

AMERICANISM AMBASSADOR / PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR



JESSICA GARDNER

4611 Tall Oaks Drive
Dayton, OH 45432-3240
(937) 245-2897
jessiauxreport@gmail.com

As Rosie the Riveter told America in 1942, “We can do it.” The VFW Auxiliary can do it and can spread that spirit of Americanism today. For this Program Year the VFW Auxiliary is sharing this message in a way that “POPs.”

Americanism POP Signs

We have all seen posters from World War II which depict icons like Uncle Sam and Rosie the Riveter, asking you to join the military and do your part. Today people’s attention spans are even shorter than they were in the ‘40s. So, let’s try a technique that worked in the past.

Use a POP Sign to get people’s attention. POP stands for a Point-of-Purchase display, a marketing tool used to promote products and inspire people to act. America is our product and by incorporating symbols like the American Flag, bald eagles, the Statue of Liberty and other patriotic imagery we can use the POP Sign to promote Americanism. It can be a physical sign or a post on social media. The goal is to catch people’s attention within a few seconds because most won’t take the time to read a brochure or listen to our pitches. Make them fun. Enjoy making your signs and be creative!

Think of this like picking a book by the cover or which movie to watch by the poster. Make them bright and keep the wording short. As Uncle Sam said during World War II, “I want you for the U.S. Army,” we want to be sure to ask our audience for help. Let everyone know what we do and what

they can do to promote patriotism. Let them know about the Flag and holidays.

See the Americanism awards on page 11 for more information on how creating POP Signs can be reported for awards.

Flag Education

Organize efforts to educate people on the importance of Flag etiquette. Topics you should cover include folding the Flag, respectful disposal of the Flag and displaying the Flag. Organize classes on the importance of the history and meaning of the Flag.

Promote Patriotism

Educate people on the meaning and history of national symbols and traditions. People are not being taught the history of why our symbols are important. I was always taught that when we forget our history we are bound to repeat it. Promote holidays. Provide information on ways to celebrate the holiday but don’t forget the reason why. Focus on the reason, meaning and significance of the holiday over the food and festivities.

Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Remembrance

September 18, 2026 is National POW/MIA Day, a solemn remembrance of the sacrifices, honor and bravery of those who served and were unable to return home, are still missing or suffered at the hands of our enemies. This day shows our unwavering commitment to finding them and remembering the sacrifices of those who are lost to us. It is a day to honor the fallen, pray for those who endure(d) hardships during combat and to support the families through their grief and in the relentless hope that their loved one will return. National President Donna K. Mills’ 2026-2027 special joint project with VFW National Commander-in-Chief Cory L. Geisler is Operation

Bring Them Home, which supports the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). See the special joint project page at the front of the book. Operation Bring Them Home is reportable under Veterans & Family Support.

Until they are all home we will remember.

History of Americanism in the Auxiliary

The VFW Auxiliary has promoted Americanism since its founding in 1914, establishing it as one of the foundations of the organization. From the beginning, this core mission of promoting patriotism and national pride has been a driving force for several milestones within the Auxiliary. A key moment in the Program's history occurred in the 1921 when the VFW created "Americanization Day" on May 1 as a patriotic response to the perceived communist influence of the May Day celebrations at the time. The holiday was officially renamed Loyalty Day and made a permanent fixture on the national calendar by Congress in 1958, following decades of promotion by the VFW and its Auxiliary.

For the Patriotic Instructors

The Patriotic Instructor is responsible for educating members about the history, symbolism and proper etiquette related to the organization and the American Flag. It is your job to instruct and demonstrate the proper way to stand and salute the Flag. Be prepared to educate members on standing at attention, parade rest, how to salute and what the gavel raps mean. Take the initiative to plan and demonstrate proper observances of patriotic holidays through celebrations and events.





AMERICANISM PROGRAM

Flag Education • 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 unfailing 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/Americanism Chairman

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 help sheet 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.

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.
- Promote Patriotism – Celebrating Patriotic Holidays. Patriotic holidays are an opportune time to involve the whole family and bring community attention to your Auxiliary. Patriotic holidays and days of note can serve as the perfect way to show that your Auxiliary supports patriotism, veterans and their families as a top priority. A list of these dates can be found in MALTA.

For more information and guidance on Americanism and Patriotism, including Patriotic Instructor duties, patriotic days, Americanism Helpful Hints, branches of service birth dates, military flags order of precedence and Star Family recognition, see MALTA Member Resources.

Patriotic items and educational materials are available for purchase through the VFW Store at 1-833-VFW-VETS or online at vfwstore.org.

Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher award Program

Each year the VFW recognizes three exceptional teachers - one each from the elementary, junior high and high school levels - for their outstanding commitment to teach Americanism and instill patriotism in their students.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/teacher-of-the-year>

VFW National Public Servant Award Citations.

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects emergency medical technicians, law enforcement and firefighter personnel to receive VFW Public Servant Awards.

The "VFW Department Public Servant Award Citation Request Form" is now available on the VFW website. VFW members can locate this form by logging in to www.vfw.org and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section.

VFW Life Saving Award Citation

The VFW Life Saving Award is one of the highest recognitions conferred by both the Department of Washington and the National Veterans of Foreign Wars. It honors those who display remarkable heroism, skill or bravery in saving or attempting to save a human life.

All Life Saving Award Citations must be requested through the VFW Programs Dashboard Tool. VFW members can access the VFW Programs Dashboard Tool by logging in to [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org), on the "My VFW" page under the Membership Quick Links section.

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 available in MALTA Member Resources.

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

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

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary 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 Americanism 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 VFW Auxiliary 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 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.