GENERAL ORDERS NO. 1

2026-2027 SERIES

August 11, 2026

1. Having been elected National President and having been installed in office in accordance with the Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary, I hereby assume command.
2. The following officers have also been duly elected and installed by the 113th National Convention and will be accorded with the recognition due them:

National Senior Vice President

Kim Harney, Auxiliary 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona

National Junior Vice President

Sandra L. Uzell, Auxiliary 7536, Lyndhurst, Ohio

National Treasurer

Ann Panteleakos, Auxiliary 5446, Plainfield, Connecticut

National Chaplain

Margaret Jane Feher, Auxiliary 7387, Hazard, Kentucky

National Conductor

Cynthia P. Davis, Auxiliary 8509, Baltimore, Maryland

National Guard

Jeanette D. Garcia, Auxiliary 401, Albuquerque, New Mexico

National District Council Members (NDCMs):

NDCM No. 1	Maine/New Hampshire	Celeste Nicholas
NDCM No. 2	Vermont/Massachusetts	Sheila Spaulding
NDCM No. 3	Maryland/New Jersey	Elizabeth DallaTezza
NDCM No. 4	Delaware/New York	Karen Ann Dotson
NDCM No. 5	Missouri/Illinois	Danetta Wakefield
NDCM No. 6	West Virginia/Virginia	Carol Vangi
NDCM No. 7	Tennessee/Kentucky	Cindy Kohrs

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WWW.VFWAUXILIARY.ORG • INFO@VFWAUXILIARY.ORG

NDCM No. 8	Georgia/Alabama	Dianne Tiller
NDCM No. 9	South Carolina/North Carolina	Sandra Johnson Leu
NDCM No. 10	Oklahoma/Arkansas	Teresa Price
NDCM No. 11	Wisconsin/Iowa	Renee Quinn
NDCM No. 12	Wyoming/North Dakota	Arlene Birkle
NDCM No. 13	Kansas/Colorado	Tessa Butcher
NDCM No. 14	Montana/Idaho	Denise Sampo
NDCM No. 15	New Mexico/Arizona	Betty Decker
NDCM No. 16	Hawaii/Alaska	Patricia Sauer
NDCM No. 17	Utah/Nevada	Renee West
NDCM No. 18	Rhode Island/Connecticut	Kathrine Fleischauer
NDCM No. 19	Mississippi/Louisiana	Mary Johnson
NDCM No. 20	Oregon/Washington	Debbie Little
NDCM No. 21	Nebraska/South Dakota	Nancy Worth
NDCM Area A	Pennsylvania	Bonnie Drake
NDCM Area B	Michigan	Deborah Scheetz
NDCM Area C	Indiana	Linda Misuraca
NDCM Area D	Ohio	Jessica Gardner
NDCM Area E	Minnesota	Sonia Tatge
NDCM Area F	Florida	Teresa Bachand
NDCM Area G	California	Kathleen Smith
NDCM Area H	Texas	Melanie McConaghy

