

AMERICANISM AMBASSADOR/ PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR



KATLYN BURKE

1615 Marshall Street
Greenville, TX 75401
402-201-4772
auxamericanism24@gmail.com

How do you celebrate or promote patriotic holidays? Do you promote a patriotic holiday within your community? It is the perfect time to show your community what the Auxiliary is about and bring attention to patriotic holidays and the importance of them. By your Auxiliary showing it supports patriotism, it shows your community, veterans and their families are a top priority.

Patriotic Holidays

As we come together with friends and families on patriotic holidays it is a good time to remember to pay tribute to the men and women who have served in the U.S. military as they have served or are currently serving to protect our country and freedom.

There are many important patriotic holidays throughout the year; some may be more commonly known than others, but all are equally important. These patriotic holidays are a good time to bring friends and families together and show your community how important our country is and what it means to you.

Lesser-known patriotic holidays are just as important as the other patriotic holidays. It's important that we focus on all the patriotic holidays as it shows us supporting patriotism and making veterans and their families top priority. Here are a few ways to promote lesser-known patriotic holidays:

- Study the history behind the lesser-known patriotic holidays so you can educate others about them and why they are just as important as the other patriotic holidays.
- Participate in a parade. Ask members and youth to help with the parade by handing out Flags.
- Fly the American Flag

- Do something nice for veterans/ service members on the specific patriotic holiday.
- Attend a patriotic ceremony.
- Raise awareness about the lesser-known patriotic holidays.

Here are some less commonly known patriotic holidays we can observe:

- Loyalty Day is on May 1 each year. "It is a day set aside for the reaffirmation of loyalty to the United States and for recognizing the heritage of American freedom."
- Purple Heart Remembrance Day is observed on August 7. Each year on this day our nation recognizes the men and women who were wounded or killed on the battlefield by remembering the sacrifices they made.
- Constitution Day and Citizenship Day is September 17. On this day in 1787 the U.S. Constitution was signed.
- POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed on the third Friday of September. On this day, we honor those who sacrificed and are prisoners of war and those still missing in action.
- Day of the Deployed is observed on October 26. This day honors all the service members who have been deployed in the service of the United States. This day also honors their families and all the sacrifices they have made during deployments.

As we promote patriotism and celebrate some of the lesser-known patriotic holidays don't forget about some of the well-known patriotic holidays as well:

- Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May.
- Flag Day is observed on June 14.
- Independence Day is observed on July 4.
- Veterans Day is observed on November 11.

Promote Patriotism

We feel patriotic hearing our National Anthem sung or saying the Pledge of Allegiance on patriotic holidays; it helps us remember the value of our freedom as American citizens and passing our patriotism on to the next generation and many to come after.

We can celebrate patriotic holidays and #AuxiliaryPatriotism in many ways; here are a few examples:

- Participate in a parade. Ask members and youth to help with the parade by handing out Flags.
- Fly the American Flag
- Visit a historic landmark
- Host a community celebration
- Support a veteran, do more than just thanking them for their service. Lend them a hand with things they may need help with.

Branch of Service Birthdays

It is important to celebrate each branch of service's birthday as we are proud of our U.S. military and what they represent, and 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 Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard)

Flag Education during Patriotic Events

As we celebrate these patriotic holidays and promote patriotism, it is important to educate others about the U.S. Flag any moment we can. The U.S. Flag has symbolized freedom for many years and is important that we teach everyone about Flag education.

- How to properly salute the Flag
- When to display the Flag
- How to conduct a Flag-raising ceremony
- How to fold and store the Flag

Patriotic Instructor

As a Patriotic Instructor, you have a crucial and important role in the Auxiliary as you teach the members about giving the proper salute to the American Flag. Also, you help teach our members about the traditions of our organization.



AMERICANISM PROGRAM

Flag Education • Promote #AuxiliaryPatriotism • POW/MIA Recognition • Star Family Recognition

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 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 about the proper salute to the U.S. Flag, as well as the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. They also take the 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* helpsheet and video are available in MALTA Member 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.

Flag Education

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.

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.

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. Encourage members of your Auxiliary to volunteer in schools and educate youth about the importance of respecting our Flag. Volunteers can visit individual classrooms or give a presentation at a school assembly. For more resources, see MALTA Member Resources.
- 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 involving the entire community. For more information on this and other Flag etiquette, refer to MALTA Member Resources.

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 MALTA Member Resources.

National Vietnam War Veterans Day – March 29
National Vietnam War Veterans Day honors a generation of men and women who served and sacrificed. March 29 marks the anniversary of when the last combat forces departed South Vietnam in 1973, even though some troops remained until their final departure in 1975.

Loyalty Day – May 1
On May 1, 1930, 10,000 VFW members staged a rally at New York’s Union Square to promote patriotism. Through a resolution adopted in 1949, May 1 evolved into Loyalty Day.

Armed Forces Day – Third Saturday in May
A day to pay tribute to the men and women currently serving in our nation’s armed forces.

Memorial Day – May 30 (Traditional)
Patriotism calls for all citizens to be reminded of the deaths of their fellow countrymen during wartime. By honoring the nation’s war dead, we preserve their memory and thus their service and sacrifice.

Flag Day – June 14
This day celebrates the official symbol for the United States: our “Stars and Stripes.” Flag Day was first recognized by Congress on June 14, 1777.

Independence Day – July 4
On this day in 1776, our forefathers formed a new nation by adopting the Declaration of Independence.

Patriot Day – September 11
This day is to perpetuate the memory of those who perished in the attack on America that occurred on this date in 2001.

POW/MIA Recognition Day - Third Friday in September
POW/MIA Recognition Day honors the commitments and the sacrifices made by our nation’s prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. National POW/MIA Recognition Day, traditionally on the third Friday in September, is one of the six days specified by law on which the black POW/MIA flag shall be flown over federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices and military installations.

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 setup in MALTA Member Resources.

Gold Star Mother’s & Family’s Day -
Last Sunday in September
On this day, Americans are encouraged to display the Flag and hold appropriate ceremonies as a public expression of our nation’s gratitude and respect for our Gold Star Mothers and Families.

Veterans Day – November 11
This is an opportunity to honor the brave men and women, both living and deceased, who fought America’s battles past and present.

Pearl Harbor Day – December 7
This day is in remembrance of the same date in 1941 when Japanese bombers staged a surprise attack on U.S. military and naval forces in Hawaii.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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

AMERICANISM PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community about lesser-known patriotic holidays.
 - Citation and \$25 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. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2025 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, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Americanism Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of lesser-known patriotic holidays.
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 presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.