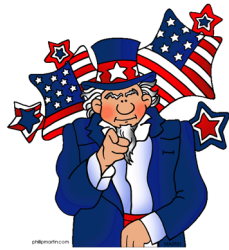




**Americanism / Patriotic Instructor  
2022 – 2023  
Diana Kulhanek, Chairman**



**Americanism is an** attachment or allegiance to the traditions, interests, or ideals of the U.S. “Americanism is an unflinching love of country loyalty to its institutions and ideals eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity”

**Program Goals:**

- **Promoting Patriotism and Celebrating Patriotic Holidays**
- **POW/ MIA Day Recognition**
- **Star Family Recognition**
- **Flag Education**

The next generation will shape this land long after we are gone. One of the best ways to ensure that the United States remains the world’s greatest nation is to instill our American values and traditions into our children. Reach out to schools, clubs and organizations in your community and encourage flag education including:

- How and when to display the flag
- How to fold and store a Flag
- What each fold means
- What the stars and stripes mean
- How and when to properly salute the Flag
- Conduct a flag raising ceremony

- Where you should face and salute during the National Anthem if there is no flag
- Invite youth to a Flag retirement ceremony
- Replacing a tattered flag

Respecting and properly caring for the US flag is a large part of exhibiting patriotism and showing the American spirit.

**Respect for the Flag-Engaging the Community-**

**Flag Education in Schools-** educating our youth about patriotism is a key step on the path to good citizenship. Encourage our members to visit schools and educate our youth on the importance of respecting our flag. Volunteers can visit individual classrooms or give presentations at a school assembly. Visit [vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/Americanism](http://vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/Americanism) for more resources.

**Recognition of Outstanding Community Flag Display-**

Recognize members of the community, businesses, and other organizations for their display of our flag by presenting a Certificate of Appreciation from your auxiliary. Displaying the Flag reinforces patriotism to the entire community.

**Flag Retirement Ceremonies-**

These ceremonies honoring our Flag serve as one of the most beautiful forms of respect for our country. The United States Code stipulates, **“When a U.S. flag is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. We gather these Flags of our Country and of our States, which have been determined to be no longer serviceable.”**

A Flag retirement ceremony provides a wonderful opportunity for families to get involved and can serve as an event to include the entire community. For more information on this and other Flag etiquette visit [www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette](http://www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette).



### Promote Patriotism- Celebrating Patriotic Holidays-

Patriotic holidays are a wonderful way to involve the whole family and bring community attention to your Auxiliary. When family events are presented to the community, prospective new members will walk through your door. Patriotic holiday celebrations can serve as the perfect way to show that your Auxiliary supports patriotism veterans and their families as a top priority. For more information about patriotic days and ways to celebrate visit: [www.vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/americanism](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/americanism).

#### PATRIOTIC HOLIDAYS

July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Independence Day
September 11 <sup>th</sup>	Patriot Day
3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday in Sept.	POW/MIA Recognition Day
Last Sun. Sept.	Gold Star Mother's & Families' Day
November 11 <sup>th</sup>	Veterans Day
December 7 <sup>th</sup>	Pearl Harbor Day
March 29 <sup>th</sup>	National Vietnam Veterans Day
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	Loyalty Day
3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May	Armed Forces Day
May 30 <sup>th</sup>	Memorial Day
June 14 <sup>th</sup>	Flag Day

#### Branch of Service Birth Dates

U.S. Army	June 12, 1775
U.S. Marine Corps	November 10, 1775
U.S. Navy	October 13, 1775
U.S. Air Force	September 18, 1947
U.S. Coast Guard	August 4, 1790
U.S. National Guard	December 13, 1636

#### POW/MIA Recognition –

POW/MIA Recognition Day honors the commitments and the sacrifices made by our nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. National POW/MIA Recognition Day traditionally on the third Friday in September is one of six days specified by law on which the black POW/MIA flag shall be flown over federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices, and military installations.

