

Americanism/Patriotic Instructor

2023/2024

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Thank you President Diana Russell-Milton for having the trust in me to perform the duties this important chairmanship. It will be an honor and privilege to serve you and the Department of California.

AMERICANISM

The word Americanism was first coined by John Witherspoon, Professor, Princeton College in 1781. It is a noun and is “an expression or other feature that is characteristic of America and is an attachment or allegiance to the traditions, Institutions and Ideals of the United States of America.” (Oxford Dictionary) It is, therefore, not tangible, we cannot hold it nor carry it, BUT we can carry it in our minds and embrace it. The Auxiliary Bylaws and Rituals define it as: “...an unfailing 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.”

*“Americanism is a question of
Principle, of idealism, of Character.
It is not a matter of birthplace, or
Line of descent.”*

Theodore Roosevelt

Goals of this Program are:

- Flag Education
- Promoting Patriotism
- Recognizing Star Families
- Celebrating Patriotic Holidays

"This American system of ours, call it Americanism, call it capitalism, call it what you will, gives each and Every one of us a great opportunity If we seize it with both hands and Make the most of it."

Al Capone

Flag education:

Why would we want to teach flag etiquette. The answer is simple, the flag embodies what the United States stands for, love of country and national purpose, liberty, justice, and freedom. It has been flown at every war this great country has been involved in. It is recognized in every country in the world and respected in most.

Flag education should be taught beginning around 2nd grade. We need to get permission from school principals to attend classes, or better yet to attend rallies and teach children flag etiquette to include:

- How and when to fly the flag
- What the red and white stripes stand for and what the blue and stars represent.
- How to properly salute the flag and when to salute it.
- What each fold of the flag means.
- How to properly fold the flag, with student participation.
- How to properly dispose the flag.

It is important to include the citizenry in flag education as well as the children. We can also present a certificate to business and residents that display the flag. It is available on MALTA.

PATRIOTISM

Patriotism is not unique to America. It goes back to the Greek word; patriotes. It is not only a word but also a call to Action, "Uncle Sam Needs you" "Let Freedom Ring" "Freedom's Calling" are but a few. The word Patriotism is used in most countries, dating back to the Greeks, but it was first recorded in 1709 and defined as a "...devotion to and vigorous support for one's country." (Oxford Dictionary).

Unfortunately, patriotism is declining at an unprecedented level. There are several reasons for this decline, lack of trust in our public education system, lack of promoting patriotism in the home, and a lack of trust in our government, to name a few.

How do we reverse this trend?

First, we need to encourage families to participate in their children's education, both at school and at home.

Second, we need to attend school boards, State Education Boards, and State Legislators to demand that the curriculum include civic and history courses.

Third, we need to promote celebrating Patriotic Holidays, at our auxiliaries, at our homes, and with our neighbors.

Celebrate Patriotic Holidays and Birth Dates for each branch of service:

PATRIOTIC HOLIDAYS

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

Branch of Service birth dates

U.S. National Guard	Dec. 13, 1636
U.S. Army	June 12, 1775
U.S. Marines	November 10, 1775
U.S. Navy	October 13, 1775

U.S. Coast Guard August 4, 1790
U.S. Space Force December 20, 2019
(First new branch of service in 73 years)

POW/MIA Recognition

This is a day that the U.S. recognizes and honors all veterans that made the sacrifice by being a prisoner of war or are still missing in action.

Auxiliaries recognize this day by either having an POW/MIA recognition at their auxiliary or by attending one sponsored by another auxiliary.

Star Family Recognition

This day recognizes the loss or injury of a family member in the service to our nation. **Blue Star** Families can display a flag or banner with a white field and a red border and a blue star for each family member who served during any period of war. **Red Star** families can display a flag or banner with a white field with a red border and a gold star representing a family that died in a military action. **Silver Star** families can display a flag or banner with a blue field, an inner and outer red and white border and a silver star representing a family member injured, wounded, or became ill during combat or because of being in combat.

Attending patriotic holidays is a great way to get family members, neighbors and the public how to identify and understand the importance patriotic holidays. They are good events to increase membership by distributing the Auxiliary Fact sheet and an application to those that are interested in joining this great organization. They are also good events to educate the public about the Buddy Poppy Program by passing out Buddy Poppys.

Patriotic Instructor

This is a very important position in the Auxiliary. It is the person that educates members on proper flag etiquette, how to salute the flag and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. They are also responsible for teaching patriotism and good citizenship to the citizens of our nation.

1. They shall instruct members in the proper display and salute to the flag.
2. They shall maintain a record of all patriotic holidays and encourage observance and perform other duties as the president may require.

3. They shall assist the conductress or conductor on room set up pursuant to the Rituals.

Understanding Auxiliary Traditions help sheets and videos are available at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources .

Comprehensive details of auxiliary traditions and rituals are available in the Podium Edition Bylaws and Rituals book available either at the VFW Store or on MALTA, on line at vfwstore.org or calling 833-VFW-VETS (833-839-8387)

REPORTING PROGRAM WORK

In the words of someone I can't remember "if it is not reported, it was not done." **SO** remember to report your activities. Examples of activities include, but are not limited to:

- Special programs or events your auxiliary held on a patriotic day.
- Certificates awarded to business or houses prominently displaying the U.S. flag. (Flags must be visible from the street)
- Promoting patriotism through community education and schools
- Family Freedom Festival - -Collage of event photos
- Recognizing Blue, Gold, and Silver star mothers and families.
- Passing out U.S. Flags
- And a plethora of other activities auxiliary are involved in that are too numerous and varied to list here

Awards for Department Departments and Department Chairmen

The Past Departments Francis Swanson and Traci Lewis-Ventress Legacy Award will be presented at the 2024 Department Convention. This award will be presented to one Auxiliary Chairman with the best overall project in Americanism.

- A citation will be given to each auxiliary in the Department that conducts a POW/MIA ceremony. Must include the missing man table and reports must reach me no later than October 15th for your auxiliary to receive a citation.

- A citation to each **Division** winner for the best promotion of Flag Education in the classroom.
- A citation to each **Division** winner for best flag retirement ceremony.
- A citation to each **Division** winner for most outstanding use of Media to promote patriotism. (Flyers/Facebook/Video/Newspaper/Social Media)
- An award to the most outstanding Auxiliary Chairman for the best Americanism project.

NATIONAL AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding patriotic community event.
2. Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts a patriotic community event. Criteria and Entry Form are required. They are available at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries to submit form to Department by March 31, 2024. Department Chairman to send form to National by April 30, 2024. Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.
3. Citation and \$25 to one auxiliary in each of the four conferences that host 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, AZ The Department Americanism must send a copy of the completed Department winning entry form to the National Ambassador by April 30, 2024.

“One flag, one land, one heart, one hand, One nation evermore.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes