



Americanism-Patriotic Instructor

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Celebrating American Heritage and Patriotism

The Essence of Being American

Being an American often brings tears to my eyes as I reflect on our nation's rich history and the countless sacrifices made by those who have fought—and continue to fight—to uphold the ideals enshrined in our Constitution by the founding fathers. The notion that "all are created equal" held a different meaning 250 years ago at our nation's birth. Today, it compels us to respect all those who step foot on our soil to pursue the American Dream. As a melting pot, we believe in freedom of speech, religion, and choice. It is our responsibility to keep these ideals alive, to teach the significance of our flag, our creed, and our pledge, and to resist anyone who seeks to undermine these dreams.

The Colors of Our Flag

Red, White, and Blue: What Do They Mean?

- **Red:** Symbolizes valor and hardiness; it represents courage, bravery, and the readiness to fight to protect our values.
- **White:** Stands for purity and innocence, embodying the aspiration for a just and equal society.
- **Blue:** Represents vigilance and justice, signifying the strength to uphold justice and remain watchful.

Honoring Our Heroes – including veterans, their families, and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation.

POW/MIA Recognition

Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) are honored during ceremonies to acknowledge military personnel who are held captive or have gone missing. This ceremony is performed at every event until they return or are accounted for.

Star Symbols

What Do Stars Mean When Displayed in a Window?

- **Gold Star:** Represents parents who have lost a child in combat. They are shown respect by not applauding them during ceremonies.
- **Blue Star:** Represents a family with an active member serving in the military.
- **Silver Star:** Signifies a family member that is a wounded, ill, or injured veteran from any branch of the Armed Forces.
- **White/Green Star:** Represents a family member lost to suicide from any branch.

Celebrating Our Nation's 250th Birthday

Let us celebrate our nation's 250th birthday with pride and honor. Communities across the country will host parades and celebrations to pay tribute to those who founded our great nation and those who continue to protect it. At the State Convention in June 2027, a special prize will be awarded to the Auxiliary that provides the most creative representation of Americanism through a video, picture, or report. This includes teaching the pledge, honoring veterans, teaching flag etiquette, participating in patriotic events, or creating an engaging point-of-purchase (POP) sign.

American Flag Rocket

Build a flag rocket to distribute at parades, schools, or events at your post. A video tutorial will be posted on the Department website, allowing everyone to learn how to make it. Witnessing the joy on the faces of children and parents as they learn something new about our flag will warm your heart and reignite your pride in it.



“POP” Program

Use "POPs" (Point of Purchase) to promote Americanism. During WWII, posters were used to recruit for the war effort and to sell War Bonds. Examples include “Uncle Sam Needs You” and “Rosie the Riveter.” Print these posters from the internet, display them at your post, and use them during patriotic holidays to capture attention and promote Americanism.

Fall Conference

Wreaths Across America: Remember, Honor, and Teach

If you haven't yet participated in this tribute to our fallen veterans, mark your calendar! Founded in 2007 by Morrill Worcester, Wreaths Across America is a nonprofit dedicated to honoring veterans by laying homemade wreaths on their graves nationwide. This year, wreaths will be laid on December 19, 2026. To honor past veterans from your post, sponsor wreaths using order forms in the president's packets. For more information about participating cemeteries, visit the Wreaths Across America website: www.wreathscrossamerica.org. In honor of the United States' 250th anniversary, the 2026 theme is **Remember Me**. This emphasizes the importance of recognizing the individual lives behind America's military service. Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America, explains, “While we often honor service members collectively, each one has a name, a family, and a story. Their sacrifices are deeply personal, and their stories shape the freedoms we enjoy today.” You can join the initiative to share the story of someone who served and may have been forgotten by time. By sharing their stories, we ensure future generations learn about their contributions. To participate, visit the Remember Me story-sharing page. <https://app.memoryfox.net/story/wreaths-across-america/remember-me> Together, let's honor their memories and share their stories, ensuring their sacrifices are never forgotten.

Spring Conference

Honor Flight

Honor Flight is a nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring veterans by providing free trips to Washington, D.C. Priority is given to WWII and Korean War veterans. Volunteers are needed to escort these veterans. For those unable to travel, donations are welcome to support this memorable experience. A \$5 “Mail Call” thank you card order form will be included in the President's Packet. If you have the honor of escorting a veteran during the 2026 flight, please share photos to be displayed at the conferences and on the Department website. Flight schedules are announced approximately six months before departure on the Honor Flight website.

Awards

National Awards for Auxiliaries

A citation and \$25 will be awarded to one VFW Auxiliary that creates the most unique POP sign or meme showcasing the VFW Auxiliary. Entry form (required) is available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Submissions must be received before March 31, 2027. Citations will be mailed directly to the winning Auxiliary from VFW Aux National Headquarters, and the prize money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Department Awards for Auxiliaries

The Auxiliary with the most outstanding Americanism program will receive a citation and monetary awards: \$20 for 1st place, \$15 for 2nd place, and \$10 for 3rd place for each membership group.

“Serving America’s Heroes” because we stay “Busy as a Bee Working Together for our Veterans.”