3. The following appointments are hereby announced:

National Secretary

Ann Panteleakos, Auxiliary 5446, Plainfield, Connecticut

National Chief of Staff

Bette Jean Biedrzycki, Auxiliary 2754, West View, Pennsylvania

National Patriotic Instructor

Jessica Gardner, Auxiliary 2800, Dayton, Ohio

National Historian

Teresa Price, Auxiliary 539, Henryetta, Oklahoma

National Assistant Conductor

Evan Smiley, Auxiliary 11404, Brandenburg, Kentucky

National Assistant Guard

Edna Kiviniemi, Auxiliary 2492, Imlay City, Michigan

National Color Bearer No. 1

Michael S. Yates, Auxiliary 4252, Hernando, Florida

National Color Bearer No. 2

Stephen E. Doherty Sr., Auxiliary 8955, Westerly, Rhode Island

National Color Bearer No. 3

Jason Manke, Auxiliary 5319, Athens, Michigan

National Color Bearer No. 4

Philip C. Reinpold, Auxiliary 5812, Pueblo West, Colorado

National Banner Bearer

Ella Barks Wilson, Auxiliary 4759, Starks, Louisiana

National Flag Bearer

Margaret Russo, Auxiliary 7164, Avenel, New Jersey

National POW-MIA Flag Bearer

Benjamin McDonald, Auxiliary 2208, Waverly, Iowa

National Musician

Patsy Cole, Auxiliary 4190, Decatur, Alabama

National Soloist

Willa Watts, Auxiliary 3629, Fairbanks, Alaska

National Assistant Musician

Bethany Knoll, Auxiliary 7743, Osborne, Kansas

National Assistant Soloist

Karen Camera, Auxiliary 10804, North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

4. As a reminder, some of the objects of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to assist the Posts and members thereof of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and its own members whenever possible. We therefore support the VFW in their focus to identify, address, and eradicate racial bias and discrimination. And the VFW Auxiliary leadership unites with the VFW leadership in the pursuit to eliminate racial injustices and discriminatory practices within our organization.

5. In accordance with the VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws, Article XI-Discipline, any member who commits offenses recognized by the VFW Auxiliary may be subject to disciplinary action and may be assessed the penalties provided in this Article. Further, issues governed by Article XI should be addressed at the appropriate lowest level before they are elevated to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters. The VFW Auxiliary joins with the VFW in stating that acts of sexual harassment, racial or sexual discrimination, or any other conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline or

deemed unbecoming of a member will not be tolerated. Harassment and discrimination include any verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, or that otherwise interferes with another's ability to participate in VFW Auxiliary activities. All members are expected to conduct themselves with dignity, respect, professionalism, and common courtesy always.

6. For the purposes of clarification, we do not operate as a men's organization or a ladies organization, but as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its VFW Auxiliary.

7. Every Auxiliary chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary will be expected to participate in at least one program that benefits veterans. Additionally, it is necessary that all Auxiliary, District, and Department Presidents comply with all provisions of the VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws, the Booklet of Instructions, and the Ritual.

8. Presidents and Treasurers, all levels, attention is directed to VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws, which requires the offices to be bonded with an indemnity company in a sum at least 1.25 the amount of the funds and value of property for which they may be accountable. However, I recommend bonding in a sum for twice the amount of the funds and value of property for which they may be accountable to ensure appropriate coverage.

9. Attention is directed to VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws, Section 814 – Trustees, Duties of (All Levels). All audits are to be completed by the Trustees. Audits are conducted and submitted timely.

10. Attention is directed to the requirement of timely filing of Internal Revenue Form 990. Contact the Department Treasurer for assistance.

11. Attention Presidents, an annual official visit of all Auxiliaries and Districts is necessary to ensure compliance with the VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws.

12. Attention is directed to VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws, Article X, Sec. 1003-Auxiliary Emblem and Logo. The Emblem and Logo of the Auxiliary belongs to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Organization. Departments, Districts, Auxiliaries or individual members shall not manufacture or have manufactured or reproduce any article or emblematic jewelry, pins, or badges containing this emblem or logo without prior written consent of the VFW Quartermaster General.

13. Caution is urged in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Fact check all information before posting to ensure that it is accurate and aligns with the VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws.

14. As we begin a new VFW Auxiliary year, we also begin a new opportunity to serve. Elections have concluded, officers have been installed, and our members have entrusted them with the responsibility of leading their Auxiliaries, Districts, and/or Departments. While not every member may have supported those who were elected, once the election is over, we must come together with a shared commitment to respect the offices they hold and support them as they carry out their duties.

    The true measure of our organization is not whether we always agree, but whether we can work together with dignity, respect, and a common purpose. Personal differences, disappointments, or past grievances should never be allowed to overshadow the mission that unites us all. We owe our veterans, service members, their families, and our communities our very best—not our divisions.

