



Americanism Program

This definition of “Americanism” was originated by the Commanders-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, United Spanish War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the National Commanders of the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans of the World War 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.”

Patriotic Instructors

The Patriotic Instructor educates members on the proper salute to the U.S. Flag, as well as the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. He or she also takes the time to understand the VFW Auxiliary Ritual and the Federal Flag Code. He or she helps members to understand the traditions and ceremonies of the organization. The *Understanding Auxiliary Traditions* help-sheet and video are available on the website at <https://vfwauxiliary.org/resources/>.

For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions, rituals, and patriotic ceremonies, reference the VFW Auxiliary *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual*. Patriotic items and educational materials are available for purchase through the VFW Store at 1-833-VFW-VETS or online at vfwstore.org.

Recognize and Honor Blue Star, Gold Star, Silver Star, and White Star Families

This year the Department Americanism Chairman & Department Chaplain are partnering to promote the recognition and to honor the Blue Star Mothers and Families; Gold Star Mothers and Families; Silver Star Families; and White Star Families. We are asking Auxiliaries’ to recognize and honor these families in your community.

- Blue Star Families can display a flag or banner that is officially defined as a white field with 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.
- Gold Star Families can display a flag or banner with a gold star (with a blue edge) that represents a family member who died during military operations.
- Silver Star Families can display a flag or banner with a silver star that represents a family member who was injured, wounded, or became ill in combat.
- White Star Families had a family member who served in the military and lost their life to suicide.

Flag Education

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

For more information about Flag etiquette, the history of our Flag and to read the U.S. Flag Code, visit <https://www.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. Volunteers can visit individual classrooms or do a presentation at a school assembly. For more resources, visit <https://vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/americanism/>.
- **Recognition of Outstanding Community Flag Display** – When a community member, business, or organization takes the care and time to display our “Stars and Stripes,” it reinforces patriotism to the entire community. You may recognize this display of patriotism by presenting a certificate of appreciation from your Auxiliary.
- **Flag Retirement Ceremonies** – These ceremonies honoring our Flag serve as one of the most beautiful forms of respect for our country. This is the perfect way to involve the whole family of Auxiliary and VFW members. Flag retirement ceremonies can also serve as an event to involve the entire community. For more information on this and other Flag etiquettes, <https://www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette>.

Promote Patriotism – Celebrating Patriotic Holidays

Patriotic holidays are an opportune time to involve the whole family and bring community attention to your Auxiliary. When fun family events are presented to the community, prospective new members will walk through your door. Patriotic holidays can serve as the perfect way to show that your Auxiliary supports patriotism, veterans, and their families as a top priority. For more information about patriotic days and ways to celebrate, visit <https://vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/americanism/>.

POW/MIA Recognition

Auxiliary members are passionate about bringing attention to former Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action by holding ceremonies to both educate their communities and honor these special veterans. One way to honor these veterans and educate youth and the community on this subject is by having a Missing Man Table Ceremony.

This practice provides a visual demonstration of the significance of POW/MIA Recognition Day. You are encouraged to share this ceremony with youth groups partnering with the Auxiliary.

Find a sample of the ceremony wording and table set up at <https://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/Missing-Man-Ceremony.pdf>.

Department Awards:

*The 6-8 most Outstanding Americanism Projects submitted by Auxiliaries will receive a plaque.

*Every Auxiliary that submits a project will receive a citation.

National Awards:

*Citation to every Auxiliary that promotes patriotic holidays in their community. Auxiliaries must send a Project Report Form to the Department Chairman by March 31, 2021. Form is available on the Department webpage – vfwauxaz.org under Resources/Forms. Citation will be mailed directly 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.