



## Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Americanism – August/September 2025

[www.vfwauxmi.org](http://www.vfwauxmi.org)

Facebook Page: Americanism - Michigan

**National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free***

**Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All***

"We are off to a good start for this program year. Thank you for the reports that you are submitting. The first quarter has just ended, and we have a good number of Auxiliaries that have reported so far. Before we get into the meat of the program, there's just a couple of paperwork issues that I'd like to clear up for people. You are doing a wonderful job of reporting the flags that you are distributing; however, please make sure that you indicate in the body of the report how many flags you distributed. I don't need to know the size of the flags, just how many and whether they are American flags or POW/MIA flags. Also, I need to know how much you spent on the flags. Many of our Auxiliaries keep flags on hand for different events and projects. There is still a cost that is associated with that. For example, say your Auxiliary purchased 1,000 flags for \$300. That means that each flag cost \$0.30. Therefore, if you used 200 flags for 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the dollar amount listed would be \$60. Lastly, if someone gives you donations, this does not get reported (except for maybe Buddy Poppy). In the report where it asks for "DOLLARS", it refers to a cost to the Auxiliary. Hope this helps.

**Teacher of the Year** – Now that school is getting back in session, you will want to consider teachers in your area that you would like to nominate for the Teacher of the Year. There are three categories – Elementary (K-5), Junior High (6-8) and High School (9-12). Rules and submission form can be found on the Department of Michigan VFW website under Programs/Teacher of the Year. An essay of not more than 350 words must accompany the submission form. Nominations must be submitted to your VFW Post by October 31, 2025. **Please note, I had the date on the Guide Sheet incorrect. The deadline is October 31, 2025, not October 1, 2025. Sorry for the error.**



**POW/MIA Recognition** – One of our Department awards this year is for the Best Overall event/activity of POW/MIA recognition. Plan an event or activity to recognize those in your Post or community who were prisoners of war or for families of those whose family members were missing in action. If you don't have anyone from your Post or community, come up with a way that you can recognize those who were prisoners of war or are still missing in action. How can you promote the POW/MIA's so they are never forgotten. Have you signed up for Action Corps Weekly? In each issue, there are POW/MIA service men and

women who have been found and brought home. Develop an educational pamphlet or article for your local paper. Maybe you can research those who are identified as coming home and find their families to send a card of condolence or thank you for their family member who paid the ultimate sacrifice. A very popular theme throughout the VFW is "*Honor the Dead by Serving the Living*" and of course, President Debbie's theme, "*We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All.*" Get those recognition projects out there so our heroes are **never** forgotten. Don't forget to report what you do for **POW/MIA Day on September 20, 2025.**

**Star Family Recognition** – One of our Achievement goals for this year is to host and/or participate in an event/activity to recognize the Star Families. There are countless ways to accomplish this goal – have a meal/tea for them, present them with a Citation of Thanks for their family member, send them cards, present them with the Star flags for the window display, and so many more. I have a little project in mind and I'm going to start with GOLD STAR FAMILIES, so I am challenging all the Auxiliaries to provide

me with a list of names of your Post and Auxiliary members and members of your community that you know who Gold Star Family members are. For each person, please provide the name of their family member who died in service to our country, the branch of service and, if possible, where and when. You can send this to me via email at [legalblaze@aol.com](mailto:legalblaze@aol.com). I will need these lists as soon as possible, but at any time of the year, I can revise my list. Of course, by providing me with this list, you have participated in an activity to recognize a star family so you can submit a report for it.

Gold Star Families – Family members of military members who have died in the line of duty. These are parents, siblings, spouse, and children of the veteran. This term dates to WWI when the first banners were hung in the windows of families who had someone in the military who died. In 1928, Grace Darling started the Gold Star Mothers organization. Here is an interesting fact that I have learned – I always thought that the veteran had to die in combat for the family to receive Gold Star recognition. This is not true. Gold Star recognition is given for the family of any veteran who died while serving during any time of conflict. This includes those who died in non-combat circumstances such as at a US base on continental soil.

Blue Star Family – Immediate family members of a U.S. military service member who is currently serving on active duty. The Blue Star banners began in 1917 and prominently hung in the windows. Each banner can have 1-5 stars. If one of the service members dies during a time of military conflict, the star is changed to gold. The Blue Star Family organization began in 2009.

Silver Star Family – The families have a service member who has been wounded, fallen ill, or suffered injuries during their service.

Green Star Family – Families have suffered a military loss through suicide from any branch of service.

White Star Family – These families include first responders and frontline workers who have experienced a military loss through suicide.



Gold Star Mother's V-J Day Ceremony – WWII veterans are honored and commemorated at this service. **August 10, 2025**, at noon at the White Chapel Cemetery in Troy, Michigan. The ceremony starts at noon so please try to be there by 11:30am to get parking and make your way to the WWII Four Freedoms Memorial area.

