

Americanism Lynette Peavey

PROGRAM:

- ✪ Flag Education
- ✪ Promote Patriotism
- ✪ POW/MIA Recognition
- ✪ Smart/Maher National Citizen Education Teacher Award

What is Americanism?

The widely used definition comes from the origin of our great Nation. This definition was created by the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, United Spanish War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the National Commander of the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans of the World War. It was created at a conference held in Washington, D.C. in February 1927:

“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.”



What does Americanism mean to you? With the World at War with a new and invisible enemy, now, more than ever, it is time to ask what does Americanism mean to me?

For me, Americanism is patriotism, pride and devotion to the ideals set forth in our Constitution and Bill of Rights. It is pride in our American Flag, in our Veterans and active Military, in our First Responders, our Hospital workers, Doctors and Nurses and everyone working at Grocery Stores, Pharmacies, Banks, the Post Office, the Fed Ex and UPS workers, etc. It is everyone doing their part to make sure essential services are provided as we shelter at home.

Our Program this year covers goals that ensure we spread Americanism and Patriotism throughout our communities. Please do everything possible to **Promote, Participate** and **REPORT** in each of the following areas:

Teach America’s Patriotic Traditions:

A large part of showing Americanism is respecting and properly caring for the United States Flag. It is important to know and teach proper flag etiquette. Each VFW Auxiliary should be working with youth to

teach them about America’s patriotic traditions, respect and honor for our U.S. Flag. Instruct children in learning the Pledge of Allegiance or the first verse of the “Star Spangled Banner.”

Patriotic Instructors

Patriotic Instructors educate members on the proper salute to the U.S. 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. They help members to understand the traditions and ceremonies of the organization. The *Understanding Auxiliary Traditions* help sheet and video are available on the VFW Auxiliary National website at: www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources.

For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions, rituals and patriotic ceremonies, please refer to the VFW Auxiliary *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual*. Patriotic items and educational materials are available for purchase at the VFW Store online at: www.vfwstore.org.

Community Flag Education:

Our American Flag is a living symbol of our national pride and the liberties and freedoms we hold dear in the United States. Reach out to your community. Teach Flag history, respect, etiquette and how to properly display and retire flags. Examples:

- ✪ Recognize businesses and individuals that regularly fly the flag.
- ✪ Offer to exchange tattered, worn flags with new ones.
- ✪ Provide a community flag disposal receptacle
- ✪ Hold a Community Flag disposal ceremony.

These are a few of the ways we have to educate our communities about our nation’s most well-known symbol of Patriotism and American Pride.

Recognize and Honor Blue Star and Gold Star Families:

Our National Americanism Ambassador is passionate about supporting the families of those currently serving in the Military and of those who have lost a loved one during their service to our Nation. I am too. Seek out Blue Star families of active military. Keep in touch with them. Find ways to help them and their units. Seek out Gold Star families of deceased service members. Offer your respect and thankfulness for their loved one’s service. Stay in touch with these families. Show them you care.

Celebrate Patriotic Holidays:

All of us celebrate Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Veteran’s Day. Remember to also recognize and celebrate the other Patriotic Holidays as well! There is a National Award this year for best ***Promotion of Patriotic holidays in the Community***.

- ✪ Loyalty Day – May 1
- ✪ Armed Forces Day – Third Saturday in May (May 15, 2021)
- ✪ Memorial Day – May 30 (Traditional) – (observed: Monday, May 31, 2021)
- ✪ Flag Day – June 14
- ✪ Independence Day – July 4

- ✪ Patriot Day – September 11
- ✪ POW/MIA Recognition Day – Third Friday in September (Sept. 18, 2020)
- ✪ Veteran’s Day – November 11
- ✪ Pearl Harbor Day – December 7



POW/MIA Recognition:

It is important to honor our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action at every opportunity.

Use of the “Missing Man Table” is encouraged at Auxiliary functions and events. It can be placed discreetly near the front of the room with a sign explaining the somber symbolism of the table setting.



Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award:

The VFW Teacher of the Year award contest recognizes three exceptional teachers for their outstanding commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students. Each year, a certified/licensed elementary, junior high and high school teacher whose curriculum focuses on citizenship education topics can be nominated for the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

Examples of Activities from Award-Winning Teachers:

- ✪ Field trips to city hall
- ✪ Community volunteer projects
- ✪ Hosting veterans to discuss their military experiences
- ✪ Special projects that foster development of democratic values and beliefs.

How the Contest Works:

Based on the nominees submitted, VFW Posts and Auxiliaries will recognize one outstanding teacher in grades K-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Posts then submit these winners' names and required documents to their District-level judging. From there, the selected winners are forwarded to the Department level. After judging, each Department then forwards the entries of its winners to the VFW National Headquarters for consideration in the national awards contest.

For more information, instructions for nomination and nominations forms, visit:
vfw.org/community/youth-and-education.

AMERICANISM PROGRAM AWARDS

National Awards for Auxiliaries:

Most outstanding promotion of patriotic holidays in the community.

- 🌟 Citation to every Auxiliary that promotes patriotic holidays in their community. Criteria and entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Americanism Chairman by **MARCH 31, 2021**.

The Department Americanism Chairman must send a copy of all submitted entry forms to National Headquarters by April 30, 2021.

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

- 🌟 Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding promotion of patriotic holidays in the community.

Department Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. **Citations** will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd for Best Overall promotion/execution of the Program within each **Auxiliary Membership Division**.
2. A Citation will be given 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 **no later than April 15, 2021** in order to receive the citation.
3. A citation to each **Division** winner for the Best Promotion of Patriotic Holidays.
4. A citation to each **Division** winner for the Best Promotion of Blue Star Mothers and Families or Gold Star Mothers and Families.
5. \$25 VFW Store Gift Certificate to one Americanism Chairman for **Best Promotion Over All** of Blue Star Mothers and Families or Gold Star Mothers and Families.
6. A citation to each **Division** winner for Best Use of Media to promote Patriotism in the Community.
7. An Award to the Most Outstanding **District** and **Auxiliary** Chairman for the promotion of Americanism.

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