Auxiliary members are enthusiastic about bringing attention to former POW/MIA and those Missing in Action by holding ceremonies to both educate their communities and honor these special Veterans. One way to honor these Veterans is to set up a Missing Msn table not only at your Post but out in the community. This practice provides a visual demonstration of the significance of POW/MIA Recognition Day. Find a sample of the ceremony wording and table set-up at [www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources).

#### Star Family Recognition-

Star Families – **spouses, children, parents, siblings, or others whose loved one served, was injured, or died in service to our nation** – are a vital part of our country's military community and history. A service flag or service banner is a banner approved by the Secretary of Defense that family members of those serving in the Armed Forces can display:

- **Blue Star Families** can display a flag or banner with a white field and red border with a blue star for each family member serving during any period of war or hostilities
- **Gold Star Families** can display a flag or banner that has a white field, red border, and a gold star that represents a family member who died during military operations
- **Silver Star Families** can display a flag or banner with a blue field, outer red and inner white border and a silver star that represents a family member who was injured wounded, or became ill during or because of combat

You are encouraged to recognize and honor these families in your community.

#### Patriotic Instructor

The Patriotic Instructor educates members about the proper salute to the U.S. Flag, as well as the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. They take on the responsibility of teaching **patriotism and good citizenship to the people of our country**. He or she will understand the VFW Auxiliary Ritual and the Federal Flag Code.

- They shall see that the room is in keeping with the Ritual.
- They shall instruct the members in the proper use of and salute to the Flag.

- They shall maintain a record of all patriotic days and initiate programs for their proper observance and perform such other duties as the President may require.

*Understanding Auxiliary Traditions* help sheet and video are available on the website at [www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources).

For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions, rituals, and patriotic ceremonies, reference the *VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual*. Patriotic items and educational materials are available for purchase through the VFW store at 1-833-VFW-Vets or online at [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org).

#### **Digital Connections-**

Last year's Americanism Ambassador started the Program's first-ever hashtag campaign to promote patriotism as a next level tool to connect with our communities. Tag your Patriotic activities or events using the hashtag #AuxiliaryPatriotism. Record these moments by posting them to social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

#### **AWARDS**

##### **National Awards for Auxiliaries:**

1. The most outstanding patriotic community event

Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts a patriotic community event. Criteria and entry form (required) available at [www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources). Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Chairman by March 31, 2023.

The Department Americanism Chairman must send a copy of all submitted entry forms to National Headquarters by April 30, 2023.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four conferences that hosts the most Outstanding patriotic community event. A citation to each Division winner will be announced, and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Department Americanism Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department winning entry form to the National Americanism Ambassador by April 30, 2023, for judging.

##### **AWARDS for Depts. and Dept. Chairmen**

1. Citations to each Department Americanism Program chairperson for participation in this Program. Citation will be presented at the 2023 Department convention.
2. A \$25 VFW Store Gift certificate to one Department Americanism chairperson in each of the ten program divisions for the best promotion of the Americanism program in conjunction with another VFW Auxiliary National program. Winners will be announced, and awards presented at the 2023 national Convention in Phoenix, Arizona
3. Outstanding Performance Award in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on criteria listed. Winners will be announced at the National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

##### **Department of California Awards**

The Past Department Presidents Frances Swanson and Traci Lewis-Ventress Legacy Award will be presented at the 2023 Department Convention. This award will be presented to one Auxiliary Chairman with the best overall project in Americanism.

- A citation will be awarded to each Auxiliary in the Department that conducts a POW/MIA ceremony. This is to include the Missing Man Table. Reports need to be RECEIVED by me no later than October 15<sup>th</sup> for your Auxiliary to receive the citation.
- A citation to each Division winner for the Best Promotion of Flag Education in the classroom.
- A citation to each Division winner for the Best Flag Retirement Ceremony.
- A citation to each Division winner for Most Outstanding Use of Media to promote Americanism (flyers/ Facebook/Video/ newspaper/social media).
- An award to the Most Outstanding Auxiliary Chairman for the Best Americanism project.