

## AMERICANISM PROGRAM 2026-2027



**Julie Licari, Department Chairman**

“Americanism is an unflinching love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideas; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty and posterity.”

As American citizens and members of the VFW/VFWA, we know by practicing Americanism, we show our love of Country and we must do so and teach future generations to do so as well.

### **The Americanism Program:**

- **Promotes #AuxiliaryPatriotism** by celebrating America’s Patriotic Holidays Days and lesser-known Patriotic holidays
- **Teaches respect and proper care for the U.S. Flag.**
  - Team with Youth Groups and teach Flag Education for Kids
- Brings attention to Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action by hosting **POW/MIA ceremonies** to both educate the public and honor these special veterans. Missing Man Table set up and Ceremony
- **Star Family Recognition**

### **Patriotic Holidays-**

There are many important Patriotic holidays celebrated throughout the year, but we need to celebrate the lesser-known ones as well. It’s important to celebrate and recognize all Patriotic holidays as it shows patriotism and making veterans our top priority. Here are ways you can celebrate these holidays:

- Study history so you can educate others on their significance.
- Participate in parades- have members and youth hand out the American flag.
- Fly the American flag daily.
- Celebrate the holiday with our veterans.
- Attend or sponsor a ceremony.
- Raise awareness about the lesser-known holidays.

**Patriotic Holidays:**

**July 4th 2026 We the People Celebrate our Nations 250th Birthday! Register and be in a local Parade, walk or make a float out of a trailer and pull it.**

- Memorial Day- *Lay a wreath at your local Federal Cemetery*
- Flag Day
- Independence Day
- Veterans Day- **Host a lunch/dinner/pot luck to thank a Veteran!**

**Lesser-known holidays:**

- Loyalty Day
- Purple Heart Remembrance Day-**Make a POP Sign/FB Post to honor the Day**
- Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
- POW/MIA Recognition Day- **Post a message on your Facebook page**
- Day of the Deployed

Please go to the Department of California website, find Programs, click on Patriotism and look at the.....

## **2026-2027 National Holiday Calendar !**

**Key Upcoming Events to celebrate and promote:**

**July-250th Birthday of America, August 7th- Purple Heart Day  
September- 25th Anniversary of 9/11, Sept.18th National POW/MIA  
October- Breast Cancer Awareness Month, November- National  
Veteran & Military Family Month. December 7th National Pearl Harbor  
Day**

## **Patriotism**

We can celebrate Patriotic Holidays and #AuxiliaryPatriotism in many ways, here are a few suggestions:

- Participate in parades, invite youth and members to join in
- Fly the American Flag
- Visit historic landmarks.
- Host a community Celebration.
- Support a Veteran, lend a helping hand.
  
- Take pictures and post on your social media.

### **Branch of service birthdays**

It is important to

recognize the birthdates of each branch of service Branch of Service Birth Dates:

- U.S. Army June 12, 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

### **POW, (Prisoners of War), MIA, (Missing in Action) Recognition**

**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 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 enthusiastic about bringing attention to former POW/MIA and those Missing in Action by holding ceremonies to both educate their communities and honor these special Veterans. One way to honor these Veterans is to set up a Missing Man table not only at your Post but out in the community. This practice provides a visual demonstration of the significance of POW/MIA Recognition Day. Find a sample of the ceremony wording and table set-up at [www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources).

## Star Family Recognition

Star Families – spouses, children, parents, siblings, or others whose loved one served, was injured, or died in service to our nation – are a vital part of our country's military community and history. 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 and red border with a blue star for each family member serving during any period of war or hostilities.
- **Gold Star** Families can display a flag or banner that has a white field, red border, and 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 filled, outer red and inner white border and a silver star that represents a family member who was injured, wounded or became ill during or because of combat. You are encouraged to recognize and honor these families in your community.

## Flag Education

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

For more information regarding flag etiquette, the history of our flag and to read the US Flag Code visit [vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette](http://vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette).

There is so much more information than I can put on this page.

**\* Do you know the correct way to hang the U.S. Flag Vertically? Ask me at the Sacramento convention and the first 10 will get a Patriotic Prize!!**

## **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. Members can volunteer at schools, visit classrooms, give presentations and speak at assemblies stressing the importance of respecting our flag.

**Recognition of Outstanding Community Flag Display-** Recognize members of the community, businesses, and other organizations for their display of our flag by presenting a Certificate of Appreciation from your auxiliary. Displaying the Flag reinforces patriotism to the entire community.

**Flag Retirement Ceremonies-** provide opportunities for the entire family to show honor and respect for our Flag, for more information on this and other flag etiquette refer to MALTA Member resources.

### **Patriotic Instructor**

The role of the Patriotic Instructor is to educate the members about the proper salute to the 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. P.I. 's help members understand the traditions and ceremonies of the organization. For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions rituals, and patriotic ceremonies reference the VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition: Bylaws and ritual.

## **Americanism Program Awards**

### **Awards for Auxiliaries:**

- 1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in EACH of the 10 Program Divisions that creates the most unique POP sign and/or Meme showcasing the VFW Auxiliary.**

**Entry Form is Required and is available in the MALTA Member Resources.**

**VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman by March 31st, 2027, for judging.**

**The VFW Department Americanism Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-Winning entry form to the VFWA National Americanism Ambassador by April 30th, 2027 for judging.**

**Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFWA National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.**

**Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:**

- 1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department American Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the best promotion of POP signs and/or MEMES showcasing the VFW Auxiliary.**

**Winners will be announced and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFWA Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.**

- 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 Ambassador's Program Goals.**

**Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFWA National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFWA Department account after the 2027 VFWA Auxiliary National Convention.**

**Department Legacy Award** A Legacy award will be awarded to one Outstanding Auxiliary Chairman for the best overall Promotion of the Americanism Program

**NATIONAL AWARDS:**

Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award

VFW National Public Service Award Citation

VFW Life Saving Award Citation

Have an outstanding year and I look forward to seeing your reports!

God Bless America!

**Julie Licari**

Americanism Chairman/Patriotic Instructor

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