



**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS**

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## Illinois

2025-2026 Series

**General Orders No. 11**

May 2026

### **STATE HEADQUARTERS CLOSURE**

State Headquarters will be closed on May 25<sup>th</sup> in observation of Memorial Day.

### **ALL-STATE/ALL-AMERICAN AWARDS**

All-State and All-American Awards for recognition at State Convention was concluded on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Please keep reporting you can still make All-state or All-American this year the year does not end until June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **COMMANDER SHIRTS**

You can now purchase the incoming Commander's shirts. There is a link for the form on the homepage of the State website [vfwil.org](http://vfwil.org) that can be filled out and you can pay either by check or through the "donate now" button located on the homepage of the State website [vfwil.org](http://vfwil.org)

### **FINAL EXPENSE VOUCHER**

Reminder for all Officers who have Expense Accounts – the final date for submitting expense voucher for the 2024-2025 term is **Friday, June 19, 2026**. Expense vouchers must be within budget limitations and must be marked FINAL. **Expense Vouchers received after that date will not be honored.**

### **SPECIAL NOTICE TO DEPARTMENT PROGRAM CHAIRMEN**

All Department Program Chairmen are reminded that most Programs ended officially as of April 30, 2026 and you are therefore requested to type up your Program Award Winners; we must have your Award Winners in State Headquarters by no later than Monday, **May 8, 2026** to enable us to order and prepare your Convention Awards in a timely manner. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

### **LOYALTY DAY, May 1st**

Posts and Districts are urged to start planning now for Loyalty Day (May 1, 2026) observations in their community. Visit the VFW Store for Loyalty Day Posters, Award Citations, and Brochures, and Patriotic Holiday Speeches are available at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

### **VFW DAY OF SERVICE, May 2nd**

The VFW Day of Service kicks off on Saturday, May 2, 2026, marking the start of veteran-led community service projects that will take place throughout the month. We're asking VFW Posts, members, community advocates, and veterans of every stripe to band together to host one community service event on May 2<sup>nd</sup> or at another point during the month to make a meaningful difference in your community. Posts can sign up

to participate or express interest by visiting <https://todaysvfw.org/day-of-service/>. Service projects can be of any size. After completing your project, please send information and pictures of your participation to State and National Headquarters, as well to Illinois VFW News Editor Barb Wilson for inclusion in the May issue of the Illinois VFW News. Photos and information can be emailed to Barb at [barb.wilson2@outlook.com](mailto:barb.wilson2@outlook.com)

## **PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 15TH**

Posts within the Department of Illinois are hereby instructed to fly their U.S. Flag at "half-staff" on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 in observance of **Peace Officers Memorial Day, May 15<sup>th</sup>** as authorized by Public Law 103-122. (See law below):

### *Position and manner of display*

The flag, when carried in a procession with another flag or flags, should be either on the marching right; that is, the flag's own right, or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.

(A)- (1) (Unchanged)

(iii) The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. On Memorial Day the flag should be displayed at half- staff until noon only, and then raised to the top of the staff. By order of the President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession as a mark of respect to their memory. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to Presidential instructions or orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law. In the event of the death of a present or former official of the government of any State, territory, or possession of the United States, that Governor of that State, territory, or possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff.

The flag shall be flown at half-staff thirty days from the death of a President or a former President, ten days from the day of death of the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of a State, territory, or possession; and on the day of death.

## **IMPORTANT - REPORT OF ELECTION FORM**

Per section 213 of the National By-laws, Posts that have not submitted a properly completed Post Election Report to National by June 1<sup>st</sup> are in arrears and shall be deprived of all representation in District, Department and National conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustments of such deficiencies. Posts that have registered delegates for the Department and National Conventions will not receive credentials until the Post has satisfied their arrearage.

## **SPECIAL NOTICE REGARDING DISTRICT CONVENTIONS**

*The District Convention is held for the purpose of electing your officers for the upcoming administrative year. Any member, not a member of the District Convention, (Refer to Section 404 of the National By-Laws) may attend the Convention, however, they shall have no voice in business discussions unless requested by the Commander, and shall have no voting privileges. Those on official business shall be recognized by the Commander for the conduct of business. (Article IV, Sec. 403 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees).*

## **PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIRED FOR ALL ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS**

Officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the District Commander, Adjutant and Quartermaster prior to installation to office. In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within thirty (30) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National By-Laws. **Proof of Eligibility for District Commanders, District Senior Vice Commanders, and District Junior Vice Commanders MUST be furnished to the State Adjutant within thirty (30) days of Election.**

## **REMINDER – POST/DISTRICT OFFICER CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS**

**Please note that changes in Post or District Officers must be reported to State Headquarters immediately.** Changes in addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses should also be reported immediately – even if changes are made on the Online Membership System (OMS). These changes are not always transmitted to State Headquarters; please help us keep our records current.