## **HOLIDAYS/OBSERVANCES FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER**

**August 4 – U.S. Coast Guard Day** – The U.S. Coast Guard was established on August 4, 1790, which was originally called the Revenue-Marine by Congress and authorized by the Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton to build the first 10 Revenue Service cutters for the purpose of enforcement of the first tariffs enacted under the U.S. Constitution. The Coast Guard received its present name by an act of Congress signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson on January 28, 1915. This law merged the Revenue Cutter Service with the U.S. Life-Saving Service to provide the nation with a single maritime service dedicated to saving life at sea and enforcement of the U.S. Maritime Laws.

**August 7 – Purple Heart Day** – The day the first Purple Heart – then known as the Badge of Merit, was awarded by George Washington in 1782. The Badge of Merit was renamed as the Purple Heart in 1932. It signifies those who were wounded in combat and for commendable actions. In 1944, it was given specifically for those who were wounded or killed in action and General Douglas MacArthur was the first recipient of the modern Purple Heart during WWII.

**August 10 – Agent Orange Awareness Day** – Agent Orange was a herbicide used by U.S. troops during the Vietnam War to defoliate forests and eliminate enemy cover. It is believed that Agent Orange was first used on August 10, 1961. Because of the lasting effects on veterans leading to serious health issues including cancer and birth defects, the observance day was begun in 1988. The intent was to reach out to Vietnam Veterans who may have been exposed to the chemical and encourage them to seek medical assistance and support through the Veterans Affairs program.

**August 14 – National Spirit of '45 Day** – This observance was enacted by Congress in 2010 to raise awareness and recognize the achievements and sacrifices of America's Greatest Generation who fought in WWII. It coincides with the announcement on August 14, 1945 of the end of the war. The intent is to idolize the characteristics of the WWII generation which were seen as personal responsibility, humility, integrity, frugality, grit and forbearance.

**August 16 – National Airborne Day** – Began by President George W. Bush in 2002 to honor the contributions of the Army's use of airborne troops in all campaigns, theaters and peacekeeping missions from the first paratroopers in 1942 through the soldiers of the 101<sup>st</sup> "Screaming Eagles". The first parachute jump occurred in 1940 at Fort Benning, Georgia. The day is intended to serve as a reminder of the bravery, skill and sacrifice of airborne forces.

**August 19 – National Aviation Day** – Established and codified under President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was established on the birthday of Orville Wright to promote interest in aviation. The proclamation may direct all federal buildings and installations to fly the U.S. flag that day.

**August 26 – Women's Equality Day** – Established in 1971, it coincides with the date of the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which granted women the right to vote. Tennessee was the final state to sign the Women's Suffrage Amendment and it was signed into law by the Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby, on August 26, 1920.

**September is National Service Dog month** – A great way to honor the service dogs who provide care and assistance to our veterans would be to donate to President Debbie's Special Project – **Blue Star Service Dogs**.

**September 1 – Labor Day** – President Grover Cleveland signed into law Labor Day as a federal holiday on June 28, 1894 - to be celebrated on the first Monday of September. The effort began in 1887 to establish a day to recognize workers who contributed and sacrificed for the labor movement and who were the backbone of the American Industrial Revolution. It was not until after the devastation and death of several workers during the Pullman Strike in Chicago that Congress passed the law to establish Labor Day.

**September 2 – V-J Day** - Also known as Victory over Japan Day. This is the day in 1945 that Imperial Japan surrendered in WWII, effectively ending the war. The formal surrender documents were signed aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, Japan.

**September 7-13 – National Suicide Prevention Week** – Although suicide is a world-wide concern, think of our veterans who are suffering in silence. Familiarize yourselves with the signs of depression, PTSD and crisis in our veterans. Reach out and you may save a life.

**September 11 – Patriots Day aka 9/11** – Commemorate the attacks by al-Qaeda on the United States on September 11, 2001. Nineteen Islamic terrorists hijacked four commercial airline planes. The first two crashed into the Twin Towers in New York City, the third crashed into the U.S. Pentagon and the fourth into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The attacks killed 2,977 people making it the deadliest terrorist attack in history. As a result, the U.S. government launched its global war on terror.

**September 13 – Uncle Sam Day** – Established by President George HW Bush in 1989. The nickname “Uncle Sam” became synonymous with the U.S. government. However, the date was chosen to coincide with the birthday of Samuel Wilson – a meat packer from New York who supplied barrels of meat for the U.S. troops during the War of 1812. He stamped each barrel with “U.S” and the soldiers started calling him Uncle Sam. The symbolic picture of Uncle Sam was first published in Harper’s Weekly in 1861; however, the modern image of Uncle Sam was created by Thomas Nash and published on June 29, 1872.

**September 16 – Mayflower Day** – This is the day in 1620 that 102 Pilgrims set sail from Plymouth, England seeking religious freedom from the British government.

**September 17 – Constitution Day/Citizenship Day** – Established by Congress on February 29, 1952. It commemorates the date of September 17, 1787 when delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia signed and adopted the U.S. Constitution.

**September 18 – U.S. Air Force Day** – The U.S. Air Force was established on this date in 1947 with the signing of the National Security Act by President Harry S. Truman.

**September 19 – POW/MIA Recognition Day** – Congress passed a resolution authorizing the observance of POW/MIA Recognition Day on July 18, 1979. It provided that the President would declare the date. Since 1986, the date was established as the third Friday of September.

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