

AMERICANISM / PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR



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The following 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 of 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.” #AUXILIARYPATRIOTISM

What is your Auxiliary’s and VFW’s favorite Patriotic holiday? How does your Auxiliary and VFW promote Patriotism and Patriotic holidays in your community? Patriotic holidays are a chance to bring community attention to your Auxiliary and VFW for prospective new members to walk through your doors. By doing this you’re showing the community you support Patriotism and that all Veterans, and their families are your top priority. You will also show your community that it is important to pay tribute to the men and women who have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces that have or are protecting our country, and our freedom daily. They are why we are **“THANKFUL & GATEFUL FOR THE SACRIFICE.”**

We feel Patriotic hearing our National Anthem sung or saying the Pledge of Allegiance on Patriotic holidays or before a ball game. It helps us to remember the value of our freedom as American Citizens and passing our Patriotism on to the next generation and many more to come after that. **“FROM OUR ROOTS TO OUR BRANCHES, EXTENDING SERVICE TO OUR VETERANS.”** These Patriotic holidays are a good time to bring friends and family together and show your community how important our Country is and what it means to you, your

Auxiliary, your Veterans, and to show them that we are **“THANKFUL & GRATEFUL FOR THE SACRIFICE.” #AUXILIARYPATRIOTISM**

It is important to celebrate each branch of service’s birthday as we are proud of our military and what they represent. They are the reason why we are free. It is also important to remember the order of how the military flags should be faced left to right - Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, & Coast Guard.

There are many important Patriotic holidays throughout the year to promote Patriotism; some may be more commonly known than others, yet your lesser-known Patriotic holidays are equally as important. Here are a few ways to promote Patriotism, on the commonly known Patriotic holidays and the lesser-known Patriotic holidays:

- Study the history behind the lesser-known Patriotic holidays so you can educate others about them and why they are equally as important.
- Make a trifold or small pamphlet with all the Patriotic holidays highlighting the lesser-known Patriotic holidays to raise awareness of them.
- Host / organize / attend / participate in a Patriotic ceremony / Patriotic event / parade etc... Ask VFW members, Auxiliary members, the community, and youth to help decorate, donate, ride on the float, or to come watch the ceremony / event, or hand out flags while walking in the parade. Ask your local Government to be a guest speaker, or to come watch the ceremony / event etc...
- Do something nice for Veterans, Service members, or families of both on specific holidays that are important to them. You can also lend them a hand with everyday tasks they may need help with.
- Use **#AUXILIARYPATRIOTISM** with everything you post on all social media platforms.

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR

As a Patriotic Instructor you have a crucial and important role in the Auxiliary as you are to educate the members about giving the proper salute to the American Flag, as well as the recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance, and understanding the Federal Flag code. A large part of demonstrating Americanism and Patriotic spirit is respecting and properly caring for the U.S. Flag. Flag etiquette covers everything from proper display of our Flag to acceptable conduct around this symbol of our nation. You should also help educate our members about the VFW Auxiliary traditions, rituals, and ceremonies. **#AUXILIARYPATRIOTISM**

Educating our youth about Patriotism is an important step on the path to good citizenship. Encourage your Auxiliary and VFW members to work together to volunteer in schools and educate youth about the importance of respecting our Flag. Auxiliary and VFW members can

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visit individual classrooms or give a presentation at a school assembly.

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When a community member, business or organization takes the care and time to display our “Stars & Stripes”, it reinforces Patriotism to the entire community. You may recognize this display of Patriotism by presenting a Certificate of Appreciation from your Auxiliary to the community members, business or organization. These Certificates are free to you, and printable from Malta-Member Resources-Americanism-Promote Patriotism.

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Flag Retirement 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 involving the entire community. As you are reporting on your programs to your State Chairman, please make sure you also report to your VFW Post Commander or designated VFW member monthly, with the *Auxiliary to Post Community Service Form*. (found in MALTA-Member Resources-Miscellaneous Resources). **#AUXILIARYPATRIOTISM**

For more information about Flag etiquette, the history of our Flag, and to read the US Flag code, visit www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette. For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions, Rituals, and Patriotic ceremonies, reference the VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition: Bylaws and Rituals. For even more resources, don’t forget about MALTA - it will help with all your programs! Visit www.vfwauxiliary.org and click on MALTA MEMBER LOGIN.

