

Promoting Patriotism: September's Days of Honor and Remembrance
2025–2026 National Americanism Ambassador Diana Russell-Milton

As summer fades quickly into fall, we prepare for a season filled with reflection, remembrance and patriotic pride. September is especially significant — it holds **four key Patriotic Days**. Now is the perfect time to educate our communities on the meaning behind each of these observances and inspire awareness and appreciation for the sacrifices they represent.

To explore all our nation's Patriotic Days and access detailed information, visit **MALTA's Member Resources**. Select **Americanism**, then scroll to **Promote Patriotism** — you'll find valuable materials to help share and celebrate these important days.

Patriot Day – September 11

Also known as the **National Day of Service and Remembrance**, Patriot Day honors the memory of the **2,977 people** who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon and in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Thousands more were injured, and the impact continues to ripple through our nation.

Commemorative events take place at the **National September 11 Memorial** in lower Manhattan, where the names of the victims from both the 2001 attacks and the 1993 World Trade Center bombing are read aloud by family members. The **September 11 Memorial & Museum** stands as a powerful tribute — not only to those we lost, but to the resilience of the survivors and the heroic efforts of first responders. It also marks the anniversary of the conclusion of the 9/11 rescue and recovery operations.

POW/MIA Recognition Day – Third Friday in September
September 19, 2025

National POW/MIA Recognition Day honors the commitment and sacrifices made by our nation's **prisoners of war** and those who are still **missing in action**. It is a solemn reminder that we **will never forget them**.

Since 1982, the **POW/MIA flag** has flown just below the American Flag at the White House and at various federal buildings, military installations and memorials across the

those who have not returned home.

American POW Statistics

According to a **Congressional Research Service** report:

- **World War II:** 130,201 U.S. service members were imprisoned; 14,072 died in captivity.
- **Korean War:** 7,140 were imprisoned; 2,701 died.
- **Post-1991 Conflicts:** 37 service members have been held as POWs; *none remain in captivity.*

Still Missing

According to the **Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)**, **83,114 Americans** who served in past conflicts remain missing:

- **73,515** from **World War II** (*approximate due to limited/conflicting data*)
- **7,841** from the **Korean War**
- **1,626** from the **Vietnam War**
- **126** from the **Cold War**
- **6** from **conflicts since 1991**

How to Honor POW/MIA Recognition Day

Here are ways your Post and community can meaningfully observe this day: **set a POW/MIA Missing Man Table**, **conduct a POW/MIA Ceremony** with your VFW and VFW Auxiliary at your Post, **fly the POW/MIA Flag** at your Post, home or workplace or **educate your community** on the importance of remembering our POW/MIAs.

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

Constitution Day & Citizenship Day – September 17

This day marks the signing of the **U.S. Constitution** on September 17, 1787, by 39 delegates at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. The Constitution begins with the powerful words:

“We the People...”

In 2004, Congress officially renamed the observance to **Constitution Day and Citizenship Day** to also recognize all who have become U.S. citizens, whether by birth or naturalization. It is a day to reflect on our rights, responsibilities and what it means to be a citizen of this great nation.

Gold Star Mother's & Family Day – Sunday, September 28

Observed annually on the **last Sunday of September**, **Gold Star Mother's and Family Day** honors and remembers the **mothers and immediate families** of service members who died in the line of duty.

The term "Gold Star" comes from the tradition of military

- ☆ **Blue Star:** A family member is serving in active duty
- ☆ **Silver Star:** A family member was wounded or injured in a war zone
- ☆ **Gold Star:** A family member was killed during active duty — representing ultimate **sacrifice for freedom**

Gold Star families bear the immeasurable pain of loss, yet they also carry immense pride in their loved one's service. As President Barack Obama stated in his **2011 Proclamation**:

"Gold Star mothers and families know the immeasurable cost of fighting for the ideals we believe in, and they know the pride that comes with exemplary service to America."

— President Barack Obama, September 23, 2011

Let us remember and honor their sacrifice — not just in September, but always.

GOD BLESS AMERICA

Let's lead with purpose, educate with passion and continue to promote patriotism in every community across this great nation. Together, we ensure that those who have served and sacrificed are **never forgotten**.