    Let this be a year marked by unity rather than discord, encouragement rather than criticism, and collaboration rather than conflict. When we choose to lift one another up, we strengthen our Auxiliaries, inspire future leaders, and ensure that the VFW Auxiliary continues to be an organization worthy of the veterans we proudly serve. Together, let us lead with integrity, serve with compassion, and remain steadfast in our commitment to our mission.

BY ORDER OF:
Donna Mills
National President

OFFICIAL:



Ann Panteleakos
National Secretary-Treasurer

DM: AP: cb

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

FALL CONFERENCE

The **Fall Conference** will be **October 24th 2026** at VFW Post 6590. The **Councel of Administration** will start at 10am.

Lunch will be served after the meeting. The price for lunch is $12.00. Make checks out to VFW Auxiliary 6590 and mail to Marie Cozine 5 Kennedy Drive Cookstown, NJ 08511.

Fall Conference will follow with our Department President Camilla Albano and her Officers and Chairmen will kick-off the National Programs for the 2026-2027 year.

AMERICANISM

Carmen Peterson
Americanism Chairman
2026-2027



September, 2026

Hope you had a wonderful summer, but now our work begins. School is starting so now is the time to start promoting Flag Education and Patriotism. Use Social Media to promote these values that our Auxiliary holds so dear. Use the resourse on MALTA and get brochures on Flag Etiqutte and any other material you can find on Americanism. The ifnormation is out their. Make your own brochure andget coloring pages to hand out at preschools, libraries,and visit your local school,scout troops and ony other youth group to promote our values.

This month;s Trivia

The Bill of Rights is made up of 10 Amendments

Dates to Remember

September is Suicide Prevention
9/2 National V-j Day
9/7 Labor Day
9/11 Patriot Day
9/13 National Grandparents Day
9/13 Uncle Sam Day
9/17 Constitution Day & Citizenship Day
9/18 POW/MIA Recogniton Day
9/18 US Air Force Birthday
9/18 President George Washington laid the first cornerstone of the US Captial
9/27 Gold Star Mothers & Family Day
9/29 National VFW Day
Keeps these dates in Mind, hang a monthly calender to remind everyone about these dates and their importance.

We will be Rocking our Veterans and his family through out the year and always.



History of Americanism in the Auxiliary

The VFW Auxiliary, established in 1914, has a rich history of supporting veterans and their families, evolving from a women's organization to an inclusive group dedicated to service and patriotism.

Founding and Early Years

The VFW Auxiliary was founded on September 14, 1914, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with Margaret Armstrong as its first National President. Original named the Ladies Auxiliary VFW, it was created to support the Veterans of Foreign Wars and assist service members returning from battle. The organization began with just 47 members primarily female spouses and relatives of VFW members, and quickly grew in size and influence.

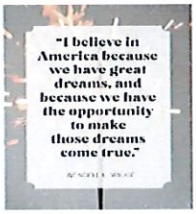
Patriotic Instructors

As the person in charge of PATRIOTISM in your auxiliary, make sure you remind your members of important dates and to celebrate and remember. Flag Etiquette is an important job you hold. Teach the values of proper care of the Flag and its proper use.

AMERICANISM POP SIGNS

I hope you have been working on your POP signs and remember to create a sign that depicts the VFW Auxiliary: Patriotism, Americanism and values we hold dear. You can use any media you like such as: Excel, paint box or AI to make your sign.So get those creative juices working and create an awesome POP sign.

End of Year Reports: Remember toLOOK at your end of the year reports and decide which one you would like to do. You don't have to do all of them, but choose one or two. Those of you who will enter the contest, remember to put your projects in order and label them.



Americanism

2026-2027

It's a simple piece of cloth. When the first flag was stitched together, (the flag, which the Continental Congress passed as the Flag Act on June 14, 1777), these simple pieces of cloth were put together to form a beautiful symbol which still represents our country today.

"When we honor our flag, we honor what we stand for as a nation – freedom, equality, justice, and hope."