## **DISTRICT ELECTION REPORTS**

All District Quartermasters have received a 2026-2027 Report of Election form for the District and they are asked to please submit them as soon as the District election has been held. It is very important that the names, addresses, Post numbers, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are up-to-date. Commanders-elect who may receive mail at a Post Office Box should also include their street address for shipping purposes.

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

### **Sec. 413 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.**

The Commander of the District in arrears for financial obligations to Department or National, for fees, dues, poppy money, supply money, or failing to have the office of the Quartermaster properly bonded in accordance with Section 703, failing to ensure that the District is properly insured in accordance with Section 709, failing to submit properly completed and approved District Trustees Report of Audit, District Election Report for the ensuing year, or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation at the Department Convention. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies. A properly completed District Election Report shall be submitted to National Headquarters prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

### **Sec. 213 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.**

Any Post in arrears for any financial obligations to County Council (if applicable), District, Department and National for fees, dues, poppy money, supply money, failing to have the office of Quartermaster properly bonded in accordance with Section 703, failing to ensure that the Post is properly insured in accordance with Section 709, failing to submit properly completed and approved quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit, Post Election Report for the ensuing year submitted to National, or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation in County Council and District meetings; County Council, District, Department and National Conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

## **CREDENTIALS – CONVENTION**

Sec. 222 - Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.

(a) Delegate strength shall be one for every thirty members or fraction thereof in good standing. Delegates and alternates shall be elected in accordance with the Manual of Procedure.

- (b) Delegates elected under this section shall not be considered instructed and may exercise full authority in the duty to be performed.
- (c) Each Post will pay, in accordance with its Department Bylaws, a delegate registration fee for each and every delegate to which the Post shall be entitled
- (d) Each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of \$25, which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a \$10 delegate fee.

### **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES RECORD BOOK**

Community service, as defined by the National Community Service Trust Act, "encompasses any human act serving the common good in the interest of the community." Community service is "a service that is performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions."

Annually, we ask all VFW Posts to submit record books detailing their Community Service Projects. We encourage Posts to gather pictures, newspaper clippings, letters, receipts, etc., and compile this vital record of their activities in their community. We receive fewer and fewer entries each year for judging; ask for volunteers in your Post to assemble this critical part of your Post's history. Please get in touch with State Headquarters if you have any questions.

When the Community Activity Record Books are submitted for judging, they must have the official entry form attached to the inside front cover. The Official Entry Form is in the Commander's Leadership Manual, and at the end of these orders, your record book must be at State Headquarters by May 2, 2026, judging on May 5, 2026

### **DEPARTMENT BYLAW CHANGES**

Resolutions affecting the Bylaws of the Department must be submitted in proper form and received by State Headquarters by no later than May 15, 2026, so that the resolutions can be circulated to all Posts within the proper time prior to the State Convention. Resolutions concerning the Department By-Laws received after that date cannot be considered at the convention. **If you have questions regarding the proper form, please contact State Headquarters.**

### **PROGRAM DIRECTORS REPORTS – STATE CONVENTION**

**All program directors** – please have your reports printed so that you will be able to pass it to the State Adjutant when you finish giving your report to the Convention floor. Please provide a duplicate copy of your report to the State Headquarters by May 25, 2026 and please make sure your name is on your report. **Please remember to keep your reports short and to the point.**

**Reminder** – the State Convention is also the Annual Meeting of the Corporation. Please be sure to have your correct name and title on your report. Your cooperation in this matter will eliminate the chances of errors in the report and will help Department by having information available for the news media, etc.

### **STATE AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

Awards will be presented at the time the Program Director makes their final report during the State Convention. Directors must insure their awards are in the stage area prior to making their reports.

### **DEPARTMENT ELECTED/APPOINTED OFFICERS AND DISTRICT JUNIOR VICE COMMANDERS**

All newly elected and appointed Department Officers and District Junior Vice Commanders for the 2026-2027 term of office are reminded that according to our National By-Laws all Officers listed above are

required to submit proof of eligibility to the Department Adjutant prior to being installed into their respective offices during the State Convention. If you have a question on whether or not you have ever submitted your DD-214 or Proof of Eligibility to the Department, please contact the State Adjutant prior to the convening of the State Convention in June.

### **STATE CONVENTION**

The State Convention will be held on June 11-14, 2026. The hotel for the State Convention is Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy, Springfield, IL 62703. If you would like to call the hotel the phone number (217) 529-7777 and the Group code is: V1W. There is a link also located on the state website vfwil.org; to get to the link go to News and then go to Events the link provided takes you directly to our reservation link and you can book your room through there.

### **STATE CONVENTION REGISTRATION**

Included in these General Orders is the Advance Registration Form for the State Convention. Delegates can also be registered online by going to [www.vfwil.org](http://www.vfwil.org), the form is located under resources then reports and forms.. The registration fee is \$20.00 until **May 31, 2026**, and is \$22.00 after **May 31, 2026**. Letters of registration confirmation will be mailed to registrants after the proper registration fee has been paid. Registrants will be required to present this confirmation when they check in at the convention registration desk at the Crowne Plaza.

