Photo Documentation Checklist

A general template for any event - parade, ceremony, meeting, fundraiser, service project, or community activity. Print one copy per event, check off shots as you take them, and file it with the photos.

> **How to use this:** Work top to bottom. You do not need every shot - you need enough that someone five or ten years from now can see what happened, who was there, and why it mattered. Capture names while you are still on site.

Event Record

Fill in first

EVENT NAME

DATE | TIME

LOCATION / VENUE | CITY

HOST POST / AUXILIARY / DISTRICT | PHOTOGRAPHER NAME

EVENT PURPOSE - ONE SENTENCE

ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE | WEATHER / NOTABLE CONDITIONS (OUTDOOR EVENTS)

1 — Before You Go

Prep

- [ ] **Gear ready:** Phone/camera charged, storage cleared, lens cleaned, date and time correct
- [ ] **Program in hand:** Agenda, program, or run-of-show so you know what happens and when
- [ ] **Names list:** Officers, speakers, honorees, and dignitaries expected - with correct spellings
- [ ] **Permissions noted:** Venue rules, no-photo areas, and who can grant photo permission
- [ ] **This checklist + pen** and caption log (page 3) printed or open on your phone

2 — Arrival & Venue

Establish the place

- [ ] **Wide establishing shot:** Venue, hall, park, or parade route with signage visible
- [ ] **Entrance and signs:** Banner, welcome sign, registration table, event poster
- [ ] **Setup in progress:** Members setting up chairs, flags, tables, or displays - before the crowd
- [ ] **Colors and symbols:** U.S. flag, Auxiliary banner, Post colors, charter or emblem display
- [ ] **Displays and details:** Memorabilia, scholarship / award tables, raffle or fundraiser displays

3 — The Program

In order

- [ ] **Opening:** Posting of colors, Pledge, invocation, or opening remarks - wide and close
- [ ] **Each speaker at the podium:** One clear, well-lit shot per speaker, name noted for caption
- [ ] **Key moments:** Awards, installations, presentations, wreath-laying, flag folding, check presentations
- [ ] **Audience reaction:** Applause, standing, salutes, moments of silence - faces, not just backs of heads
- [ ] **Performers:** Band, choir, bugler, color guard, youth groups - in action and posed
- [ ] **Closing:** Retiring the colors, final remarks, closing prayer or song

4 — People

The heart of the file

- [ ] **Officers together:** Department / District / Auxiliary officers posed group photo
- [ ] **Honorees:** Award recipients holding the award, with presenter - both looking at camera
- [ ] **Guests and dignitaries:** Elected officials, Post leadership, Gold Star families, community partners
- [ ] **Volunteers at work:** Serving food, registering guests, selling tickets, cleaning up
- [ ] **Youth:** Scouts, JROTC, scholarship winners, youth contest participants (see permission note, page 3)
- [ ] **Generations:** Longtime members with new members, mentors with those they brought in
- [ ] **Small groups:** 2-4 people who worked together - get every name, left to right

5 — Community & Candids

Show the service

- [ ] **Service in action:** The work itself - serving veterans, families, or the community
- [ ] **Crowd and scale:** One wide shot that shows turnout honestly
- [ ] **Interactions:** Handshakes, conversations, children with veterans, neighbors meeting members
- [ ] **Food and fellowship:** Meal lines, shared tables, kitchen crew - if food is part of the event
- [ ] **One human moment:** Laughter, an embrace, a quiet moment at a memorial - the photo people will remember

6 — Details Worth Keeping

Close-ups

- [ ] Program, agenda, or ticket - flat and readable
- [ ] Awards, medals, certificates - before presentation
- [ ] Wreaths, flowers, memorial displays
- [ ] Hands at work - sewing, serving, signing
- [ ] Historic items, photos, or uniforms on display
- [ ] Signage with date / place if no program exists

Photography tip: For each important moment take three distances - wide (where), medium (who and what), close (detail or face). Fill the frame, watch the light on faces, and avoid backs, cluttered backgrounds, and half-blink shots when you can reshoot.

7 — Before You Leave

Do not skip

- [ ] **Names confirmed:** Spellings checked with the person or the program - especially honorees
- [ ] **Left-to-right order** noted for every group photo while people are still present
- [ ] **Missing shots retaken:** Review this checklist - is there an officer, speaker, or moment you missed?
- [ ] **Thank-yous:** Venue contact, photographer helpers, and anyone who posed - note names for the report
- [ ] **Quick review:** Scroll through - delete only true duplicates and unusable blurs, keep the rest

Photo Caption Log

Fill in on site

One line per keeper photo. Photo # can be the last digits of the file name or your own sequence. Write names left to right.

PHOTO #	WHO / WHAT IS IN THE PHOTO	NAMES (LEFT TO RIGHT)	USE: WEB / SOCIAL / PRINT

8 — After the Event

Within one week

- [ ] **Select keepers:** Best 10-25 photos that together tell the full story - quality over quantity
- [ ] **Rename files:** Use the pattern below before filing - never leave camera numbers as the only name
- [ ] **Captions finished:** Full captions written from the log above, names spelled correctly
- [ ] **Back up twice:** Historian file plus one second location (drive, cloud, or Department file)
- [ ] **Share:** Send selections for website and social media, with captions attached - not photos alone
- [ ] **File this checklist** with the photos, plus the program / agenda if one was kept

File naming pattern: YYYY-MM-DD_EventName_Description_001 *Example: 2026-11-07_Auburn-Parade_ColorGuard_001*
Keep the original files untouched. Edit copies for web or social use, never the archival originals.

Permissions and respect

Ask before photographing children and follow the parent, school, or youth organization permission in place. Do not publish a close-up of a minor without that permission. Honor requests not to be photographed, be discreet at memorials and care settings, and avoid private documents or screens in frame.

What makes a historian photo

A good historian photo answers four questions: **When**, **where**, **who** is in it, and **why** did it matter? If a photo cannot answer at least three - with its caption - retake it or note what is missing in the log.

REUSABLE TEMPLATE Print fresh copies as needed. Cross out what does not apply rather than leaving it blank.