Ronald Regan

We are the ones who exemplify what Patriotism is, to honor our country, its beliefs, and our Veterans. To continue that we need to get ourselves out there and promote and using social media is one of the best ways to do this.

This year's Agenda:

- Americanism POP Signs
- Flag Education/Respect for the Flag
- Promote Patriotism
- Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Remembrance
- History of Americanism in the Auxiliairy
- Patriotic Instructor Responsibilities

Plus, VFW Programs we can help with:

- Smart/Maher VFW National Education Teacher Program
- VFW National Public Servant Award Citations
- VFW Life Saving Award Citation

This year will be an interesting one and I am excited to get this program going, especially with our new POP program.

Americanism POP Signs

Remember the signs with Uncle Sam saying, "I want you in the Army", this was the idea for getting people's attention to what was needed. They were popular in the 1940's and even now. Use a POP sign to get people's attention to what the VFW Auxiliary is about. POP stands for Point-of-Purchase, used as a marketing tool, we can use this to promote our organization as well as PATRIOTISM. So, get those thinking caps on, your creative juices bubbling and start thinking about a POP sign. All entry forms must be sent to me by March 31, 2027, for judging. One winner will be chosen and then sent to National by April 30, 2027; I hope to see many entries.

Flag Education/Respect for Flag

There are many people who do not know proper Flag etiquette or even respect for the Flag. This includes flag disposal, folding the Flag, displaying the Flag, and honoring the flag. This can be done in many ways, put a booklet together on Flag etiquette, give classes on Flag etiquette, and at events, let the public know that when the Flag passes by we salute and the same when the National Anthem is played. You may be wondering why I capitalize the word Flag, because it stands for the American Flag and that is giving respect.

Promote Patriotism

Patriotism is a word that cannot be bottled in one meaning, it means respect, honor, integrity and freedom, we teach this by doing. Teach about our symbols and why they are important, promote holidays that are part of our history and the reason why we are who we are today.

Prisoners of War/Missing in Action Remembrance

We need to continue to honor our POWs and MIAs because of their contribution to our freedom and the ultimate sacrifice they gave for us. September 18, 2026, is National POW/MIA Day you can do a short service and recognize them at your Auxiliary meeting, a prayer or a small service to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. You can also hold a POW/MIA Candlelight Service honoring those and their families. National President Donna Mills' 2026-2027 special join project with VFW National Commander in Chief Cory L. Geisler is ***"Operation Bring Them Home"***, which supports the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). More details to come.

History of Americanism in the Auxiliary

The VFW Auxiliary has promoted Americanism since its founding in 1914, establishing it as one of the foundations of the organization. Our organization has its roots in Americanism and these roots need to be taught to our Auxiliary so they realize that this program is key to all we do. Find out more of what the organization has done, check into the history of what we do and teach this to your auxiliaries, the Patriotic Instructor will help to guide you and teach YOU about Americanism, Patriotism, and Loyalty.

Patriotic Instructor

The Patriotic Instructor has a big job to do, it is his/her job to teach the history, traditions of the Auxiliary, Flag Etiquette and symbolism that reflects our organization, He/She shall teach proper hand salute, standing at attention, at parade rest, what the gavel means and demonstrate proper observances of patriotic holidays and their meaning throughout the year.

"I think Patriotism is like charity – it begins at home". Henry James

Yes does begin at home, in our hearts, and what we do. We a Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary member, is our obligation to teach by doing.