**REMINDER:** Delegates **will not** be allowed to vote until such issues have been resolved if the Post is in arrears for supplies, poppies or any sort of financial obligation to the Department. The Post must be bonded, have an approved inspection, have an election report on file with Department and National Headquarters for the ensuing year, and all audits including the March 31, 2026 audit must be submitted and approved. Delegate strength for convention is based on one delegate and one alternate delegate per thirty members or fraction thereof. Registration will be open in Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> floor) of the Crowne Plaza:

Thursday June 11, 2026	1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Friday June 12, 2026	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday June 13, 2026	8:00 am – 10:00 am

### **ATTENTION POST COMMANDERS**

Under the Department of Illinois Veterans of Foreign Wars Bylaws, Article V - Convention Section 8: “Each Post shall register, in advance or at the Convention, at least one delegate to the Department Convention by payment of the advance registration fee in effect for such Convention. Post failing to comply with this requirement shall be considered delinquent and in arrears.

### **2026 DISTRICT COMMANDER-ELECT TRAINING**

Once District Elections are held, an invitation will be sent to newly elected District Commanders for 2026-2027. Department Headquarters will provide rooming accommodations for 4 nights (Wednesday-Sunday) for incoming District Commanders at the Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway in Springfield.

Mandatory District Commander training will be held on Thursday, June 11th, at 8 am in Ruby Ballroom located on the second floor. District Sr. Vice Commanders, Jr. Vice Commanders, and Quartermasters are invited to attend this training as well.

**PLEASE NOTE:** District Commanders-Elect should be present during the Council of Administration Meeting on June 11th, 2026. The dress code is business casual (Polos and Khakis). They must also be present on Saturday, June 13th, 2026, during the installation of officers!

On Sunday, June 14th, there will be a brief Council of Administration meeting at 9 am to pass an interim budget until the next meeting in August.

## **DISTRICT CAUCUS DURING STATE CONVENTION**

Each District will be responsible for establishing their own District Caucus and it will be their responsibility to contact and invite candidates to address their caucus.

## **MEMORIAL SERVICE**

The Memorial Service will be on Thursday night June 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm in the Sapphire/Diamond Ballroom. All District Commanders are required to attend and participate in Memorial Service. If you are unable to attend, you must notify State Headquarters prior to State Convention and you need to have either your Senior Vice Commander or the incoming District Commander Elect to attend in your place. Dress code is suit and tie and appropriate equivalent.

## **PATRIOTIC RALLY**

This year instead of having a Patriotic Rally there will be a parade around the parking lot at the Crowne Plaza. The Parade is Friday night June 12<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 pm-7:30 pm. All Post, Districts and Auxiliaries will need to bring your colors.

## **COMMANDER AND PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION**

On Saturday, June 13, 2026, join the newly installed Illinois VFW State Commander and Auxiliary State President for the Commander and President's Reception. The reception is being held at Northenders Post 10302 located at 2349 Stockyard Rd, Springfield. The reception starts at 6:00 pm and the cost of tickets are \$25.00, you can send in a check or pay through the "Donate Now" located on the state website homepage [vfwil.org](http://vfwil.org). Deadline for ticket sales is June 5, 2026.

## **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

This year at State Convention, we are offering to attendees, breakout sessions which will be located in Capital 1, 2, & 3 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Thursday June 11, 2026

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

## **POST BENEFITS ADVISOR TRAINING**

At the State Convention this year there will be 2 breakout sessions for post benefits advisor training.

## **CONVENTION EXHIBIT BOOTHS**

Please let the businesses in your area know exhibit space is available during our 107<sup>th</sup> Annual State Convention at the BOS Center. Contact State Headquarters at 217-529-6688 for more information.

## **SILENT AUCTION**

The Annual Silent Auction will be held during the State Convention. Check out your home for items in good condition to donate. Please bring your donated item to Plaza H and make sure to fill out the form given to you. If you have any questions, please contact State Headquarters. District Commanders are asked to donate an item from their District valued at no less than \$75.

## **RULES OF THE CONVENTION COMMITTEE**

Chairman, Vince Long, Post 1756-10  
Jeff Britt, Post 6865-14  
Rick Frank, Post 1461-6  
Bill Regan, Post 7452-19  
Bobby Edwards, Post 10302-10

## **POPPY DISPLAY COMMITTEE**

*Chairman:* Stephanie Kirksey, Post 6504-14  
Roger D. Guebert, Post 7980-14

## **POPPY DISPLAYS**

Poppy Displays will be accepted in Capital 6 (3<sup>rd</sup> floor) starting on Thursday, June 11, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 pm, and continuing on Friday, June 12, 2026 from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm.  
All poppy displays must be picked up from Capital 6 before 4:00 pm on Saturday, June 7, 2025.

