



Department of Missouri VFW Auxiliary
Americanism Program &
Patriotic Instructor
2025-2026

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***“One Flag, One Land, One Heart, One Hand, One Nation Evermore.”
Oliver Wendell Holmes***

Patriotism is defined as the love for and loyalty to one’s country, often manifested through actions like participating in civic duties, supporting national values, and showing respect for the nation’s symbols.

Our National Americanism Ambassador Diana Russell-Milton stated “Honoring and respecting the American Flag is significant for several reasons. It is a tribute to the sacrifices and service our veterans made, and it is a symbol of our national unity and identity.”

As we begin the 2025-2026 Program year, let us concentrate on our love of country and our American Flag, and all it represents.

Education

We have a responsibility to educate the community around us about our nation’s patriotic symbols and traditions such as the American Flag, National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance, and how to display and honor these symbols.

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.

Examples of ways you can engage your community:

- Get involved in schools – The youth are our future, and we have the perfect opportunity to start early with teaching the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem, as well as respect for the American Flag.
- Recognition of Community Flag Display – Present a certificate of appreciation to a community member, business or organization who displays the American Flag properly according to the U.S. Flag Code.
- Partner with civic organizations and other groups to spread awareness about the significance of the Flag and its role in American history.

- Flag Retirement Ceremony – Your Post and Auxiliary can set up a collection site for worn flags, then hold a ceremony and invite the community. This is an excellent way to educate on the proper way to retire the American Flag.
- Promote Patriotism – One of the best ways to promote patriotism is by celebrating patriotic holidays. You can involve the entire family and community, putting a spotlight on your Auxiliary and all you do for veterans. You can find a list of dates on MALTA.

POW/MIA Remembrance

Prisoner of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) Remembrance Day is observed on the third Friday in September. It is dedicated to those who endured captivity or remained unaccounted for while serving our nation. By continuing to observe this day, we are ensuring that their sacrifices are never forgotten.



Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher 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. The deadline for applications to the local VFW is October 31. For more information go to www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/teacher-of-the-year.

Patriotic Instructor



The Patriotic Instructor is responsible for educating members about traditions and ceremonies of the organization. They take the time to understand the VFW Auxiliary Ritual and the Federal Flag Code. They must be prepared at each meeting to assist new members regarding the raps of the gavel, standing at attention, or parade rest, etc. The *Understanding Auxiliary Traditions* help sheet and video are available in MALTA Resources and is a great reference. We must mentor the new members that we bring in if we expect them to feel welcomed and wanted in the organization.

National Award for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event displaying or educating others about proper ways to display and respect the flag.
 - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that host the most outstanding activity and/or event educating others about proper ways to display and respect the American Flag.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2026, for judging.

Department Award for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event that promotes patriotism through the distribution of American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags.
 - First Place - Citation and \$20 goes to one Auxiliary in each of the four Program Divisions.
 - Second Place – Citation goes to one Auxiliary in each of the four Program Divisions.



Always ***“Be the Reason a Veteran Smiles Today”***, as we travel ***“From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Our Veterans – Who Keep Us Free”***.