Carmen

Carmen Peterson, Americanism Chairman/Patriotic Instructor
csp.njvfwaux@gmail.com

Americanism End of Year Report

due April 15, 2027

Carmen Peterson
152 Main Street Port Monmouth,
NJ 07758 908-461-3614
csp.njvfwaux@gmail.com

Auxiliary Name: _____ Auxiliary # _____ District #_____
Auxiliary President:_____ Phone: _____
Auxiliary Chairman:_____ Phone: _____

Flag Education/Patriotism

1. Did your Auxiliary promote, participate in and/or organize any patriotic day and/or branch of service Birthday. ***Yes/No***

2. Did your Auxiliary distribute and/or presented American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags. ***Yes/No***
   How many American Flags and/or POW/MIA flags did you distribute and/or presented. _____

3. How many Patriotic Appreciation Citations, Certificates of appreciation or Respect of the Flag Citations presented to citizens and/or businesses in recognition of their displaying the American Flag, POW/MIA Flag and/or other displays of American Pride.

_____

4. Did your Auxiliary promote POW/MIA Recognition Day? ***Yes/No***
   How did your Auxiliary Promote POW/MIA, explain below.

5. Did your Auxiliary promote Flag Education Programs to Schools, Senior Citizens and/or Scout
   Groups, or youth groups. ***Yes/No***

Patriotic Instructor

6. Did your Auxiliary Patriotic Instructor promote the history, symbolism and proper Etiquette related to the organization and the American Flag? ***Yes/No***
   Did the Patriotic Instructor promote the history of Americanism in the Auxiliary? ***Yes/No***

POP Program

5. Did your Auxiliary participate in the POP Program. ***Yes/No***
   How many entries did you send in _____

Awards will be given out for Americanism at Convention, to participate put all information, proof, and what you did in a two-pocket folder. In doing this please organize your materials in a proper sequence. Do not just put in materials haphazardly, it make it difficult to judge. Thank you in advance.

Americanism Department Awards

National Awards

Citation and $25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Division that creates the most unique POP sign and/or meme showcasing the VFW Auxiliary.

Department Awards

- An award for the best POP sign/meme and promotion.
- An award to the auxiliary chairman for the best POW/MIA program.
- An award for the best Americanism Program.
- An award for the best Patriotic Instructor program.
- A citation to the best Flag Education Program
- A citation for the best History of Americanism in the Auxiliary
- A Citation to the best promotion of Patriotism

To participate in the Awards for Americanism, all materials must be in a two-pocket or folder with clips to hold your material. It must be in logical order, label: for example: Flag Education, Patriotic Instructor, POP program, etc. This makes it much easier to judge. All booklets must be in by April 15, 2027, for judging.

"BUDDY" POPPY PROGRAM - September

Sandy Reed
11 Darwin Road
Old Bridge, NJ 08857

September brings the beginning of a new season of Auxiliary activity, making it the perfect time to put the Buddy Poppy program back in the spotlight.

The Buddy Poppy is a simple red flower with a powerful message. It reminds us of the sacrifices made by generations of veterans and honors those who served our nation. But Buddy Poppy is also about supporting those who are still with us.

As we look ahead to Veterans Day and the busy fall season, now is the time to make Buddy Poppy plans. Contact local businesses, community organizations, schools, and event organizers to find opportunities for your Auxiliary to distribute Buddy Poppies and share their story.

Don't simply hand someone a Poppy—tell them why it matters. A few words about the meaning behind the flower can turn a simple donation into an opportunity to educate someone about our veterans and the work of the VFW and VFW Auxiliary.

I encourage every Auxiliary to set a Buddy Poppy goal for the year. Look for new locations, involve new volunteers, and find creative ways to bring the Buddy Poppy message into your community.

Our veterans gave us their service. Let us give them our remembrance, our gratitude, and our continued support.

- Remind volunteers that they are not "selling" Poppies but distributing them with the hope of getting donations.
- Donations collected during the "Buddy" Poppy distribution will be allocated to the Relief Fund per our Bylaws.
- "Buddy" Poppy Display Contest will take place at our State Convention in Wildwood 2027.
- To order Poppies,
  https://checkout.square.site/buy/UQRPIDCPOW7SXGGFS5K5KKVM
  Poppies will be sent to the post Quartermaster.



NATIONAL HOME

Sandy Reed
11 Darwin Road
Old Bridge, NJ 08857
San728@gmail.com

September is a month of new beginnings!!

