

Americanism

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Americanism is a term first used by John Witherspoon of Princeton University in 1781 in reference to words and phrases distinct from use by the British people. It is the attachment and allegiance to traditions, interests, ideals, customs, political principles, and practices that are significant and unique to America and that are essential to our culture.

Americans feel passion, pride, and spirit for this country that was a vision and experiment for our Founding Fathers. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights give us the ability to enjoy the ideals of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

Americanism is:

- Freedom and opportunity
- Ideal of loyalty
- Cultural, political, and moral virtue
- Public ideology
- Honoring diversity
- A declaration of unity
- Defined by its rights and responsibilities
- A shared vision and security
- Spoken into existence
- Chosen daily by its people
- Celebrating patriotic holidays together
- United under and honoring the Flag

Because of the precious freedom we have in the USA we can openly celebrate our patriotic holidays, honor our Flag, and National Anthem. We are able to give respect and honor to those who serve, have served, sacrificed, and gave all to ensure that our freedoms continue.

“LET FREEDOM RING”

In following our National Ambassador’s program goals **“More Than Letters”** is something that she is encouraging us to focus on for this year. We tend to abbreviate or shorten things for expedience or convenience in our language. We use acronyms to refer to some of our Veterans. Prisoners of War (POW) Missing in Action (MIA) Killed in Action (KIA) We should educate our Auxiliaries and our communities on using the words and not the acronyms. This will be more impactful when referencing those we are remembering.

More Than Letters

- Acknowledge them daily
- Learn and say their names
- Have a dedication ceremony
- Host a special program
- Write about them in your newsletter
- Share their stories
- Meet their families
- Go to POW/MIA Day ceremonies at the state Capitol or host one at your Post

“Banding Together for Our Veterans”

#AuxTRIBE

Our National Ambassador points out that when our servicemen and women retire from their service to our nation, many of them feel displaced, depressed, delusional, and lost without the identity they shared with their comrades. Being out of their uniforms and lacking a shared mission and conversations can be hard. This is where we can step in and become their **#AuxTRIBE**. Our rituals, traditions, uniforms, and mission to serve veterans and families can be relatable and comforting to them. This can create an environment they yearn for. Ways to develop #AuxTRIBE include:

- Embody a brotherhood/sisterhood
- Protect the peace of our Posts
- Be there for each other
- Learn and practice your VFW Auxiliary rituals
- Proudly wear our uniforms and gear
- Encourage #AuxTribe mentality

*For more information on #AuxTribe please visit VFW National MALTA Member Resources/Americanism Program.

Patriotic Instructors

Patriotic Instructors* educate Auxiliary members in the correct Salute to the US Flag and give proper instruction of reciting “The Pledge of Allegiance.” He or she should take the time to research and understand the VFW Auxiliary Ritual and the Federal Flag Code as well. It is the Patriotic Instructor’s responsibility to share this knowledge with the Auxiliaries within the Department. Flag education should be shared within our communities.

- In schools
- By recognizing a community individual or business for their Flag display
- Hold a Flag retirement ceremony or a Flag folding ceremony.

***This year’s Dept. Patriotic Instructor is**

Janet Albin
137 700 Road
New Oxford, Pa 17350
(717) 465-0550 janetalbin@comcast.net

Promote Patriotic Holidays

Promote Patriotism- Celebrate Patriotic Holidays

Patriotic holidays are a great time to bring attention to our Auxiliaries and our mission. Host family fun events on the holidays or weekends close to them. Hold a Family Freedom Festival or a “Buddy” Poppy Drive and incorporate Patriotism and Americanism in it. Share ideas with other Auxiliaries at your District meetings and refer to MALTA Member Resources for information and ways to celebrate. Always have flags available to pass out to the community members, especially the children. It is crucial and our responsibility as Auxiliaries to the VFW to see that we continue educating our Youth on what it means to be an American. Also, to see that our Flag and our Veterans are respected and honored.

Patriotic Holidays

- National Vietnam War Veterans Day - March 29th
- Loyalty Day - May 1st
- Armed Forces Day - Third Saturday in May
- Memorial Day - May 30th (traditional)
- Flag Day - June 14
- Independence Day - July 4th
- Patriot Day - September 11th
- POW/MIA Recognition Day - Third Friday in September
- Gold Star Mother’s and Family’s Day - Last Sunday in September
- Veteran’s Day - November 11th
- Pearl Harbor Day - December 7th

Branch of US Military Birth Dates

- U.S Army - June 17, 1775
- U.S. Marine Corps - November 10, 1775
- U.S. Navy - October 13, 1775
- U.S. Air Force - September 1947
- U.S. Coast Guard - August 4, 1790
- U.S. National Guard - December 13, 1636
- U.S. Space Force - December 20, 2019

Star Family Recognition: (You are encouraged to recognize these families in your area.)

You may have noticed a Blue Star, Gold Star or Silver Star banner in the window of a home in your community. They are banners, approved by the Secretary of Defense, that family members of those serving in the United States Armed Forces may 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 US Armed Forces during a war or hostile period.
- Gold Star Families can display a flag or banner with a white field and a red border, with a gold star to represent a family member who died during military operations.
- Silver Star Families can display a flag or banner with a blue field and an outer red and inner white border with a silver star that represents a family member who was injured, wounded, or became ill as a result of combat.

NATIONAL AMERICANISM PROGRAM AWARDS

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community that our VFW acronyms are “more than letters.”
 - Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that educates their community that our VFW Auxiliary acronyms are “more than letters.” Entry form required and available in **MALTA Member Resources**. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2024 for judging. The Department Americanism Chairman must email National Headquarters by April 30, 2024 at info@vfwauxiliary.org a total combined list of every Auxiliary in their Department that completed and submitted an entry form.

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

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences that host the most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community that our VFW Auxiliary acronyms are “more than letters.”

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, 2024 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into Auxiliary account after National Convention.

DEPARTMENT OF PA AMERICANISM PROGRAM CITATIONS

1. Citation to each Auxiliary that hosts an activity/or event that educates their community that our VFW Auxiliary acronyms are “more than letters.” This citation is based on the National Ambassador’s Award and will be given to each Auxiliary that sends in an entry form to me by March 31st, 2024. Forms are available in **MALTA Member Resources**. *Please feel free to contact me with any questions.*
2. Citation to each Auxiliary that hosts, or co-hosts with their Post, a Flag folding ceremony or a missing man ceremony. (MUST include photo and description with your end of year report.)
3. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division who best promotes a Patriotic holiday or any branch of service birthday within their community. (MUST include photo and description of event with your end of year report.)
4. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division that distributes the most American Flags.
5. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division that distributes the most POW/MIA Flags.
6. Citation to the Auxiliary with the best promotion pertaining to Flag education within their community. (MUST include photo and description of event with your year-end report.)
7. Citation to the Auxiliary with the best POW/MIA recognition or promotion. (MUST include photo and description of event with your year-end report.)
8. Citation to the Auxiliary with the best recognition of Blue, White, Gold, and/or Silver Star families. (Must include photo and description of event with your year-end report.)

ALL OBLIGATIONS INCLUDING AUDITS, BONDS, DELEGATE FEES, PLEDGES, SUPPLIES, ETC. TO NATIONAL, DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND DISTRICT MUST BE MET FOR YOU AUXILIARY/DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN TO QUALIFY FOR AWARDS.