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STAR FAMILY RECOGNITION

You may have seen a Blue Star, Gold Star, Silver Star or White Star service flag 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 armed forces can display.

- BLUE STAR FAMILIES can display a flag or banner with a white field, a red border with a blue star, for each family member serving in the Armed Forces during any period of war or hostilities.
- GOLD STAR FAMILIES can display a flag or banner with a white field, a red border with a gold star, that represents a family member who died during military operations.
- SILVER STAR FAMILIES can display a flag or banner with an outer red, 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.
- WHITE STAR FAMILIES must not be forgotten! This designation recognizes families who have lost an active duty or Veteran service member to mental health.

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

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AMERICANISM / PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM AWARDS

National Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Most outstanding activities and/or event educating their community about lesser-known patriotic holidays.
 - A Citation and \$25.00 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-Americanism-Award Forms. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Americanism Chairman by March 31st, 2025, for judging. The Department Americanism Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department winning entry form to the National American Ambassador by April 30th, 2025, for judging.

State Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Plaque to the Auxiliary in each membership division that works as a group with your Auxiliary and VFW for the most outstanding recognition of lesser-known Patriotic Holidays. Citation for 2nd and 3rd.
2. Plaque to the Auxiliary in each membership division that promotes/participates or recognizes the most Patriotic Holidays and Branches of Service Birthdays. Citation for 2nd and 3rd.
3. Plaque to the Auxiliary in each membership division that presents the most Patriotic Appreciation Citations, Certificates of Appreciation or Respect for the Flag Citations presented to citizens and/or businesses in recognition of their displaying the American Flag, POW/MIA Flag and/or other displays of American Pride. Citation for 2nd and 3rd.
4. Plaque to the Auxiliary with the Most Outstanding “Promotion of Patriotism” in each membership division. Citation for 2nd and 3rd.
5. A Citation to each Auxiliary that turns in a copy of their *Auxiliary to Post Community Service Form* to their VFW Post and Americanism Chairman in the same email within 20 days of the VPR / Event / Ceremony / Activity etc. Citation for 2nd and 3rd.

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PATRIOTIC HOLIDAYS

Sources – vfw.org & Wikipedia.org

OPERATION DESERT STORM JANUARY 17TH

The Gulf War was an armed conflict between Iraq and a 42-country coalition led by the US. The coalition's efforts against Iraq were carried out in two key phases: Operation Desert Shield, which marked the military buildup from Aug. 1990 to Jan. 1991; and Operation Desert Storm, which began with the aerial bombing campaign against Iraq on Jan. 17th, 1991, ended with the American-led liberation of Kuwait on Feb. 28th, 1991.

VIETNAM PEACE ACCORD JANUARY 27TH

The “Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam,” otherwise known as the Vietnam Peace Accord established a ceasefire, a 60-day period for withdrawal of all American and other foreign troops, and the return of U.S. civilian and military personnel held prisoner by Communist forces. The accords officially ended direct U.S. military involvement in Vietnam on January 27th, 1973.

SINKING OF THE USS MAINE FEBRUARY 15TH

At 9:40pm on the night of Feb. 15th, 1898, the US battleship *Maine*, anchored in Havana Harbor, was suddenly blown up, the explosion tearing out her bottom & sinking her, killing 260 officers & men on board.

PRESIDENTS DAY (WASHINGTON’S BIRTHDAY) THIRD MONDAY IN FEBRUARY

The holiday honors the accomplishments of Washington, who created the first military badge of merit for the common soldier - The Purple Heart medal.

K9 VETERANS DAY MARCH 13TH

The official birthday of the US Army K9 Corps was established back in 1942. Since then, dogs have been trained and deployed in different roles, from scout dogs to sentries, messengers, and even mine detectors.

KOSOVO CAMPAIGN MARCH 24TH

The Kosovo War was an armed conflict in Kosovo that lasted from Feb. 28TH, 1998 until June 11TH, 1999. It was fought between the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia & the Kosovo Liberation Army.

NATIONAL VIETNAM MEMORIAL DAY MARCH 29TH

The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act, signed into law in 2017, designates March 29TH of each year as National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

SOMALIA MARCH 31ST

The departure of the last troops of the United Nations' Somalia operation in March 1995 marks a critical juncture for Somalia, and for international peacekeeping.