## **SUPPLY SALES BOOTH**

The Supply Sales Booth will be set up in Plaza H starting on Thursday, June 11, 2026 from 1:00 pm until 5:00 pm the Supply Sales Booth will continue on Friday, June 12, 2026 from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm and Saturday, June 13, 2026 from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm.

## **DISTINGUISHED GUEST COMMITTEE**

The Distinguished Guest Committee Members will use the VIP Room in the BOS Center as their base of operations for our distinguished guests.

### *Distinguished Guest Committee:*

Brad Gould, Post 630-7  
John Davin, Post 5917-18  
J.D. Spindler, Post 4549-17

## **OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO STATE CONVENTION**

The officers below are assigned to be present at the Council of Administration Meeting in Ruby room (2<sup>nd</sup> floor on Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 3:00 pm.

They should also be in attendance for the Joint Opening Session on Friday, June 12, 2026 at 8:00 am in the Sapphire/Diamond room (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) and all business sessions on Friday and Saturday.

### *Credentials Committee:*

*Chairman:* Scott Holley, Post 3873-19  
Joe Wein, Post 2202-4

### *Officer of the Day, Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms:*

Jeff Britt:	Post 6865-14,	Officer of the day
Raymond Bachewicz:	Post 2298-5,	Sergeant-At-Arms
Roy Johnson:	Post 5220-3,	Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms
Steve Noodwang	Post 2791-16	Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms

## **HOSPITALITY ROOM**

The joint hospitality rooms will be in Governor, Illinois, Sangamon, and Springfield on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

**Crock pots and roasters are allowed this year, but electric hot plates, and definitely nothing that is gas or propane is allowed.**

Also, this year the hospitality room **will be closed** during all the business sessions, the Memorial Service, the Patriotic Rally, and the installation of Officers.

## **2026 CONVENTION RAFFLE AND PURPLE HEART TICKETS**

2026 Purple Heart and Convention raffle were in the January issue of the Illinois VFW newspaper. The Illinois VFW Newspaper is posted online on the state website [vfwil.org](http://vfwil.org). You can print the tickets out and fill them out and send them back to State Headquarters. There is 1 sheet of 5 tickets (\$20 for 5 tickets or \$5 a ticket) and two Purple Heart tickets (\$5 each). Winners will be randomly selected at our State Convention in June for a \$10,000 grand prize, a \$3,000 second prize, a \$2,000 third prize, and a \$500 award to fourth through tenth place winners. Purple Heart Raffle: \$2,000 grand prize.

## **127<sup>th</sup> VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Reno, NV, is the host city for the 127th VFW and 112th Auxiliary National Conventions, which will be held July 25-29, 2026. Housing reservation information will be located on the convention website, accessed through the main VFW website at [vfw.org/convention](http://vfw.org/convention). The convention website will also include general convention information, such as the registration form, tentative agenda and links to Reno attractions. Hotels are first come first serve and not by state this year.

Section 222 of the Manual of Procedure states each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention Registration Fee of \$25 - which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Please note each additional delegate attending the National Convention will have to pay an additional \$10 delegate fee. Information on delegate registration will be available at a later date.

## **2026-2027 VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN**

The VFW has announced the topics for the 2026-2027 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen youth essay competitions. The topic for both the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen will be the same this year, which is:

***"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"***

Posts are encouraged to start distributing this information to the schools in your area now and rather than waiting until fall. Entry forms can be found on either National Headquarters website [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) or on Illinois website [vfwil.org](http://vfwil.org).

## **COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION AND COMMANDERS HOMECOMING**

The August Council of Administration and Commanders Homecoming in Joliet is scheduled for August 7-9, 2026. Please check the June General Orders for more information.

## **2026 ILLINOIS VFW CALENDAR**

The calendar raffle began on Jan. 1, 2026, and will run daily through Dec. 31, 2026. The winning ticket will be returned to the drawing, so you may be able to win multiple times throughout 2026. State Headquarters has developed a prize structure and incentive package for Posts that sell calendars. Approximately \$21,500 in prizes will be awarded. The winners will be posted weekly on the Department website ([www.vfwil.org](http://www.vfwil.org)), it can be found under "news" then 2026 Calendar raffle.

