

AMERICANISM PROGRAM

Program Goals:

- Flag Education
- Promote Patriotism
- POW/MIA Recognition
- Star Family Recognition

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT'S THEME

"Champion for Veterans"

In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "Americanism is a question of spirit, conviction, and purpose, not of creed or birthplace."

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S THEME

"Hands that Serve, Hearts that Care"

What does Americanism and Patriotism mean to you? Is Americanism something that is described? Is Patriotism something that is portrayed? Is it a feeling?

Everyone interprets meanings in their own ways. That is what makes us Americans!

Per the *VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition Bylaws and Ritual*: "Americanism is an unfailing 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."

Our purpose is to be a "Champion for Veterans" with "Hands that serve, Hearts that Care".

Flag Education

This continues to be a huge undertaking to continue traditions that make us all proud to be Americans. Our goal is to educate our youth the importance of the flag.

"The Flag is very much a part of our daily lives. We should always respect it because it represents everything we are as Americans - everything we hope to be", from the VFW Etiquette of the stars and Stripes".

- Teach proper handling, displaying and disposal respect for the American Flag. Visit schools and organizations to motivate and inspire what the flag means to you. Publish flag etiquette tips on social media. (Make your own #hashtag)
- Represent by respecting our flag and National Anthem at all public events, particularly on patriotic holidays.
- If you notice a tattered Flag, offer to replace it. Visit <https://www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette>

Promote Patriotism

Celebrating patriotic holidays. Organize or participate in local patriotic events (organize a parade, march in a parade, have a float in a parade).

- VOTE! Bring your children/grandchildren with you. Many county offices have coloring books for children on what it means to vote.
- Visit https://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/Patriotic-Holidays-updated_2020.pdf

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POW/MIA Recognition

National POW/MIA Recognition Day, which is now recognized annually on the third Friday of September. This commemoration is set aside to honor the commitment and sacrifices made by this nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action, as well as their families.

- Set up a POW/MIA table out in your community
- Distribute and recognize the display of the POW/MIA flag. "You are not forgotten"

Visit https://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/23_Missing_Man_Ceremony_SV.pdf

Star Family Recognition

Service members do not serve alone! We as an Auxiliary should know that a service flag or service banner is a banner approved by the Secretary of Defense to recognize the sacrifice made by the families of service members. **Blue** = Hope, **Gold** = Sacrifice, **Silver** = Gallantry

- Blue Star Families can display a flag or banner with a white field and red border with a blue star. The number of blue stars on the flag corresponds to with the number of individuals who currently serve in the Armed Forces from that immediate family.
- Gold Star Families can display a flag or banner with a white field and red border, a gold star is placed over the blue star on a Blue Star Service Flag so that the blue forms a border and creates a Gold Star Service Flag.
- Silver Star Families can display a flag or banner with a blue field with an outer red and inner white border, silver threads cover the blue star to represent a family member who was wounded, contracted a serious illness or injury in a war zone.

DEPARTMENT AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES:

1. Most outstanding patriotic community event.

Special Award to one Auxiliary in each of the four (4) Membership Classes with the **most outstanding patriotic community event**.

Criteria and entry form (required) at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources Auxiliaries are to send entry forms(required) to their Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2023.

NATIONAL AWARDS:

AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES

1. Most outstanding patriotic community event.

- Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts a patriotic community event.

Criteria and entry form (required) available at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2023.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- **Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences that hosts the most outstanding patriotic community event.**

Winners will be announced, and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

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