GOLD STAR SPOUSES DAY APRIL 5TH

Since 2010, Congress has annually acknowledged April 5th as “Gold Star Wives' Day,” paying tribute to the contributions of individuals associated with Gold Star Wives of America, a non-profit organization established in 1945 by women who lost their husbands in service to our country.

LOYALTY DAY MAY 1ST

Loyalty Day is observed on May 1st in the United States. It is a day set aside "for the reaffirmation of loyalty to the United States and for the recognition of the heritage of American freedom".

VICTORY OVER EUROPE (VE DAY) MAY 8TH

Victory in Europe Day is the day celebrating the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II for Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on Tuesday, May 8th, 1945; it marked the official end of World War II in Europe in the Eastern Front, with the last known shots fired in May.

MILITARY SPOUSES APPRECIATION DAY MAY 10TH

We honor the contributions and sacrifices made by military spouses. Military spouses are the silent heroes who are essential to the Nation's strength. They are the families who support our troops during mission, deployment, reintegration and reset. They serve our country just as much as their loved ones.

ARMED FORCES DAY THIRD SATURDAY IN MAY

Armed Forces Day is celebrated on the third Saturday in May. It falls near the end of Armed Forces Week, which begins on the second Saturday of May and ends on the third Sunday of May (the fourth if the month begins on a Sunday, as in 2016).

MEMORIAL DAY LAST MONDAY IN MAY

A day for honoring and mourning the US military personnel who died while serving in the Armed Forces. From 1868 to 1970, it was observed on May 30th. Since 1971, it has been observed on the last Monday of May.

D-DAY JUNE 6TH

The Normandy landings were the landing operations and associated airborne operations on Tuesday, June 6th, 1944, of the Allied invasion of Normandy in Operation Overlord during World War II. Codenamed Operation Neptune and often referred to as D-Day, it is the largest seaborne invasion in history.

FLAG DAY JUNE 14TH

Flag Day is celebrated on June 14TH in the United States. It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States on June 14TH, 1777, by resolution of the Second Continental Congress.

US ARMY BIRTHDAY JUNE 14TH

The U.S. Army was founded on June 14TH, 1775, when the Continental Congress authorized enlistment of expert riflemen to serve the United Colonies for one year.

NATIONAL PTSD AWARENESS DAY JUNE 27TH

National PTSD Awareness Day aims to raise awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental health problem that may develop after a person has been exposed to one or more traumatic events.

INDEPENDENCE DAY JULY 4TH

Independence Day, known colloquially as the Fourth of July, commemorates the Declaration of Independence, which was ratified by the Second Continental Congress on July 4TH, 1776, establishing the United States of America.

KOREAN ARMISTICE JULY 27TH

The armistice was signed on July 27TH, 1953, and was designed to "ensure a complete cessation of hostilities and of all acts of armed force in Korea until a final peaceful settlement is achieved."

US COAST GUARD BIRTHDAY AUGUST 4TH

The Coast Guard traces its founding to Aug. 4TH, 1790. That's when the first Congress authorized construction of 10 vessels to enforce tariff and trade laws, preventing smuggling, and protecting the collection of federal revenue.

PURPLE HEART DAY AUGUST 7TH

Purple Heart Day, on August 7th, commemorates the creation of the oldest American military decoration for military merit. The Purple Heart honors the men and women who are wounded in battle. During the American Revolutionary War, the Badge for Military Merit decorated six known soldiers.

OPERATION IRAQ FREEDOM AUGUST 31ST

The Iraq War was a protracted armed conflict in Iraq from 2003 to 2011. It began with the invasion of Iraq by the United States-led coalition that overthrew the Ba'athist government of Saddam Hussein.

VICTORY OVER JAPAN (VJ DAY) SEPTEMBER 2ND

On Aug. 15TH, 1945, Australian Prime Minister Ben Chifley announced on radio that Japan had unconditionally surrendered to Allied Forces. This day, which has become known as VP Day, was marked with jubilant celebrations across the nation as citizens looked towards a future free of conflict and fear of invasion.

PATRIOT DAY SEPTEMBER 11TH

Patriot Day occurs on Sept. 11TH of each year, in memory of the people killed in the terrorist attacks in 2001.

