Youth Activities programs can be a big asset for your Post and District when they are promoted in your communities. Issue press releases and introduce these programs in the community. People like to hear of organizations doing things for veterans as well as local youth.

When choosing your post and district chairpersons make sure to appoint those who are energetic and knowledgeable of VFW programs. Consult the Youth Activities Manual found on the VFW national website. It contains everything you will need to make your program a success. This includes Patriots Pen Essay Writing as well as the complete Scouting Program.

When approaching the various types of youth activities, develop a plan of implementation. Allow plenty of time for press releases, advertising as well as contact with community leaders. Local papers like to hear of different youth programs, so it is usually easy to get coverage. Our youth is our future, and can strengthen our Posts within their communities. We are promoting good citizenship and showing young people the joys of service.

Informed Post, District and Auxiliary Chairpersons are vital within our organizations. They provide a vital link between the community and today’s youth. Contact your local schools, scouting organizations, as well as the many church groups of your areas. Check out the various kind of activities which they already have and try to build on them. Be excited about our programs. Be creative and work in new programs with local teachers and scout leaders. Be sure to honor these young people with certificates, trophies, plaques and cash awards to help keep them excited and motivated.

Encourage your Posts and Districts to report about their programs on the X sheets. Reporting on a monthly basis makes it easier and more accurate.

Post Awards
There will be a $50.00 cash award and certificate for first place presented to the Posts who have the most hours, dollars, and member participation reported in the following membership categories:

- Membership Category 1 - Up to 150 Members
- Membership Category 2 - 151-300 Members
- Membership Category 3 - 300 Members and up

District Awards
There will be one District Plaque Award presented to the District who has the most hours, dollars, and member participation reported.
PATRIOT’S PEN
2020-2021 Theme: “What Is Patriotism To Me?”

Get started in your schools as soon as possible. Be sure to have all the information (entry forms, theme, rules and eligibility requirements, post award information as well as District and state information) when you approach your teachers to help you. Maybe even a copy of last year’s winning essay (which you can get a copy of from the VFW website). This year we are also putting all of the forms (entry, judging, bio, etc.) on the vfwil.org website. Make sure you coordinate with your Auxiliary, because working together can make it easier on everyone.

Rules
The contest is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students enrolled in a public, private, or parochial school or a home schooled study program within the United States, its’ territories and possessions; or enrolled in an overseas school as a dependent of the US Military or US Civilian personnel. (Foreign Exchange students are excluded)

The essay must be the contestant’s original work and the participants cannot refer to their race, disabilities, national origin, or identify themselves, their school, city or state, in any way within the essay. All essays must be typewritten and have to be no less than 300 or more than 400 words. A one letter word such as (a), will be counted as one word. Essays either under or above requirements will be disqualified. Posts and Auxiliaries are encouraged to work together in promoting the program.

Deadlines
Student Entry deadline is October 31 – essays must be in the hands of the Post Chairman no later than this date.
Post judging deadline November 15 – winning essays to the District Chairman by November 22, 2020.
District judging deadline is December 15 – Districts must have their District winner to the State Headquarters no later than December 20; complete with completed entry form, sponsoring Post and /or Auxiliary signature; a head and shoulder color/glossy photo and biography questionnaire from the Patriot’s Pen program. Department judging will be completed by January 10, 2021.

Top 3 entries will receive two nights lodging at the Department of Illinois Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen Awards Banquet and meeting weekend in Springfield.

The State Awards are:

1st Place - John H. Emery Youth, Pageantry and Patriotism Fund First Place Award in memory of Ronald Hubert …. $1,000 Cash
2nd Place - Gaye Hines Memorial Second Place Award ........................................................................................................$500 Cash
3rd Place Award - Raymond L. Moreland Memorial Third Place Award ......................................................................................$250 Cash

**The winner will be announced at the Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen Awards Banquet and the winner will read his or her winning essay**

The Post sponsoring the State Winner will receive a beautifully engraved plaque at the State Convention.