Children return to school, families settle into new routines, and Auxiliaries begin another year of programs and opportunities to make a difference.

It is also the perfect time to remind our members and communities about the VFW National Home and the important work it does for military and veteran families.

For more than 100 years, the National Home has been a place where families can find support, stability, and hope. Its mission is not simply about providing assistance—it is about helping military and veteran families overcome challenges and build stronger futures.

As Auxiliary members, we have an important role in keeping this program strong. We can support the National Home through fundraising, donations, education, volunteering, and—perhaps most importantly—by making sure people know that help is available.

This September, take a few minutes at your Auxiliary meeting to talk about the National Home. Share its story with a new member. Put information in your newsletter or on your social media. Consider a fundraiser or donation project. Most importantly, learn what resources are available so that if a military or veteran family needs assistance, we can help point them in the right direction.

Sometimes making a difference begins with simply knowing where to turn.

As we begin another year of Auxiliary service, let's renew our commitment to the families who have sacrificed alongside those who served our nation.

Cancer

Alice Sandman

176 Patty Bowker Rd.

Tabernacle, NJ 08088

(609) 268 – 1556 (609) 456 – 1775

amsandman0204@gmail.com

August is World Lung Cancer Month.

Signs and Symptoms

1. A new cough that doesn't go away
2. Chest pain
3. Coughing up blood, even a small amount
4. Hoarseness
5. Shortness of breath
6. Wheezing

There is a blood test that can be ordered by your health care team. Signatera uses a simple blood draw to detect fragments of Cancer DNA.

Please don't smoke.

August is also Sun Safety Month. Please remember to use sunscreen, even when you don't think you need it.

CANCER

SEPTEMBER 2026

Alice Sandman

176 Patty Bowker Rd.

Tabernacle, NJ 08088

(609) 268 – 1556 (609) 456 – 1775

amsandman0204@gmail.com

September 11th is MFN Awareness Day. Myclofibrosis is a rare blood cancer that affects the blood and bone marrow.

September 12th is Stand Up To Cancer Day.

September 15th is World Lymphoma Day. Lymphoma a group of blood cancers that start in the infection – fighting white blood cells of the lymphatic system.

September is also Uterine Cancer, Gynecological Cancer, Blood Cancers Awareness Month. Thyroid, Ovarian, Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

September is also Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

As most of you know my Special Project was Pediatric Brain Cancer because of my great-niece, Kaitlyn, was diagnosed when she five (5) years old. While she still has the brain tumor, she is living a somewhat normal life and is about to start high school this month.

Special Project

September 2026

Alice Sandman

176 Patty Bowker Rd.

Tabernacle, NJ 08088

(609) 268 – 1556 (609) 456-1775

amsandman0204@gmail.com

Please be aware of the donations for our Special Project.

1. Vet Haven South – send to Department Treasurer (earmarked Special Project – Vet Haven South)
2. Joint Special Project – Veterans Assistance Program – send in a separate check to Department Treasurer (earmarked Joint Special Project or Veterans Assistance Program)

Please note our Department Treasurer Paula Pinto will return checks that are not earmarked correctly.

Commander's Special Project – Brig Vet Surf Camp – donations must be sent directly to the VFW Office in Trenton, earmarked Special Project.

National Joint Special Project – Operation Bring Them Home – Donations may be made one of two ways:

1. Through MALTA – Select "Make A Gift, National Presidents Special Project"
2. Write a check to National Headquarters, earmarked Special Project

Donations to be reported under Veterans and Family Support

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Department of New Jersey
Extension & Revitalization

Department of Chief of Staff
Cecelia Watkins
cece51@comcast.net

August 15, 2026

School of Instruction

District & Auxiliary President, as you start to put together your programs for your auxiliary meeting or District President getting ready to inspect your **Auxiliaries.** Many things can be a distraction and can lead to delays in your agenda Keep your eye on the prize. Making to the **Goal line** in keeping every auxiliary out of the Red Zone by making a game plan and use your **Ritual** that provides details and outline everything you need to know in running a successful meeting.
Make copies and pass out to the members who may not understand or maybe you have a new member who needs to understand what you are doing.

