (NO.)  
FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
Paul Evans  
1234 Anywhere St.  
Anywhere, XX 12345  
(555) 555-5555

(Date)

Fleet Reserve Association

Exclusive to the Guardian Navy News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Many military personnel take their rights and benefits for granted. What they don't realize is that many of those benefits are theirs only because organizations such as the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) spend considerable time, money and effort getting and keeping those benefits. The FRA, with headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, works behind the scenes on Capitol Hill on behalf of all sea service personnel.

The FRA is an association of nearly 150,000 Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel, active duty and retired, dedicated to attaining and protecting the rights and benefits of all military personnel and their families.

The FRA's record speaks for itself. The organization is directly responsible for many pieces of legislation which have become law. Dependents' quarters allowance, dislocation allowance, commuted rations, CHAMPUS and TRICARE, the Survivor Benefit Plan, the Repeal of REDUX, and sea pay exist today because of the FRA's expertise in obtaining beneficial and meaningful military personnel legislation.

Funding the Navy's "Sailors of the Year" program (and other Coast Guard and Marine Corps programs), offering dependent scholarships and sponsoring youth activities and patriotic endeavors within the local community are also FRA accomplishments.

To find out more about the Fleet Reserve Association, call Paul Evans at 555-5555 or visit a branch meeting. Branch (No.) meetings are held monthly at 8:00 in the evening on the third Wednesday at the Veterans Memorial Center, 949 Veterans Lane, (City).

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SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE – REGIONAL PRESIDENT VISITATIONS

(Note: All this information is not required IF the news release is prepared on branch stationery or special press release forms. Note, date is civilian type rather than military.)

FROM: (NAME) BRANCH (NO.)  
FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
Paul Evans  
1234 Wisconsin Avenue  
Anyplace, XX 12345  
  
(Date)

Fleet Reserve Association

Exclusive to the Daily Journal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Samuel J. Andrews, National President of the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA), will visit on Wednesday, April 20 to address the General Assembly meeting of the sea service organization's local branch.

The veterans' group will meet at the Veterans Memorial Center, beginning at 8 p.m.

Andrews, a veteran of 24 years' naval service, saw action in both World War II and Korea. As national president he has ultimate authority over the association's 300 plus branches and presides over the association's National Board of Directors.

His visit to the (Name) Branch XX is part of an itinerary which will cover several thousand miles by the end of Andrew's one-year term of office in September.

A quality control management analyst for the Interstate Company, Andrews resides in Minneapolis with his wife and four children.

The Fleet Reserve Association, a world-wide veterans' organization with headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, represents nearly 150,000 active duty

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(page 2 – Fleet Reserve Association)

and retired Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard professionals in over 320 branches located throughout the United States and at overseas military bases.

(Name) Branch XX is celebrating its fifty-sixth anniversary this year and sponsors the annual Fleet Reserve Association Award at (Name) University's NROTC Review and Awards Ceremony. Learn more on [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org).

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For additional information:

Paul Evans (555) 555-5555

(Further note: Check with the Chairman of your region's Public Relations Committee to obtain biographical information for your Regional President as well as a photograph of your regional president to be submitted with your press release. Biographies of the National President and National Executive Secretary are available by contacting: Fleet Reserve Association, 125 N. West Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2754.)

Sample Copy of the Annual Public Relations Report Form



SAMPLE AGENDA FOR  
PUBLIC RELATIONS WORKSHOP

MAKING ANNUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORTS

I. Introduction

- A. Many branches not submitting correct reports.
- B. Branches not receiving proper credit for PR work they do.
- C. Other branches in region do not receive the benefit of sharing successful PR projects/ideas.
- D. Regional Committee unable to provide meaningful report to the National Committee without good branch reports.

II. Membership Group of Branch

- A. Correct membership group is obtained from the National Financial Secretary's report to each branch.
- B. Important to use correct membership group as awards are given according to membership group.

III. Submitting Proper Documentation

- A. Keep copies of all news releases, advertisements, Letters to the Editor, branch newsletters, and all correspondence regarding any type of public relations efforts throughout the year. Submit a copy of each along with your report to the Regional Chairman. Reports are due to the Regional Chairman as directed on the report form, but not later than the convening of the regional convention.
- B. Submit a copy of the program for any event your branch sponsored or participated in.
- C. Verify speaking engagements with documentation. Documentation should be obtained from sponsor of event and include name of speaker, topic, type of audience, and name and date of event/ occasion.

IV. Radio/TV Public Service (PSA) or Paid Announcements

- A. IF you can get proof of Radio/TV announcements – great, BUT, don't bug media personnel to obtain documentation. A letter signed by the branch president AND the branch PR chairman will suffice.
- B. Follow guidelines contained in "If You Want Air Time" pamphlet listed in Public Relations Handbook bibliography.

V. Making Recommendations to Improve the Public Relations Program

- A. Every improvement to the FRA's Public Relations program started as a recommendation by a shipmate in a branch.
- B. If your branch committee had an especially successful experience in Public Relations efforts, share it with other branches so they can improve their PR efforts.
- C. The work of both the regional and national committee is determined by recommendations submitted by branches and shipmates.

Public Relations Workshop (continued)

VI. Naming An Outstanding Shipmate for Special Recognition

- A. Provide FULL JUSTIFICATION and details on form or on a separate sheet (preferable) and submit it with the Public Relations Committee Report.
- B. Each year, many shipmates never receive the honor they deserve only because their branch didn't take the time to inform the regional committee of their contribution to Public Relations.

VII. Other Aids to Insure a Good Committee Report

A. Judging branch committee reports can be a difficult task. Make it easier by organizing the report as described on the report form. The use of loose-leaf notebooks or photo albums is very helpful to the Branch, Regional and National Committee.

B. Use the Public Relations Handbook. Make sure it is passed from one branch committee to the next – and from one regional chairman to the next.

#### VIII. Question and Answer Session

(Note: This workshop agenda is intended for use at a Mid-year conference or Regional Convention. It can also serve however as an aid to any Branch Public Relations Committee in the proper preparation of their annual report.)

APPENDIX IV

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Your Name in the News

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Critical Issues in Public Relations

Leiding, Oscar  
A Layman's Guide to Successful Publicity

Line, W. C.  
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Marston, John E.  
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National Association of Broadcasters  
1771 N Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
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Seitel, Fraser P.  
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