### DAILY WINNERS

<b>Date of Drawing</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Amount</b>
04/01/2026	Steve Baker	\$25.00
04/02/2026	Marty Beck	\$25.00
04/03/2026	Matthew Lauck	\$25.00
04/04/2026	William Sherl	\$25.00
04/05/2026	Felix Grzelinski Jr.	\$100.00
04/06/2026	Jennifer McGimms	\$25.00
04/07/2026	Doreen Seratt	\$25.00
04/08/2026	Jerri Bethard	\$25.00
04/09/2026	Bill Star	\$25.00
04/10/2026	Mark Steinheimer	\$25.00
04/11/2026	Brooke Wheeler	\$25.00
04/12/2026	Steven Eller	\$50.00
04/13/2026	Ed Wolynski	\$25.00
04/14/2026	Ted Lang	\$25.00
04/15/2026	Henry Endris	\$25.00
04/16/2026	Roberto Heredia	\$25.00
04/17/2026	David Durov	\$25.00
04/18/2026	Reid Butts	\$25.00
04/19/2026	Randy Ratajczyk	\$50.00
04/20/2026	Lawrence Miller	\$25.00
04/21/2026	Larry Owen	\$25.00
04/22/2026	Brad Pummill	\$25.00
04/23/2026	Matt Maskel	\$25.00
04/24/2026	Michael Cushing	\$25.00
04/25/2026	Shirley Rhodes	\$25.00
04/26/2026	Laura Price	\$50.00
04/27/2026	Chase Bryan	\$25.00
04/28/2026	Robert Gipson	\$25.00
04/29/2026	Judy Swinson	\$25.00
04/30/2026	Linda Hawkins	\$25.00

### NEW CENTURY RAFFLE

The New Century Raffle has officially started and will run through June 30, 2026. The tickets are just \$10.00 each. Each ticket entitles you to participate in a weekly drawing of \$100 from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Drawings will be held every Friday. The winning ticket will be returned to the barrel for future drawings. This means each ticket has multiple chances to win. The seller of each ticket also has a chance to win \$10.00. If the seller prints their name on the ticket, they will receive \$10.00. If the seller does not sign the ticket, the \$10.00 will be automatically donated and split between the Department's Unmet Needs Program and Children's National Home. Winners will be announced each month in the General Orders and posted on the <http://vfwil.org> website

### WEEKLY WINNER


<b>Date of Drawing</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Seller</b>
4/3/2026	Lee Carmichael	No Seller Listed
4/10/2026	James Campagna	James Campagna
4/17/2026	Ken Krupowicz	No Seller Listed
4/24/2026	Ernest Szydowski	No Seller Listed

By Order of:

Official



Joseph "Scott" Swinford  
State Adjutant/Quartermaster



Eugene Blackwell  
State Commander

## **SOUTING REPORT**

**MAY 2026**

THE SCOUT OF THE YEAR WINNERS FOR 2026 HAS BEEN SELECTED. THEY ARE:

**SCOUTING AMERICA SELECTEE:** ALEXIS MCCULLOUGH, SPONSORED BY BOURBONNAIS POST 9961.

**GIRL SCOUT OF AMERICA SELECTEE:** LUCY BERRY, SPONSORED BY ROSCOE POST 2955.

### **END OF YEAR SCOUT OF THE YEAR SUMMARY**

- There were ten (10) applications submitted, this was a decrease of 8 applications from 2025.
- We had three applications submitted from Girl Scout Councils, this was an increase from previous years.
- The state scout of the year from Scouting America for 2025-2026 was Alexis McCullough sponsored by Bourbonnais Post 9961. Her package will be submitted to National VFW. (See bio on page 3)
- The state scout of the year from Girl Scouts is Lucy Berry sponsored by Roscoe Post 2955. (See bio on page 4)
- 57% of the posts did not enter any scouting activity in the dashboard, this is an increase of 4% from the previous year of non-participation in the scouting program (refer to page 5)
- 47% of the districts did not enter any scouting activity in the dashboard. This was no change from the previous year. (refer to page 6)

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Encourage the appointment of a scouting chair at District and Post levels.**
- **Prepare a standard operating procedure for the scouting program at District and Post levels. This will provide guidance and continuity for the scouting chair.**
- **Use the tracking form on page 7 to record your scouting contacts.**
- **Have the scouting chair update members at the district and post meetings.**

## Program Bulletin VOD May 2026

As you know, the National VFW has contracted with a company by the name of Scholars App to provide a method of digitizing the contest applications and reporting processes for the PP/VOD contests. We find ourselves in a period of transition to adopt this relatively new method. During the course of the 25-26 contest cycle, Scholars App and our members experienced some challenges in implementing this new method. While we have rectified most of the technical problems, there remains much trepidation for our Tech-reluctant members. **As a result, the traditional method of conducting the program will be allowed this cycle with just minimal involvement with Scholars App and there will be short video training modules for each of the actions to conduct these great contests. A more detailed explanation of the acceptable options will be available soon.** Please know that the youth scholarship team does not intend to leave behind any post or district chairpersons or any students. In fact, we are hoping the 26-27 cycle will have the largest student participation ever. Participation in the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy help to plant the seeds of patriotism in our nation's youth and bring our organization very favorable recognition in the communities we serve. And it just might result in recruiting some local eligible veterans to join with us.

**107<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL DEPARTMENT CONVENTION  
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

TO: Department Adjutant-Quartermaster  
Department of Illinois V.F.W.  
3300 Constitution Dr.  
Springfield, IL 62711

POST NO: \_\_\_\_\_

Please register below listed Comrades for the Department Convention being held the week of June 11-14, 2026 in Springfield, Illinois. The registration fee of \$20.00 per Comrade is enclosed.

***NOTE: REGISTRATION FEE AFTER WEDNESDAY, MAY 01, 2026 WILL INCREASE TO \$22.00 PER PERSON, SO REGISTER EARLY!***

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

	NAME	STREET	CITY	ZIP
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____	_____

This form may be photo-copied for additional names if needed.

Department of Illinois  
107th Annual State Convention

Tentative Agenda (May be subject to change.)

Crowne Plaza  
3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62703

June 11-14, 2026

**Thursday, June 11, 2026**

Dress Code for Training & Council Meeting will be Business Casual (Polos)

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	District Commander-Elect Training <i>Ruby (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)</i>
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Membership Luncheon <i>*Invite Only</i> <i>Plaza A (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	<i>Scholar's App Training</i> <i>Plaza I/J (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM / 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	<i>Benefits Advisor Training</i> <i>Plaza I/J (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	VSO Office <i>Opal Room (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	VFW Registration <i>Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	VFW Sales <i>Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Vendor Booths <i>Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Silent Auction <i>Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Poppy Displays <i>Capital 6 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Breakout Sessions <i>Capital 1, 2, &amp; 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Bylaws & Resolutions Meeting <i>Ruby (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)</i>
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM	Final 2025-2026 Council Meeting <i>Ruby (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)</i>
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Memorial Service (Coat & Tie or equivalent.) <i>Sapphire/Diamond (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)</i>
Hospitality Rooms	<i>Governor, Illinois, Sangamon,</i> <i>&amp; Springfield (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)</i>

Department of Illinois  
107th Annual State Convention

Tentative Agenda (May be subject to change.)

Crowne Plaza

3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62703

June 11-14, 2026

Friday, June 12, 2026

Dress Code for Business Session will be Coat & Tie

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Joint Opening Ceremony with Guest Speakers & Special Presentations <i>Sapphire/Diamond (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	<i>VSO Office</i> <i>Opal Room (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	VFW Registration <i>Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Vendor Booths <i>Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	VFW Sales <i>Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Silent Auction <i>Plaza H (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Poppy Displays <i>Capital 6 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)</i>
12:00 PM - 1:15 PM	Past Dist. Commander's Assoc. Luncheon <i>Plaza A (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), cost is \$25.</i>
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Rules of the Convention, Credentials, Legislative. with Guest Speakers & Program Reports <i>Sapphire/Diamond (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)</i>
3:00 PM - 3:45 PM	1st Nominations for 2026-27 State Officers <i>Sapphire/Diamond (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)</i>
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Patriotic Rally (Bring Post or District Colors) <i>Crowne Plaza Parking Lot *weather permitting</i>
Hospitality Rooms	<i>Governor, Illinois, Sangamon, &amp; Springfield (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)</i>

Department of Illinois  
107th Annual State Convention

Tentative Agenda (May be subject to change.)

Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., Springfield, IL 62703

**Saturday, June 13, 2026**

Dress Code for Business Session will be Coat & Tie

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Prayer Service <i>Plaza C (1st Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Guests from Veteran's Groups <i>Sapphire/Diamond (2nd Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 10:00 AM	VFW Registration <i>Plaza H (1st Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	VSO Office <i>Opal Room (2nd Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Vendor Booths <i>Plaza H (1st Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	VFW Sales <i>Plaza H (1st Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Silent Auction <i>Plaza H (1st Floor)</i>
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Poppy Displays <i>Capitol 6 (3rd Floor)</i>
10:30 AM - 11:15 AM	Buddy Poppy Report, Ntl. Home Report, Silver March & Other Program Reports <i>Sapphire/Diamond (2nd Floor)</i>
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	By-Laws & Resolutions, Credentials, Convention Raffle, 2nd Nominations, & Elections <i>Sapphire/Diamond (2nd Floor)</i>
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Joint Installation of 2026-27 State Officers <i>Sapphire, Diamond, Emerald (2nd Floor)</i>
6:00 PM	Commander & President's Reception <i>Northenders Post 10302, Cost is \$25.00</i>
Hospitality Rooms	<i>Governor, Illinois, Sangamon, &amp; Springfield (3rd Floor)</i>



MEMORANDUM

TO: VFW & Auxiliary Convention Attendees  
FROM: Scott Swinford, Department Adjutant-Quartermaster  
SUBJECT: Joint Hospitality Room

We want to extend a sincere thank you for joining us this year! It's been incredible seeing the energy and collaboration throughout the event so far.

To ensure that everyone can fully engage in our sessions and scheduled programming, please note that the hospitality room will be temporarily closed during the following events:

- 1) Thursday, June 11, 2026: 3:00 – 4:30 p.m., Council Meeting
- 2) Thursday, June 11, 2026: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., Memorial Service.
- 3) Friday, June 12, 2026: Morning & Afternoon Business Sessions.
- 4) Friday, June 12, 2026: 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Patriotic Rally
- 5) Saturday, June 13, 2026: Morning & Afternoon Business Sessions.
- 6) Saturday, June 13, 2026: 3:00 p.m. 2026-27 Officer Installation.

We invite you to join your fellow attendees during these sessions to experience our featured speakers and presentations. And as a reminder, the Council Meeting on Thursday, June 11 is open to all and we invite you to attend.

The hospitality room will open immediately following the conclusion of session for continued camaraderie and refreshments. We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to seeing you at our upcoming sessions!

**VFW DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS**

3300 Constitution Ave  
Springfield, IL 62711

Office: 217-529-6688  
Fax: 217-546-3415

vwil@vwil.org  
www.vwil.org



DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS RECEPTION  
STATE COMMANDER ROB BAILEY  
&  
STATE PRESIDENT DANIELLE KRULL  
Saturday, June 13, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

VFW Post 10302



2349 Stockyard Road  
Springfield, IL



Cost \$25.00

Please join Rob and Danielle as they celebrate the beginning of the 2026-2027 year under their leadership. The evening will start with a wonderful barbeque dinner with all the fixins! Followed by live music & dancing outside, under the stars. If dancing isn't your thing there will be bags and other games available. There will be chairs but if you have a favorite lawn chair bring it along.

## 2026-2027 Theme "What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

**Student Entry Deadline: Oct. 31, 2026**  
**Patriotic Audio Essay Competition Grand Prize: \$35,000 Award**

### What is the Voice of Democracy Program?

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, nearly 26,000 high school students compete for more than \$2 million in scholarships and incentives. Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. National winners will be notified of their scholarship & placement. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is,

### "What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

### The Rules

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Oct. 31 deadline who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions: or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over, GED or Adult Education Students are ineligible.

You must be the sole author of your essay. Inappropriate use of ChatGPT or other AI tools is not allowed. The recording must be in your own voice and in English. Hearing/speech impaired students should email the Voice of Democracy National Office at [youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto:youthscholarships@vfw.org) for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. To ensure fairness and impartiality in judging, essays **must be anonymous**. **Please do not include your name, address, school name, or any other personal identifiers in the body of your essay.** Additionally, avoid references to your race, sex, religion, national origin, or other specific personal characteristics that could reveal your identity. General references to nationality or patriotic identity (such as being an American or referencing American values) are permitted if they are relevant to the essay theme. However, personal identifiers tied to your individual background or experience should be avoided.

You may enter only one competition at one Post (if otherwise eligible) per year. At any time during the contest, additional participant personal information could be requested by the VFW, including but not limited to a photograph, SSN, or biographical information.

### Advancement

Decisions of Judges at all levels are final. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. Contact the post where you entered at to check on your advancement

### What Is the Deadline for My Entry?

All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31, 2026. It is the responsibility of the student to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location - ensuring it is a participating Post.

### How do I enter?

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or - 5 second max.) audio in MP3 format (no videos) on a flash drive, or other electronic device. You will submit the recording, a typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or VFW Post for judging.

All entries begin at the VFW 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 VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to a Post. Your local post will give instructions on how to turn in your entry to them. Audio may be submitted physically on a Flash Drive, emailed to the Post (with permission) or submitted through our online platform using Scholars App. **To submit through Scholars App you must first receive a QR code or link from your local post.** Entries sent to VFW National Headquarters directly will not be considered.

If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions: Visit this website [vfw.org/FindaPost](https://www.vfw.org/FindaPost) to "Find A VFW Post." 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) office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit this link <https://www.vfw.org/ContactUs/> and look for "Find a State Contact" to get your VFW state office's phone number and email. If you still need assistance, please email us at [VFW National Headquarters at youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto:youthscholarships@vfw.org).

### What Are the Judging Criteria?

#### Originality is worth 35 points:

Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

#### Delivery is worth 35 points:

Speak in a clear and credible manner.

#### Content is worth 30 points:

Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to another.

# 2026-2027 Official Entry Form Voice of Democracy Competition

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

( )

Phone

Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

Age

Jacket Size

School Name, City, State

Teacher's Name and Email (if applicable)

## To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian

(Required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

( )

Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian Email

## Participant Agreement for Students Advancing to National Level

If selected as a first-place state winner, I have the consent of my parent/guardian and school to attend the Founding Forward Spirit of America Leadership trip to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania as a guest of the VFW National Organization. In consideration for permission to participate in the National Voice of Democracy Competition ("Competition") I do hereby, for myself, for my heirs, executors, administrators and assignees, waive, release and discharge all rights and claims which I have or which may hereafter accrue against the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and/or the Departments (state organizations) of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and their respective officers, agents, successors and assigns from any damages which may be sustained by me in connection with my participation in or association with the Competition and/or arising out of any travel related to the Competition. In the event of sickness, accident or injury in connection with the Competition, I consent to and accept the services of a duly licensed medical, surgical or dental specialist selected on my behalf and for such treatments, as they may deem necessary. I understand that VFW will not be liable for such treatment. I further understand that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States retains non-exclusive rights to use my audio file, essay, name and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

## I Have Read and Understand the Rules and Participant Agreement

I certify that I am the sole author of the enclosed audio/essay entry and that I have not inappropriately used any AI tools or Chat GPT. I have only entered the competition once yearly if otherwise eligible. I understand that if it is found that I have entered any other Post's competition or used this essay for another VFW competition, I face elimination from the competition and will return any and all prizes or incentives awarded.