NOTE: Posts can receive credit for Patriots Pen participation by making a cash donation to the Department of Illinois, VFW earmarked “Patriots Pen”.
- Posts with 100 members or more must donate $100.00
- Posts with less than 100 members must donate $50.00
Scout of the Year Program

Annually, the VFW honors Scouts who have been the recipient of one of the following awards: Eagle Scout Award, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Silver Award, or Sea Scout Quartermasters Award. Also, in order to be eligible for the honor, the Scout must be a Registered, active member of a Scout BSA Troop, Girl Scout Troop, Venturing Crew, or Sea Scout Ship who has risen above their peers in exemplifying the exceptional qualities of their rank. The National Scholarship award are as follows:

- $5000.00 1st Place Scholarship
- $3000.00 2nd Place Scholarship
- $1000.00 3rd Place Scholarship

The Department of Illinois will be making an Award to the First Place nominee from the Boy Scout of America programs and the First place Girl Scout of America nominee in the Following amount however, only one Scout will be advanced to the National Competition:

- $300.00 Cash Award - Boy Scouts of America Scout of the Year
- $300.00 Cash Award - Girl Scouts of America Scout of the Year

Each Post and District is urged to assign a liaison person to work closely with scout groups in your area. Each District should plan to have a District Judging to select their District nominee for either or both of these Awards.

This is a natural fit for the VFW, and will afford your Posts and Districts an opportunity to create activities that promote good Citizenship and Americanism.

Make an extra effort to involve your Posts and Districts in Scouting. The rewards are great for you as well as the Scouts. Through working with your local scouting groups you will also be able to assist and promote the scouts to work toward achieving their scouting goals. On the Post level you can establish a Post award of maybe a plaque or cash. Then nominate your Scout to your District or to the Department where they would have the opportunity of advancing to National.

Deadline dates for the Scout of the Year Award:

- Student Entry to Post – March 1
- Post Entry to State Headquarters – April 1
- State Winner to National – May 1

All the necessary forms needed are at www.vfw.org under Scout of the Year Scholarships.

Always remember you are invited to call if you have any questions or need any help. Let’s plan to make Youth Activities a priority in our Posts and Districts. These programs will allow you more visibility in your community; will allow you more opportunity for new member recruitment, as well as current members getting involved because they have children and grandchildren. Remember too, the Patriot’s Pen and Scouting programs can be a precursor for the Voice of Democracy Contest.
Patriot’s Pen Introduction Questionnaire

Representing VFW Post ____________ and its Auxiliary,

a ________________________________ at ________________________________
GRADE (6th, 7th or 8th) SCHOOL NAME

in ______________________________________
CITY

____________________________________
STUDENT’S NAME

The student is the Son/Daughter of

Mother: ___________________________

and

Father: ___________________________
What Is Patriot's Pen?
Conducted nationwide, this VFW-sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic theme. We invite you to join the more than 138,000 students who participated last year in this contest. The national winners will receive at least $500. The first-place national award is currently $5,000.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.

Big National Prizes
National awards total: $55,000
Prizes include the various amounts listed below:
1st: $5,000  7th: $1,750
2nd: $4,000  8-10th: $1,500
3rd: $3,500  11-12th: $1,250
4th: $2,750  13-23rd: $1,000
5th: $2,500  24-25th: $750
6th: $2,000  26-53rd: $500

The Internal Revenue Service requires that any recipient that receives more than a $599 award should receive a Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable. This may require the winner to provide their social security number.

How Does the Contest Work?
All entries begin at the Post level. The only exception is where schools/classes/youth groups have large numbers of students and wish to conduct their own competition, submitting one winner for each 15 students to the local VFW Post competition. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post. This participating Post should be within your local area and within your U.S. state of residence.

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by local VFW Posts. Post winners advance, one for every 15 entries, to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The one first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW national competition. The winner from each Department (state) then competes for the national prizes.

Who Can Enter?
Patriot’s Pen is open to 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students enrolled by the Oct. 31 deadline in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Home-schooled students also are eligible. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools can participate, too. (Foreign exchange students and former winners that placed in the National contest are excluded from the contest.)

Official Student Entry Form
Patriot’s Pen Competition
Entry Form Must Be Completed by All Contestants Please Print or Type Clearly

| Name: First, M.I., Last |
| Address |
| City, State, Zip |
| ( ) ___________________ | _____________________ |
| Phone | Email |
| Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy) | Gender | Grade in School | Essay Word Count |
| School Name, City, State |
| Teacher’s Name and Email (if applicable) |
| Parent/Guardian’s Name Phone/Email |

I Have Read and Understand the Contest Rules
Signature of Student Participant Date

To Be Completed by the VFW Post
I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post Level Patriot’s Pen Contest.
Post Commander/Chairman’s Signature Post 
VFW Auxiliary President/Chairman’s Signature
Post Address City, State, Zip
VFW Post Email
No. of students participation No. of winners advanced to District
Amt. of Post/Aux. awards $ 
Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (banquet, pins, etc.) $ 

To Be Completed by the VFW District
I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Patriot’s Pen Essay Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department finals.
District Chairman’s Signature Dist. #
Address City, State, Zip |
| ( ) ___________________ | _____________________ |
| Phone | Email |

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairman
I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Patriot’s Pen Essay Department Competition, and is our sole entry into the National Judging.
Department Chairman’s Signature |
| ( ) ___________________ | _____________________ |
| Daytime Phone | Email |

The winner has been notified that they are the first place Department winner on . Note: National Headquarters will contact your after this date to notify them of their national placement.
How Do I Get Started?
- Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot’s Pen writing competition.
- Contact a local VFW Post within your local area within your state and indicate your interest in participating.
- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its Auxiliary.
- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of Oct. 31, 2020. You can submit your essay and entry form electronically (by email) upon the Post’s approval. Entries sent to VFW National directly will be returned.

How Am I Judged?
You will be judged on how well you understand, develop and present the theme. A positive approach is recommended to express your viewpoint.

Knowledge of the theme is worth 50 points:
You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively.

Theme development is worth 55 points:
Answer all relevant facts about the theme such as the who, what, where, when and why. Relate the theme to your own experiences.

Clarity of ideas is worth 35 points:
Write your essay in an easy-to-understand format. Leave your reader with a clear understanding of your explanation of the theme.

What Is the Theme?
VFW’s Commander-in-Chief annually chooses the year’s theme. The 2020-21 theme is What is Patriotism to Me?

What Are the Rules?
- Essay length: 500-400 typewritten words (+ or - 5 words max).
- You must write your own essay.
- All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics and cannot be less than 300 words or greater than 400 words in length. (Essays under or over these word amounts will be eliminated.) Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.
- At any time during the contest additional participant personal information (i.e. SSN, photo, etc.) could be requested by the VFW.
- In no way may contestants identify themselves within their essay (including, but not limited to, your name, school, city, state, race or national origin.) Do not put your name on your essay. The entry form is your essay’s cover sheet. Secure the Official Student Entry Form with a staple or other fastener on top of your essay. Contestants are allowed to enter only once each year if otherwise eligible (one Post competition). Contestants found in violation of this rule will face elimination from the competition and will be required to return any and all prize money awarded or received.

The essay must be a contestant’s original work and a product of the contestant’s own thinking. The approach to the Patriot’s Pen theme should be positive and clearly focused. Poetry is not acceptable. Quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified wherever used. A contestant’s teacher, counselor or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling, but the content must remain the contestant’s. Contestants will be judged on the basis of their essay alone and are not required to present the essay orally. All essays become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW retains non-exclusive rights to use your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization’s programs and activities.

Deadline Information
To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring local VFW Post by midnight October 31, 2020.

Note:
If you need help finding a participating VFW Post in your area, follow these instructions:
First, visit vfw.org/FindaPost to “Find A VFW Post.” Be sure this Post is within the state you reside in.
If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) headquarters office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit vfw.org/contactus and look for “Find a State Contact” to get your VFW state office’s phone number and email.
If you need assistance, please email us at the VFW National Headquarters at youthscholarships@vfw.org.
DISTRICT PATRIOT'S PEN PARTICIPATION REPORT

DISTRICT NO. ______

DEPARTMENT OF ___________________________, VFW

The VFW Posts and Auxiliaries identified in this report in this District participated in the VFW annual Patriot's Pen Program.

GRAND TOTALS FOR POST COMPETITION: list totals taken from District report form(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Auxs</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Post Winners</th>
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<td>Advanced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monetary Awards</td>
<td>Addl. Money Expended</td>
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MONETARY VALUE OF DISTRICT COMPETITION (add County Councils if applicable):

- District Monetary Awards: $___________
- District Additional Expenses: $___________

Signed by: ___________________________________________ Date _______________

District Chairman

PLEASE ATTACH COMPLETED REPORT FORM(S) AND GIVE

THIS COMPLETED SUMMARY TO YOUR DEPARTMENT

PATRIOT'S PEN CHAIRMAN
## DISTRICT PATRIOT’S PEN REPORT FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POST #</th>
<th>AUXILIARY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS (need minimum of one)</th>
<th>NUMBER OF POST WINNERS ADVANCED (need min. of one)</th>
<th>MONETARY AWARDS</th>
<th>ADDL. MONEY EXPENDED</th>
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WHAT IS THE SCOUT OF THE YEAR PROGRAM?
Annualy, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States awards three individuals who are: Eagle Scouts, Girl Scout Gold Award recipients, Venture Summit Award recipients and/or Sea Scout Quartermasters who have risen above their peers in exemplifying the qualities of that rank. Awards are as follows:

- $5,000 1st place National scholarship
- $3,000 2nd place National scholarship
- $1,000 3rd place National scholarship

AM I ELIGIBLE?
To be eligible for the award, the candidate must:

- Be the recipient of the Eagle Scout Award, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Award or Sea Scout Quartermaster Award.
- Be a registered, active member of a Boy or Girl Scout Troop, Venturing Crew or Sea Scout Ship at the time the above award was received.
- Have demonstrated exemplary citizenship in school, Scouting and community.

Prior National Scout of the Year winners are ineligible. There is no minimum age requirement for applicants as long as all other eligibility criteria has been met. The maximum age requirement for applicants is 18 years old. If an applicant reaches their 18th birthday during the nomination year, they remain eligible as long as they are still in high school at the time of the submission deadline. A Scout may enter through only one VFW Post. A local Post can be identified by zip code at www.vfw.org/find-a-post.

WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES?
- Deadline for entry to VFW Post is March 1.
- One candidate with full entry criteria must be submitted by a VFW Post to the next level of judging by April 1. The VFW Department (state) Scouting chairman can provide this information.
- The Department winner must be selected and submitted by their Department (state) Scouting chairman to the VFW National Headquarters by May 1.

Questions should be directed to 816.756.3390, ext. 6155 during normal business hours Monday through Friday or emailed to scouting@vfw.org.

Official Entry Form

VFW Scout of the Year Program

MUST BE COMPLETED BY EACH CONTESTANT
and submitted directly to a VFW post in your community.

Name: First, M.I., Last
______________________________
______________________________

Address
______________________________
______________________________

City, State, Zip
______________________________
______________________________

Home Phone ( )
Email _________________________

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
Scout Troop Number
______________________________
______________________________

SCOUT/VENTURE CERTIFICATION
I hereby certify that the foregoing information is accurate and if I am the winner, I will make myself available to receive the award at a presentation ceremony as designated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Scout/Venture Signature Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
______________________________
______________________________

UNIT LEADER’S CERTIFICATION
I hereby certify that the above-named Scout/Venture is an active member of our unit or was when the award was received and the information supplied by the candidate is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Unit Leader’s Signature Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
______________________________
______________________________

PARENT’S CONSENT
I hereby certify that all information on this application is correct. I willingly submit this name for consideration as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States’ Scout of the Year. If this individual is selected as the winner, I will ensure that he/she is allowed to attend a presentation ceremony as designed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Father, Mother or Guardian Signature Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
______________________________
______________________________
WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED?

The following documentation should be submitted:

- **Photograph of the Scout** — must be attached to this form. The Scout must appear in correct, complete uniform for their current rank. Recommended size 3" x 5".

