

## Americanism / Patriotic Instructor

William Steven Medellin, Sr.

(661) 492-9541

[smedellin24@yahoo.com](mailto:smedellin24@yahoo.com)



*The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. Franklin D. Roosevelt*

The Americanism Program helps Auxiliary members express their love of country and foster patriotism in our youth and communities. There are multiple elements of the Program:

### Promote Patriotism

- Patriotic Symbols and Traditions: Educate others about the meaning and importance of patriotic symbols and traditions, including the American Flag, the National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance. Share tips on how to properly display and honor these symbols in daily life.  
Spotlight on National Holidays: Provide information and ideas for celebrating national holidays like Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day. Include tips on how to organize and participate in local observances that reflect the significance of these holidays.

### Importance of Patriotic Instruction

- The Patriotic Instructor is responsible for educating members about the history, symbolism and proper etiquette related to American patriotic symbols, particularly the American Flag. This education helps members understand the significance of these symbols and how to honor them appropriately. By sharing discussions focused on Americanism in your Auxiliary meeting, the Patriotic Instructor can teach others to foster a deeper appreciation for the values and traditions that the VFW Auxiliary stands for. This role is crucial in promoting patriotism and ensuring that members uphold the principles of respect and honor for the nation. For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions, rituals and patriotic ceremonies, refer to the VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual.

### Flag Education

- Organize educational programs and workshops within your community to teach the proper etiquette for displaying and handling the American Flag. Partner with local schools, civic organizations and other groups to spread awareness about the significance of the Flag and its

role in American history. Establish a program for the respectful disposal of worn or damaged Flags. Set up collection points at local VFW posts or partner with other organizations to ensure that old Flags are properly retired according to the guidelines outlined by the U.S. Flag Code. For more information about Flag etiquette, the history of our Flag and to read the U.S. Flag Code, visit [vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette](http://vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette).

## **POW/MIA Remembrance**

- Prisoner of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) Remembrance Day is a solemn occasion dedicated to honoring the bravery and sacrifice of those who have endured captivity or remain unaccounted for while serving our nation. This day is crucial for recognizing the profound hardships faced by POWs, who suffered extreme conditions and personal anguish while separated from their loved ones. It also highlights the ongoing commitment to account for those who are still missing, ensuring that their sacrifices are never forgotten. By observing this day, we reaffirm our collective responsibility to remember these heroes, support their families and uphold the values of honor and respect for all who have served in the defense of freedom.

## **Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Program**

- Each year the VFW recognizes three exceptional teachers - one each from the elementary, junior high and high school levels - for their outstanding commitment to teach Americanism and instill patriotism in their students. For more information, visit: <https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-andeducation/teacher-of-the-year> 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).

## **Tools**

- Social Media Campaigns: Use social media platforms to share stories, events and patriotic messages. Use the current hashtags associated with the VFW Auxiliary to show other members how your Auxiliary is promoting patriotism. **#AuxiliaryPatriotism**
- QR Codes are used on just about everything. Members can use it as a talking point to explain about the VFW Auxiliary Americanism and patriotism. Most people will open it up and then they can find important information on the Americanism Program



## **Americanism Program Awards**

### **Awards for Auxiliaries:**

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event displaying or educating others about proper ways to display and respect the American Flag. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event educating others about proper ways to display and respect the American Flag. Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2026 for judging. 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, 2026 for judging. Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

### **Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Americanism Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions who demonstrates exceptional dedication and creativity in promoting the proper display and respect for the American Flag during VFW Auxiliary meetings. Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nevada.
2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Program goals listed at the top of page 9. Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nevada.