

VFW Auxiliary Americanism

Patriotic Instructor Helpful Hints



Patriotic Instructor Duties

As the Patriotic Instructor, you have been appointed to this high office to teach patriotism and good citizenship to the people of our country; to assist in the floor work ceremonies and perform such other duties as the Ritual may require. Patriotic Instructors provide leadership in promoting patriotism within the membership of our organization and inform, educate and promote patriotism among the community and within the organization. Familiarize yourself with the Ritual section of the VFW Auxiliary Bylaws and highlight the sections of your responsibilities for easy and quick reference.

Here are some key duties of the Patriotic Instructor:

- Shall see that the room is in keeping with the Ritual.
- Shall instruct the members in the proper use of and salute to the Flag.
- Shall maintain a record of all patriotic days and initiate programs for their proper observance and perform such other duties as the President may require.
- May carry the Flag in events and parades.
- Shall assist in the floor work ceremonies.
- Shall see that the pledge to the Flag is given properly and that due respect to the Flag is observed at all times by members.
- It is suggested that the Patriotic Instructor instruct new members how to stand at attention, parade rest, etc.
- The Patriotic Instructor should also try to read some portion of the Bylaws at every meeting.

Branch of Service Birth Dates

- U.S. Army - June 14, 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

Military Flags Order of Precedence

According to Department of Defense guidelines, military service flags, insignias, etc., should be displayed in the following order (left to right as you face the flags): Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard.

Star Family Recognition

You may have seen a Blue Star, Gold Star or Silver Star service flag or service banner in the window of a home in your area. A service flag or service banner is a banner approved by the Secretary of Defense that family members of those serving in the United States Armed Forces can display.

- Blue Star Families can display a flag or banner with a white field and a red border, with a blue star for each family member serving in the United States Armed Forces during any period of war or hostilities. **Blue Star Mothers' Day is February 1.**
- Gold Star Families can display a flag or banner with a white field and a red border, with a gold star that represents a family member who died during military operations. **Gold Star Mother's & Families Day is the last Sunday in September. Gold Star Spouses Day is April 5.**
- Silver Star Families can display a flag or banner with a blue, an outer red and inner white border, with a silver star that represents a family member who was injured, wounded or became ill during or as a result of combat. **Silver Star Service Banner Day is May 1.**

You are encouraged to recognize and honor these families in your community.

U.S. Flag: Education

A large part of Americanism and being the Patriotic Instructor is U.S. Flag Education. U.S. Flag education helps students learn about the flag's meaning, significance, and how to properly handle and care for it.

- Displaying the Flag
- POW/MIA Protocol
- Flag Disposal
- Official U.S. Flag Code Guide:
The U.S. Flag code is a codification of the rules and customs for displaying and using the American flag. The "flag code" is the federal law that sets forth guidelines for the appearance and display of the U.S. flag by private citizens.
- Order of Precedence
- Correct Method of Folding the U.S. Flag
- U.S. Flag History

Detailed information and links can be found on the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette>