

PATRIOT'S PEN PROGRAM

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND GUIDELINES:

VFW believes strongly in good citizenship and fostering patriotism. There is no better place to start the process than with our youth. We encourage young minds to examine Veterans of the present as well as through history, and how their own experiences invoke original thought through our Patriot's Pen youth essay writing contest.

The National Patriot's Pen Program is a youth essay contest conducted nationwide by VFW Posts and Auxiliaries. This contest gives students in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades, the opportunity to express their own opinions and improve their writing skills for a given theme, while they compete for worthwhile awards and prizes. With the exception of exchange students, all students attending public, private, or parochial schools are eligible to participate in the Patriot's Pen Program. Students will compete for \$1,000 cash at the Department level. If selected by National, the winner will receive an all-expense paid trip to the National Convention for a chance at \$5000 and recognition.

*** Post and District Chairman should refer to the National VFW Programs Guide "VFW Scholarship Programs."
*** Materials are available from VFW Emblem and Supply.

2016-2017 THEME: "The America I Believe In"

DEPARTMENT DEADLINES FOR 2016-2017:

Student Entry Deadline to the Post: November 1, 2016
Post Deadline to submit to District: November 15, 2016
District Deadline for complete package to Department: Friday, December 9, 2016

****** THERE ARE NO EXEPTIONS to the DEPARTMENT DEADLINE ******

Black out sheets will be updated via information delivered to Department from the District Chairperson submission of the attached "Patriot's Pen District Participation Report."

DEPARTMENT ESSAY AWARDS

The First Place winner is invited to the Mid-Winter Conference to read their speech. Second and Third place shall be recognized locally.

First place	\$1,000.00 and a plaque
Second Place	\$ 750.00 and a plaque
Third Place	\$ 500.00 and a plaque

A plaque will be awarded at the Department Convention for the most outstanding Post and District Patriots Pen Program as determined by the Chairman.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN ENTRY

To submit a Patriot's Pen entry, complete the following steps and forward this information to your District Patriots Pen Chairman.

1. Complete the Official Patriots Pen Competition Entry Form.
2. Entries shall be no greater than 400 words in length. (Title not counted)
3. Essays should be computer printed or typewritten in English with no color or graphics.
4. Posts judge their entries for inclusion in the District contest and submit their winners and other report information to the District Chairperson.
5. District chooses winners, and completes the District Patriot's Pen package to Department, which includes Essay, application form, photo, summary, and report form.
6. District winning entries shall include a good quality head and shoulders photograph of the student. (School photographs best.) It will be needed for the Department winner.

District Chairpersons will deliver all entries to the Department Chairman **NO LATER THAN December 9, 2016.**

*** For Post's with no District Program, please note that the Department Chairman will accept only one entry per District.

JUDGING: For consistency, all levels of judging are based on the same criteria, remembering that this is a subjective topic and there is no "right" answer to the explanation of Freedom.

Entries are judged on the following:

- **Knowledge of the theme – 30 points.** Essays must show a thorough knowledge of America, and should demonstrate specifics of their belief of the topic. (Have they prepared)
- **Theme Development – 35 points.** Essays should demonstrate a basic flow of original ideas. Do they provide a picture of their thoughts? (Can you visualize how they feel)
- **Clarity of ideas – 35 points.** Writer should have good structure, and present a clear picture of the writer's ideas. (How well is it written?)

Essays should have a positive approach toward our organization; it is recommended that students realize the nature of our organization, we are sponsoring the contest. However, it should be evident that the essays express the young writer's own viewpoints.

*** **NOTE** *** To ensure fairness, the student should not identify themselves within the essay. They should not include their name, city, state, national origin, race, or specific religion.

The Department Chairman will provide judges and the team will select a state winner and forward that entry and any required reports to National.

HOW TO REPORT:

Step 1:

Each Post that submits a student entry meeting guidelines and dates will receive ALL-STATE credit, which is reported through the District contest process. The Posts shall provide:

- Winning entry
- Number of participants
- Monies awarded

Step 2:

District collects all entries from Post within the district, then conducts judging of Post winners at the District level....District Chairpersons are required to submit the District winning entry form, picture, and essay to Department NLT December 9, 2016.

Step 3:

District Chairperson completes the Summary Form and a District Participation Form to the Department Chairman NLT January 3, 2017 that includes:

- District Summary form
- Post participation breakout form

Step 4:

The Department Chairman use the District inputs to provide Department Headquarters and National with a report of all of the Posts that participated, by District, which will then be used to give credit in the All-State Program blackout sheet.

OTHER

All activities other than the student entry should be reported on-line via the Department website under reporting procedure and **Youth Activities** at www.vfwca.org

Be sure to submit any additional Patriot's Pen Activities to the Department Chairman to be considered for the Department awards.

DISTRICT PATRIOT'S PEN PARTICIPATION REPORT 2016-2017

DISTRICT NO. _____

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA, 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)

Posts	Auxiliaries	Students	Post Winners Advanced
\$ _____			\$ _____
Savings Bonds & Awards			Addl. Money Expended

MONETARY VALUE OF DISTRICT COMPETITION (add County Councils if applicable):

District Savings Bonds & Awards \$ _____

District Additional Expenses \$ _____

Signed by: _____ Date _____

District Patriot Pen Program Chairman

PLEASE ATTACH COMPLETED REPORT FORM(S) AND GIVE
THIS COMPLETED SUMMARY TO YOUR DEPARTMENT
PATRIOT'S PEN CHAIRMAN NO LATER THAN JANUARY 3, 2017

