

AMERICANISM/PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION – 2020-2021

We've all heard this many times and have volunteered to carry out these ideals just by being a member of this organization. "Americanism is an unfailing love of country; loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the Flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity." This year, the National Americanism Ambassador 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. You must realize that my comments are coming from someone who was called "ultra-nauseatingly super patriotic" during the Vietnam demonstrations in the 60's when it wasn't cool to be patriotic! 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,"

Following are the major parts of the Americanism program which need to be addressed for the upcoming year: flag education, promote patriotism, POW/MIA Recognition, remembering, honoring and providing assistance to our blue/gold/silver/white star families. To accomplish this mission, following are some guidelines.

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR:

- Educate members, school children, and community on the proper salute to the U. S. Flag
- Educate all on proper recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
- Keep the meeting room in keeping with the Ritual

FLAG EDUCATION:

- Educate members, school children, and community on proper care of U. S. Flag
- Educate all on proper respect of U. S. Flag
- Educate all on proper etiquette concerning U. S. Flag
- Educate all on proper display of U. S. Flag
- Educate all on acceptable conduct around U. S. Flag
- Educate all on acceptable retirement of U. S. Flag

RESPECT FOR THE FLAG – ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY:

- Educating youth about patriotism is an important step on the path to good citizenship
- Recognize citizens and businesses when they take care and time to display our "Stars and Stripes"
- Have a Flag Retirement event

PROMOTE PATRIOTISM:

- Celebrate any and all patriotic days which can involve the entire community. There are many, many patriotic days per month which need to be honored and remembered. You will find a list of these days under Americanism on our Department website. Take a look at the July 2020 copy of our VFW Auxiliary magazine – pages 18 and 19. Georgia told me that she didn't even know that there was a National Purple Heart Day until she read it in my bulletin!

POW/MIA RECOGNITION:

- Have a ceremony (i.e. Missing Man Table) to educate the community and honor special veterans

HONORING BLUE/GOLD/SILVER/WHITE STAR FAMILIES:

- Recognize these families within your community at a special dinner to ceremony (or even a quick phone call to say "Hi" - our little Auxiliary in Custer has two Gold Star families and one White Star family so they can't be hard to find
- Order Fallen Hero Banners (one or more) for any event you might be having from dinners to parades. I can provide contact information.

While you are accomplishing these missions, don't forget to invite the director of your local museum (they might even deliver a speech for your event), the members of the local sheriff's office, police department, or fire department, your local Armed Forces recruiters, local teachers, your neighbors, coworkers, all who attend the local senior center, and friends. Also – don't forget to invite me or, at least, inform me of what you are doing!

Let's continue to soar to new heights as we honor our mission to serve veterans.

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