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 Voice of Democracy Competition.

Post Commander/Chairperson Signature

Post #

VFW Auxiliary President/Chairperson Signature (if applicable)

Post Address

City, State, Zip

VFW Post Email

No. of students participating

No. of winners advanced to District

Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarship 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 Voice of Democracy Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Departments.

District Chairperson Signature

Dist. #

Address

City, State, Zip

( )

Phone

Email

## To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first place winner of the Voice of Democracy Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson Signature

( )

Daytime Phone

Email

The winner  has been  will be (check one) notified that they are the first place Department winner on \_\_\_\_\_.

For assistance contact:

816.968.2787

Email: [youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto:youthscholarships@vfw.org)

Local VFW Post Information:

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Time To Call: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Time To Call: \_\_\_\_\_



2026-2027 Theme

**"What A Veteran Taught Me About America"**

**Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2026**

**Patriotic Written Essay Competition Grand Prize: \$5,000 Award**

## What is the Patriot's Pen Program?

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 60,000 students who participated last year in this contest.

## Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, State and national level. Department (State) winners receive a portion of \$55,000 in national awards. National Winners will receive at least \$500. **The first-place national award is currently \$5,000.**

The Internal Revenue Service requires a recipient awarded more than \$599 be given Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable income. This may require the winner to provide their social security number.

## How Does the Contest Work?

All entries begin at the VFW 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 VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post.

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by VFW Posts. Post winners advance, one for every 15 entries, to the VFW District (regional) level where one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW national competition. Decisions of Judges at all levels are final. Contact the post where you entered to check on your advancement. Decisions of Judges at all levels are final. Contact the post where you entered to check on your advancement.

## 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; or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. 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 intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. (Foreign exchange students are ineligible.)

## How Do I Get Started?

- Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing contest.
- Contact a participating VFW Post and indicate your interest in participating.
- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its VFW Auxiliary.
- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of Oct. 31.

Your local Post will give instructions on how to turn in your entry to them. It may be delivered in person, emailed to the Post (with permission) or submitted through our online platform using Scholars App. **To submit through Scholars App you must first receive a QR code or link from your local post.**

Entries sent to VFW National Headquarters directly will not be considered.

## How Am I Judged?

- **Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points:**  
You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively.
- **Theme development is worth 35 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 2026-2027 theme is:

**"What A Veteran Taught Me About America"**

## Deadline Information.

To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring VFW Post by midnight Oct. 31.

## Note:

If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions:

First, visit [vfw.org/FindaPost](http://vfw.org/FindaPost) to "Find a VFW Post."

If you don't have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble contacting 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](http://vfw.org/contactus) to look for "Find a State Contact" to get your VFW state office's phone number and email.

**For assistance contact  
the VFW National Headquarters at 816.968.2787  
Email: [youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto:youthscholarships@vfw.org)**

# 2026-2027 Official Entry Form Patriot's Pen Competition

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

( )

Phone

Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

Essay Word Count

School Name, City, State

Teacher's name and Email (if applicable)

## To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian

(Required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

( )

Parent/Guardian's Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian's Email

## What Are the Rules?

• You must write your own essay.

• All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics. 300 - 400 words in length (+ or - 5 word max). Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.

• To ensure fairness and impartiality in judging, essays must be anonymous. Please do not include your name, address, school name, or any other personal identifiers in the body of your essay. Additionally, avoid references to your race, sex, religion, national origin, or other specific personal characteristics that could reveal your identity. General references to nationality or patriotic identity (such as being an American or referencing American values) are permitted if they are relevant to the essay theme. However, personal identifiers tied to your individual background or experience should be avoided.

• Do not put your name on the essay. The entry form is your essays 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).

• The essay must be contestant's original work and a product of the contestant's own thinking. Inappropriate use of ChatGPT or other AI tools is not allowed. 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 the use of your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

• At any time during the contest additional participant personal information (i.e. SSN, photo, etc.) could be requested by the VFW.

***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 Competition.

Post Commander/Chairperson Signature

Post#

VFW Auxiliary President/Chairperson Signature (If applicable)

Post Address

City, State, Zip

VFW Post Email

No. of participants

No. of winners

Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarships 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 Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department.

District Chairperson Signature

Dist. #

Address

City, State, Zip

( )

Phone

Email

## To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Patriot's Pen Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson Signature

( )

Daytime Phone

Email

The winner  has been  will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on \_\_\_\_\_.

## Local VFW Post Information:

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Time To Call: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Time To Call: \_\_\_\_\_

