

Americanism Program Promotion

February 2025

Department of California

Diana Kulhanek, Chairman

Program Goals

- Flag Education;
- Celebrating Patriotic Holidays;
- POW / MIA Recognition;
- Supporting Gold Star Families

February, the month of love, is a time to cherish the bonds that warm our hearts.

Let's "Light up February with actions of love and kindness" for our Country and our Veterans!



Patriotic Valentines for our Veterans

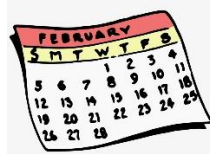
I encourage you to collaborate with the Hospital and Youth Activities Programs and send Patriotic Valentines to our Veterans. Youth groups can decorate Valentines in Patriotic colors and assemble mini treat bags that contain patriotic novelty items. The Valentines and treat

bags can be distributed to your local VA Hospitals and other health care facilities for our Veterans. Sample Valentine Card templates are located at the end of the page.



President's Day Weekend

Every third Monday of February (February 20) we celebrate Presidents' Day in all its patriotic glory. Many people relish their day off of work, but they might be surprised to know that that was the point! In 1971, Presidents' Day moved in an effort to create more three-day weekends for the public in the hope that this would inspire greater productivity nationwide. It was believed that at this point in the year, the restorative effects of the winter holidays have begun to fade and people need another break to regain some of that lost stamina. All the presidents in American history are remembered and honored for their exemplary work in making America the great country it is today. (See printable activities that you can share with your Youth Activities Program found below).



Patriotic Events in History

Feb 3 - Four Chaplains Day: A day to remember the four U.S. Army chaplains who died when the USAT Dorchester sank during World War II.

Feb 15 - USS Maine

The Maine was a United States war ship that sank in Havana Harbor **on February 15, 1898**, contributing to the outbreak of the Spanish American War in April. U.S. newspapers, engaging in yellow journalism to boost circulation, claimed that the Spanish were responsible for the ship's destruction. The phrase, "Remember the *Maine!* To hell with Spain!" became a rallying cry for action. Although the *Maine* explosion was not a direct cause, it served as a catalyst that accelerated the events leading up to the war. *Maine* was sent to Havana Harbor to protect U.S. interests. She exploded and sank on the evening of 15 February 1898, killing 268 sailors, or three-quarters of her crew.

Feb 28 Desert Storm was a war waged by coalition forces from 35 nations led by the United States against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait. The war consisted of two phases the first was codenamed Operation Desert Shield (2 August 1990 – 17 January 1991) for operations leading to the buildup of troops and defense of Saudi Arabia. And the second was Operation Desert Storm (17 January 1991 – 28 February 1991) was the combat phase.

Feb 27 - The 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote, was passed by Congress on February 27, 1922.

Gold Star Families-

A new Gold Star Families Memorial Monument (GSFMM) honoring the families of servicemen and women who sacrificed their lives while serving in the military is currently being planned in Sacramento California.

To learn more about donating to a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, please contact the Foundation at monument@woodywilliams.org. If your Auxiliary donates to the fund, please send in a report!

National Symbol- The Star Spangled Banner Music

You may know that the words to our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," were written by Francis Scott Key. But why don't we ever talk about who composed the tune? There's a good reason for that. Key's poem was set to an English drinking song. The song, "To Anacreon in Heaven," was sung by the members of The Anacreontic Society, a gentleman's club named after an Ancient Greek poet who wrote his own drinking songs and famously loved wine.

It's a pretty big leap from a song representing a social club to a song representing a country, but it's pretty fun that our national anthem used a British tune to tell the story of our American flag surviving a British attack. You can see the actual "star-spangled banner" referenced in Key's lyrics at the National Museum of American History in Washington, DC

Citations and 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 Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging.

Resources

Patriotic instruction for members in your own Auxiliary meeting is a part of the Americanism program. You can use **the Understanding Auxiliary Traditions**, which is found under MALTA, for instruction at your local meeting. **Certificates of appreciation, flag education, sample letters to schools about patriotism, and printable patriotic bookmarks** are just some of the items that are printable and extremely useful aids for Americanism Chairmen.

Reports

Remember all reports are due by April 15, 2025 to be considered for Department awards. Please submit them electronically and if you need assistance please contact me. If you wish to include pictures, send those to my email and include your auxiliary number and District as well as contact information.