The atmosphere in the meeting can break and moment. Sometime some moods and tension can disrupt. You can change the mood with a positive vibe or maybe a smile can sometime set the tone.

Time is very important to members. Keep attract of time when you are planning to debate on something. Making the most of everybody, time will benefit every member. Start your meeting on time and show respect for everyone, time and schedules make your meeting go smoothly.

I have enclosed an HEALTH CHECKUP QUESTIONAIRE FOR YOUR AUXILIARY MEMBERS. Make copies for your members and have them fill them out an as I make the official visit along with the Department President I will be collecting them. I want to reach the **Goal Line** and make every auxiliary stay in the GREEN ZONE.

SERVING AMERICA'S HEROES

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Department of New Jersey
Extension & Revitalization

Department of Chief of Staff

Cecelia Watkins
cece51@comcast.net

September Promotion

This year our main goal is to try and not let any more auxiliaries to **Disband**, because the biggest job is maintaining the strength and keeping all current auxiliaries in good working order.

As your Department Chief of Staff my job is checking in to see why some auxiliary have **fewer** than 10 members attending a meeting. This can be a potential Red Flag and this is the time to get busy as soon as possible to see and make sure that they stay out of the Red Zone. It's very difficult to have an auxiliary in good working order with so few members without the proper leadership to run and getting officers to fill chairs. We must try to help increase the membership of auxiliaries and work with them to create new interest in our National Programs.

As you know many members of ailing auxiliary are getting up in years and that's why the need to seek out and recruit younger members who are willing to take over some of the work we do for our veterans and communities. Take time to read information that each program chairman sends out. There are some great new ideas floating around out there may be just what your auxiliary may need to put the spark back and lift up some new interest for your auxiliary. The more you share ideas with our Sisters & Brothers the better our auxiliary will continue to be in good working order.

Communication is essential to be able to have a **successful auxiliary**. Stay **connected** with your **members.**

SERVING AMERICA'S HEROES



Health Checkup for Your Auxiliary Member Questionnaire

1. Why are you a member of the VFW Auxiliary? _____

_____

2. Do you volunteer for, or offer financial support to, any of the eleven (11) National Programs: Veterans & Family Support; Americanism; "Buddy"® Poppy/VFW National Home; Extension; Historian/Media Relations; Hospital; Legislative; Membership; Mentoring for Leadership; Scholarships and/or Youth Activities?

YES **NO** (circle one)

3. If you answered "YES", to question #2, what do you do and why? _____

_____

_____

4. If you answered "NO" to question #2, please share the reason why. _____

_____

_____

5. Do you feel our National Programs benefit our local veterans, their families and our own members?

YES **NO** (circle one)

6. If you answered "YES", to question #5, what do you do and why? _____

_____

_____

7. If you answered "NO" to question #5, please share the reason why. _____

_____

_____

8. Are there activities you would like to see in this Auxiliary? _____

_____

_____

9. Is the monthly business meeting conducted at a time that is suitable for you?

YES **NO** (circle one)

If not, what time would you like to see the meeting scheduled? _____

10. Is the monthly meeting length appropriate for the business conducted?

YES **NO** (circle one)

11. Do you have ideas on how to increase meeting attendance? _____

_____

_____

12. What do you feel would bring new members into our organization? _____

_____

_____

13. Where do you see the VFW Auxiliary ten years from now? Will you still be a part of it? _____

_____

_____

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS 2026 – 2027

Chairman Denise Beckler
856-448-3501
denise.beckler@aol.com
12 Wright Ave. Stratford, NJ 08084

September 2026 Communication

Last month, I asked if you had thought up ways to collect and save your auxiliary memories and history. As someone from the last of the "Boomer" age, we were scrapbookers and collected pictures in photo albums, with little stickers saying what the activity was and when. Thanks to today's social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram easily make saving your auxiliary history easier than ever!