VFW AUXILIARY BIRTHDAY SEPTEMBER 14TH

On September 14TH, 1914, the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars was organized in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Our name has since changed to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and our eligibility includes close male relatives of VFW-eligible Veterans. (We will be 110 years old this year!)

CONSTITUTION DAY / CITIZENSHIP DAY SEPTEMBER 17TH

Recognizes the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, and those who have become U.S. citizens. It is observed on Sept. 17TH, the day in 1787 that delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the document in Philadelphia.

US AIRFORCE BIRTHDAY SEPTEMBER 18TH

In 1947 President Truman signed the National Security Act which established a new defense organization, and along with it the creation of the U.S. Air Force as an independent service, equal to the Army and Navy.

POW-MIA DAY THIRD FRIDAY IN SEPTEMBER

In the United States, National POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed on the third Friday in September. It honors those who were prisoners of war, and those who are still missing in action. It is most associated with those who were POWs during the Vietnam War.

GOLD STAR FAMILY DAY LAST SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER

Gold Star Mother's Day is observed on the last Sunday in September. It is intended to recognize and honor those mothers who have lost a son or daughter in the service of the U.S. Armed Forces. Events are held to publicly express love, sorrow and reverence toward Gold Star Mothers and their families. Flags are also mandated to be displayed on government buildings on this day.

VFW BIRTHDAY SEPTEMBER 29TH

Sept. 29TH is National Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Day, celebrating one of the largest and most established organizations of war Veterans in the United States. Established on this date in 1899, a group of 13 Veterans from Spanish-America War and a Philippine Insurrection joined together to form what would become the nation's largest and most dedicated group of combat Veterans.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) AFGHANISTAN OCTOBER 9TH

Operation Enduring Freedom officially ended on Dec. 28th, 2014, although coalition forces remained on the ground to assist with training Afghan security forces. The United States Armed Forces completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan on Aug. 30TH, 2021, marking the end of the 2001-2021 war.

US NAVY BIRTHDAY OCTOBER 13TH

A second resolution passed the same day creating a naval committee to oversee the purchase of the ships and write a set of regulations for their management. Thus, was born the Continental Navy, and October 13TH remains the official birth date of the U.S. Navy.

BEIRUT BOMBING OCTOBER 23RD

Early on a Sunday morning, October 23RD, 1983, two truck bombs struck buildings in Beirut, Lebanon, housing American and French service members of the Multinational Force in Lebanon, a military peacekeeping operation during the Lebanese Civil War.

US MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY NOVEMBER 10TH

The United States Marine Corps Birthday is an American holiday celebrated every year on November 10TH, with a traditional ball and cake-cutting ceremony. On that day in 1775, the Continental Marines were established.

VETERANS DAY NOVEMBER 11TH

Veterans Day is a federal holiday in the United States observed annually on November 11TH, for honoring military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

PEARL HARBOR DAY DECEMBER 7TH

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is observed annually in the United States on Dec. 7TH, to remember and honor the 2,403 Americans who were killed in the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on Dec 7TH, 1941, which led to the United States declaring war on Japan the next day, and thus entering World War II.

US SPACE FORCE BIRTHDAY DECEMBER 20TH

The U.S. Space Force was established Dec. 20TH, 2019, when the National Defense Authorization Act was signed into law (with bi-partisan support), creating the first new branch of the armed services in 73 years.

**AMERICANISM / PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR
MID-YEAR & YEAR-END REPORT**

Mid-Year Report – Must be received by District President by December 10, 2024

Year-End Report – Must be received by District President by April 10, 2025

District President forwards to Department Chairman by December 20 and April 20 respectively

Auxiliary: _____ Number: _____ District: _____

1. Number of Patriotic Holidays and/or Branch of Service Birthdays that your Auxiliary promoted, participated in, or recognized. Please attach a report and pictures for each if not previously reported.

2. Number of American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags that your Auxiliary distributed and/or presented.

3. Number of Patriotic Appreciation Citations, Certificates of Appreciation or Respect for the Flag Citations presented to citizens and/or businesses in recognition of their displaying the American Flag, POW/MIA Flag and/or other displays of American Pride. Please attach reports and pictures for each if not previously reported.

Auxiliary Chairman Signature: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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