

AMERICANISM/PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR

BULLETIN 1 – 2020-2021

The Americanism Ambassador this year has asked that we share what Americanism means to each of us as an individual. To her, Americanism is pride in being from and living in the United States and devotion to our flag and our nation's traditions. I agree with these observations/feelings, but would like to add a couple of things. To quote General James Mattis (former Department of Defense Secretary who, in case you didn't know, lives in Richland, Washington), I believe that Americanism is in our DNA. For those of us who are Americans by birth, it is automatically a love of country and the responsibilities that come with it (wishing well to our country, defending its borders, constitution, supremacy, respect of the law, and duty to protect each individual's life and property). For those of us who are Americans by choice, we have learned to love our country by putting the needs and requirements of the country before our own self-interests. Most of you know that I am retired from the U. S. Army and am disciplined, trained, and proficient regarding my tasks and duties. Simply, patriotism is not much more to me than to quote the last part of the Soldier's Creed: "I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life"!

The major items that need to be addressed for the year of 2020-2021 are PROMOTE PATRIOTISM through teaching traditions, honor, and respect for our flag, to include the pledge and national anthem; recognition and special programs of PATRIOTIC DAYS (list of many of these days is on website - if you can't or don't want to have a serious ceremony, just mention something about the special day to a couple of people you come into contact with during the day – this is "celebrating/honoring/remembering"); POW/MIA RECOGNITION; and support of and honor to our BLUE/GOLD/SILVER/WHITE STAR FAMILIES. To accomplish all these, following the questions on the year-end report is a good way to get started.

The Americanism chair for the year within your Auxiliary and your District is also the Patriotic Instructor. Having these two as one was changed several years ago by National VFW Auxiliary. The major "job" of the Patriotic Instructor is to educate members and all community members on the proper care, respect, etiquette, display, conduct around, and salute (either the heart salute or the military hand salute) during the movement of the Flag (in parades, meetings, etc.), during the Pledge of Allegiance, the playing of the National Anthem, 21-gun salute, and Taps. This necessary job of education all boils down to a code of ethics and good citizenship – which cannot be developed overnight by edict or official pronouncement. It is developed by years of practice and performance of duty according to high ethical standards. It must be self-policing. Without such a code, a professional group (such as the VFW and its Auxiliary) soon loses its identity and effectiveness. Let's be proud, not arrogant; and let's be humble, not braggarts! It sounds like its old and honest, but it projects an aura of Americanism at its best.

If any of you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. If I don't know the answer, I will work hard to find one!

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