

AMERICANISM

2023-2024

There are so many things as Americans that bring us pride and respect for our country.

- Hearing a beautiful rendition of our National Anthem
- Reciting The Pledge of Allegiance
- Celebrating patriotic holidays together
- Honoring our Veterans, living and deceased
- Respecting our Flag and the precious freedoms it symbolizes

"America is solely unique in that it was conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." (**Abraham Lincoln**) Our forefathers founded this nation on the concept that all citizens would equally enjoy freedom and opportunity; would be allowed cultural and political diversity; and would unite with other citizens of the nation to spread patriotism and loyalty to our country. Part of demonstrating Americanism and patriotic spirit can be achieved by members who:

- Show proper respect and care for their flags
- Promote Flag education and good citizenship in their schools and communities
- Strive to be good citizens who spread patriotism
- Pledge allegiance to our country, our state, our community, and our fellow citizens

As members of The Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, it is our responsibility to help citizens of all ages, races, gender, and social status to be good Americans.

This year and in the future, we are encouraged to use more than acronyms when referencing these important terms: **Prisoners of War, Missing in Action, and Killed in Action** generate a much stronger reaction than POW, MIA, and KIA. Use **#MoreThanLetters** when sharing information about any special programs, stories, or ceremonies honoring Prisoners of War, Missing in Action, or Killed in Action service members. According to The



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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & DEADLINES

- ✓ Flag Education
- ✓ Promote
#AuxiliaryPatriotism
- ✓ POW-MIA Recognition
- ✓ Star Family Recognition
- ✓ Community Patriotic
Events
- ✓ Americanism Coloring,
Poster, and Essay
Contests*

*Deadlines

Entries received by:

District – March 30th

Department – April 15th



U.S. Department of Defense website, more than 80,000 American Service personnel are missing from previous conflicts and 38,000 are estimated to be recoverable. There are over 4,000 unaccounted-for Illinois citizens. The Defense POW/MIA Agency is committed to providing accounting to their families and the nation until they are home. Let's do something extra this year in their honor by sharing their stories, hosting a special program, meeting their families, and/or attending or organizing a POW/MIA Day ceremony on September 15, 2023.

When many of our military people leave the service, they can feel displaced, depressed, and lost. They can be suffering from battle fatigue or exposure to trauma. They may also be feeling stress from being out of uniform, without their comrades, and lacking a common mission with those around them. We, as Auxiliary members, can help provide a new community for Veterans and their families. By observing Auxiliary traditions and rituals, we can create an environment that helps members:

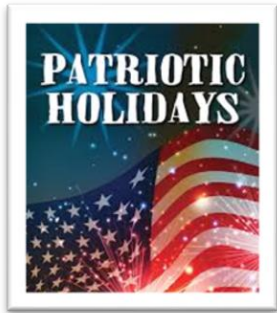
- Embody brother/sisterhood
- Protect the peace in our Posts
- Encourage respect and camaraderie between members
- Bond into a unified tribe (community)

It is important to know our American and Auxiliary traditions. They bond our members together, tie us to the past, and give us a strong foundation on which to build our future. The Patriotic Instructor should take time to understand Auxiliary rituals and traditions as well as the Federal Flag Code. It is his/her job to help Auxiliary members understand these traditions and ceremonies and to help educate the public about proper Flag etiquette and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. All members can learn more by logging into Malta member resources and viewing Understanding Auxiliary Traditions as well as referencing the VFW Auxiliary Podium edition: Bylaws and Ritual.

Flag education includes the proper display, proper care, and respectful conduct around our nation's symbol. Taking this knowledge to the classroom in your area is an important way to help shape young citizens into patriotic, responsible adults. Recognizing a community member, an organization, or a business with a certificate of appreciation for proper flag display can lift spirits and promote patriotism.

Visit [VFW.org/community/flag etiquette](https://www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette) for information on the history of our flag and the US Flag code.





Celebrating patriotic holidays gives us the opportunity as an auxiliary to show our communities that we support patriotism, our veterans and their families, and our country. Listed below are many of the most recognized Patriotic Holidays.

- **National Vietnam War Veterans Day, March 29,** marks the anniversary of when the last combat forces departed South Vietnam
- **Loyalty Day, May 1,** 10,000 VFW members staged a rally in New York to promote patriotism in 1930. Adopted in 1949, it became a holiday.
- **Armed Forces Day, 3rd Saturday in May,** pays tribute to those currently serving
- **Memorial Day, May 30 (traditional),** honors service members we have lost
- **Flag Day, June 14,** celebrates "The Stars and Stripes"
- **Independence Day, July 4,** Declaration of Independence adopted in 1776
- **Patriot Day, September 11,** a day to remember those who perished in the attack on the United States in 2001
- **POW/MIA Recognition Day, 3rd Friday in September,** honors the commitments and sacrifices made by our nation's Prisoners of War and those still Missing in Action
- **Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, last Sunday in September,** a day to show our gratitude and respect for our Gold Star Families
- **Veterans Day, November 11,** a day to honor all veterans, living and deceased who fought in America's battles past and present
- **Pearl Harbor Day, December 7,** a day of remembrance when Japan attacked U.S military and naval bases at Pearl Harbor in 1941

Military Flags Order of Precedence: According to The Department of Defense guidelines, military flags should be displayed (from left to right) Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard.






