

**Americanism/Prisoner of War-Missing in Action/Patriotic Instructor  
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*“Americanism is an unfailing love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideas; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty and posterity.”*

**The Americanism Program:**

- **Promotes #AuxiliaryPatriotism** by celebrating America’s Patriotic Holidays Days and lesser-known Patriotic holidays
- **Teaches respect and proper care for the U.S. Flag.**
  - Flag Education for Kids
- Brings attention to Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action by hosting **POW/MIA ceremonies** to both educate the public and honor these special veterans.
  - Missing Man Table Ceremony
- **Star Family Recognition**

**Patriotic Holidays**

There are many important Patriotic holidays celebrated throughout the year, but we need to celebrate the lesser-known ones as well. It’s important to celebrate and recognize all Patriotic holidays as it shows patriotism and making veterans our top priority. Here are ways you can celebrate these holidays:

- Study history so you can educate others on their significance.
- Participate in parades- have members and youth hand out the American flag.
- Fly the American flag daily.
- Celebrate the holiday with our veterans.
- Attend or sponsor a ceremony.

- Raise awareness about the lesser-known holidays.

#### **Patriotic Holidays:**

- Memorial Day
- Flag Day
- Independence Day
- Veterans Day

#### **Lesser-known holidays:**

- Loyalty Day
- Purple Heart Remembrance Day
- Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
- POW/MIA Recognition Day
- Day of the Deployed

#### **Patriotism**

We can celebrate Patriotic Holidays and #AuxiliaryPatriotism in many ways, here are a few suggestions:

- Participate in parades, invite youth and members to join in
- Fly the American Flag
- Visit historic landmarks.
- Host a community Celebration.
- Support a Veteran, lend a helping hand.

#### **Branch of service birthdays**

It is important to recognize the birthdates of each branch of service

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
- U.S. Space Force December 20, 2019

## **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 servicemembers 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 Man" 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.

## **Flag Education**

A large part of demonstrating Americanism and patriotic spirit is respecting and properly caring for the US Flag. Flag etiquette covers everything from proper display of our flag to acceptable conduct around this symbol of our nation.

For more information regarding flag etiquette, the history of our flag and to read the US Flag Code visit [vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette](http://vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette).

## **Respect for the Flag – Engaging the Community**

**Flag Education in Schools-** Educating our Youth about patriotism is an important step on the path to good citizenship. Members can volunteer at schools, visit classrooms, give presentations and speak at assemblies stressing the importance of respecting our flag.

**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-** provide opportunities for the entire family to show honor and respect for our Flag. For more information on this and other flag etiquette, refer to MALTA Member resources.

### **Patriotic Instructor**

The role of the Patriotic Instructor is to educate the members about the proper salute to the flag as well as the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. They also take time to understand the VFW Auxiliary Ritual and the federal Flag Code. P.I.s help members understand the traditions and ceremonies of the organization. For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions rituals, and patriotic ceremonies reference the VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual.

### **Americanism Program Awards**

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community about lesser-known patriotic holidays.

Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community about lesser-known patriotic holidays.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member resources. Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2025, for judging. The Department Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department winning entry form to the National Americanism Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

### **Department Awards**

- A citation will be given to each auxiliary that conducts a POW/MIA ceremony. Must include the “Missing Man” Table Ceremony and reports must be submitted by October 15, 2024 to receive a citation.
- A citation to each Division winner for the best promotion of Flag Education in the schools
- A citation to each Division winner for best flag retirement ceremony
- A citation to the most Outstanding Americanism Chairman for the best Americanism Project

### **Department Legacy Award**

A Legacy award will be awarded to one Outstanding Auxiliary Chairman for the best overall Promotion of the Americanism Program.

These are the questions you should try to answer when you make your reports about your Auxiliary's Americanism/POW-MIA/Patriotic Instructor online. Include sufficient details in your description to help your Department Chairman recognize your accomplishments. Select the appropriate "Activity" when completing your report.

## VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Americanism 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.  
The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.  
This report to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted, participated, recognized any patriotic day and/or branch of service birthdays. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of Auxiliaries that distributed and/or presented American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags distributed and/or presented by Auxiliaries. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of Patriotic Appreciation Citations, Certificate of Appreciation or Respect for the Flag Citations presented to citizens and/or businesses in recognition of their displaying the American Flag, POW/MIA Flag and/or other displays of American pride. \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairman signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Conference: \_\_\_\_\_