- **School Participation Record** — a single page, one sided resume of the candidate’s school activities indicating academic achievements, offices held, honors received and significant participation in other activities.

- **Scouting Record** — maximum of three pages, one side only, listing of all Scouting participation beginning with Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts - years of participation, unit numbers and sponsors. Also include when Eagle, Gold, Summit or Quartermaster Award was received and Palm. Identify leadership positions held at all levels, participation in Scouting activities (Jamborees, Order of the Arrow conferences, etc.) and the candidate’s Eagle Scout, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster Project.

- **Community Service Record** — a single page, one sided resume listing participation in community and religious service organizations (excluding Scouting and school), noting leadership positions held and any recognition received.

- **Letters of Recommendation** — submit three letters, no more than two pages in length from:
  - A scout leader.
  - A community member.
  - A teacher/faculty member (if homeschooled, a parent letter is allowed).
  - In addition, you may include one or two additional letters, no more than two pages in length from local community members who have special knowledge of the candidate’s abilities/accomplishments.

- **Completed Entry Form** — submitted to a local VFW Post. Local Posts can be identified by zip code at [www.vfw.org/find-a-post](http://www.vfw.org/find-a-post).

WHO MAKES UP THE VFW SCOUTING TEAM?

The backbone of Scouting in the VFW is the VFW Scouting Team. These VFW members are deeply involved in Scouting, most with decades of experience.

Appointed by their Department commander, they are responsible for promoting Scouting in their state. They are available to encourage Posts to sponsor units, support units and individual Scout projects. They should be the Department’s "expert" on all phases of Scouting. Many Departments have multiple members of the VFW Scouting Team, but every Department should have at least one individual to promote the values of Scouting to youth and to the VFW itself. For more information on the VFW Scouting Team call 816.756.3390 ext. 6155 or email scouting@vfw.org.
VFW SCOUT OF THE YEAR
Judges Score Sheet

DEPARTMENT/STATE ___________________________    DATE OF JUDGING _______________

JUDGE’S NAME & SIGNATURE______________________________________________________

Instructions to Judges: Read and review all letters and data submitted by each applicant with the
criteria listed below in mind. Use the input data to develop an overall presentation of the scout’s
personality that is consistent through all the data and letters submitted and grade each scout in
each character areas. Grade each candidate using the following scoring system:

EXCEPTIONAL = 6-10 pts.    AVERAGE = 4-5pts.    LOW = 1-3 pts.
Ten (10) points are the maximum for each of the sub-elements.

SECTION A: HIGH SCHOOL
PARTICIPATION

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<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>Academic achievement</td>
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<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
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<td>Demonstrated leadership</td>
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<td>Significance of participation</td>
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<td>Sub-Total (40 pts. Max.)</td>
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SECTION B: SCOUTING RECORD

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<td>Timeliness of achieving rank</td>
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<td>Demonstrated leadership</td>
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<td>Participation in events</td>
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<td>Quality of Eagle, Gold, Summit, or Quartermaster Project</td>
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<td>Demonstrated adherence to Scout Code</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exemplary moral/spiritual character</td>
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<td>Sub-Total (60 pts. Max.)</td>
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SECTION C: COMMUNITY SERVICE
RECORD

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Evidence of regular participation</td>
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<td>Impact on the community</td>
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<td>Demonstrated leadership</td>
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<td>Demonstrated achievement (awards, etc.)</td>
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<td>Sub-Total (40 pts. Max.)</td>
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SECTION D: CONTENT OF THE LETTERS
OF RECOMMENDATION

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<td>Evidence of exceptional character</td>
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<td>Evidence of leadership qualities</td>
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<td>Willingness to accept responsibility</td>
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<td>Evidence of self-confidence</td>
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<td>Evidence of serving others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of respect for authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of patriotism and respect for this nation and its symbols.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-Total (70 pts. Max.)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SCORE (210 PTS. Max.)

JUDGES HAVE THE OPTION OF INTERVIEWING TOP FINALISTS PRIOR TO FINAL SELECTION.