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

Brothers and sisters, wear your red, white, and blue, fly your flags, celebrate, and educate on our patriotic holidays, be proud of your patriotism, and "**Be A Warrior**" when you are fighting for our Veterans and their causes. These are things you will never regret.

Visit Malta Member resources for more information on the National Program, Patriotic Holidays, Flag Education, POW/MIA Recognition, and other resources for promoting patriotism at vfwauxiliary.org.

DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS CONTESTS

- 1. The Coloring Contest** is for preschool (ages 3-5) and all kindergarten children. The coloring page is included in the program. Auxiliaries should forward winners to District Chairman for judging. Winning entries should be divided into the following categories: 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, 5-year-olds, and Kindergarten. District Chairman must submit winners to the Department Americanism Chairman no later than April 15, 2024. Be sure the child's name, age, Pre-K or Kindergarten, school or daycare (if it applies), Auxiliary, and District number are on the back of the page.A circular graphic with the words "COLORING CONTEST!" in a stylized, bubbly font. It is surrounded by green leaves and a yellow pencil.
- 2. The Poster Contest** is for students in First-Third grades. The poster should be no larger than 14"x 22" and should be white. Any coloring medium can be used (crayons, pencils, markers, etc.). The student's name, age, grade, school name (or home school), Auxiliary, and District number should be on the back of the poster. This year's theme is "**We Are Warriors For America**". Auxiliaries should forward winning entries to the District Chairman for judging. The District Chairman must submit winners to the Department Americanism Chairman no later than April 15, 2024.A graphic showing a child sitting on a large, colorful, rainbow-colored scroll that is shaped like a ribbon. The child is holding a pencil.
- 3. The Essay Contest** is for students in the Fourth and Fifth Grades. The essay should be typed or legibly written in blue or black ink. It should also have a cover sheet that lists the student's name, age and grade, school or home school, Auxiliary, and District
A graphic showing several colorful letter tiles arranged to spell out the word "ESSAY".

number. Winning entries from the Auxiliary should be submitted to the District Chairman for judging. The District Chairman must submit winners to the Department Americanism Chairman no later than April 15, 2024. This year's theme is "**We Are Warriors For America.**"

Note for all Department contests: You may choose one winner for every 15 entries in each age category. These winners are to be forwarded to the next level for judging. District Americanism Chairmen should provide their Auxiliaries with submission dates for District judging. Remember to keep this project fun. We are encouraging students to be creative and use their imaginations while learning about patriotism.

AMERICANISM

Program Awards

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Auxiliary Awards

1. A citation to each Auxiliary that is reported in the Americanism Program by December 31, 2023.
2. An award to one Auxiliary hosting the most outstanding activity and/or event that educates its community that our VFW Auxiliary acronyms are **"more than letters"**. Entry form is due to the Department Chairman by March 31, 2024.
3. An award to one Auxiliary with the best media promotion of **"more than letters"**. This report must be received by the Department Chairman by April 10, 2024, and should include information, pictures, news articles, etc. showing how this was achieved.
4. An award to one Auxiliary Chairman with the best promotion of all parts of the Americanism program. To qualify, the Auxiliary Chairman must submit a report to the Department Chairman by April 10, 2024. Monthly reports are encouraged.

District Awards

1. A citation to each District Chairman with 100% of his/her Auxiliaries in the District reported in the Americanism program by December 31, 2023.
2. An award to the District Chairman with the best promotion of all parts of the Americanism program. To qualify, the District Chairman must submit a report to the Department Chairman by April 10, 2024. Reports should be submitted within 30 days of the meeting.

Individual Awards

1. An award to each 1st place winner in the Coloring Contest. One winner will be chosen in each of the following categories: Pre-K 3-year-olds, Pre-K 4-year-olds, Pre-K 5-year-olds, and Kindergarten.
2. An award to each of the 1st place winners in the poster contest. One winner will be chosen from each of the three grades eligible to enter this contest.

3. An award to each of the 1st place winners in the essay contest. One winner will be chosen from the 4th grade and one from the 5th grade.

NATIONAL AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community that our VFW Auxiliary acronyms are "more than letters."
 - Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that educates its community that our Auxiliary acronyms are "**more than letters**". Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to the Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2024, for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly from National Headquarters.

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

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