I know a lot of you have a Facebook page – think of it as your electronic "scrapbook". You know the saying, once it's on Facebook, it never goes away? That's true, but in this case, that's a good thing! Taking pictures and posting them not only serves to advertise what your post and auxiliary are doing within the community, it also serves as a photo album, safe from fire, flooding and decay. It's always accessible for any member to view.

The snapshot below is a FB post from the Westville Grove Auxiliary page – they posted pictures of their joint installation of the new year – a great historical snapshot!



If you don't have a Facebook page for your auxiliary, I strongly encourage you to set one up. They're easy to do – even this old Boomer has created a couple, LOL! If you'd like to set one up and have questions, don't hesitate to give me a call!

Hospital Communications September 2026

Barbara Wiener
barb.wiener@yahoo.com

201 6th St. N. Brigantine NJ 08203 609-464-1791

Hello everyone, welcome to the end of summer and almost the start of fall. This is a very busy time of the year for everyone, so please try not to forget about our veterans in all the nursing homes.

Here is a list of Christmas parties I have so far, so you can mark your calendars.

Vet Haven South—Thursday December 5th, 5pm

Vet Haven North—Saturday December 12th—12-3

Vineland---Sunday December 13th---11am—till…

Paramus---Saturday December 19th---2-5

Menlo---Sunday December 20th---215pm

Still waiting for two more but will keep everyone updated.

Don't forget about the awards that you could win for your Auxiliaries!!! Handing out as many cards as possible, not just holidays, but year-round, 1st place, $50 and 2nd place, $25. Also, the Auxiliary that does the most events with their post will win $50. That could be up to $100 for your Auxiliary.

Also, don't forget to give to the hospitals, they all look forward to us coming to them and having Bingos, parties, BBQ's, etc... If you donate to 5 or more your Auxiliary will receive a certificate of appreciation and gratitude from our veterans.

Please fill out your monthly forms in a timely manner, I really appreciate it. And remember to keep track of all your hours that you are volunteering at your local nursing homes as well as the state hospitals.

And to all who have sent their money in for the hospitals, THANK YOU!!!

Any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Vineland Veterans Memorial Home

September Communications 2026

Barbara Wiener, Vineland Rep. barb.wiener@yahoo.com

201 6th St. N. Brigantine NJ 08203 609-464-1791

Hello everyone, and where did the summer go?? It's been a crazy summer, hope everyone had a good one!!!

With the help from Kevin McElroy, Post 6964 and Vineland, August 6th, they presented myself and my family with a beautiful tribute for my dad. It was very heartwarming. Thank you to Margaret and Denise for being there also. I can't thank everyone enough who was involved.

Theres a lot happening in the next few months….

Circus—Wednesday, October 14th---2pm

I' looking for about 6 or 7 volunteers for that day and still looking for circus stuffed animals.

Turkey Bowling and Pie---Wednesday, November 18th----2pm

State Christmas Party---Sunday December 13th---2pm

For this one, I am also looking for 8 volunteers for a skit. (more info to follow)

These are fun events and everyone is invited, again, no invitations are needed.

They are looking for a few items, white tees, socks with rubber grips, tissue boxes and always, Tastycake's and large candy bars.

Remember, you don't have to just visit during the holiday season, they enjoy seeing you at all times of the year.

Any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me.

Thank you

Hospital & VAVS Monthly Activity Report

2026-2027

Please mail/email this report within 30 days of any activity to

Barbara Wiener 201 6th St. N. Brigantine NJ 08203 barb.wiener@yahoo.com

Auxiliary President_____**Date**_____

Auxiliary Name & Number_____

Auxiliary Chairman_____**Phone Number**_____

If the Event was held by a Hospital Representative and not an Auxiliary

Hospital Rep Name_____**Date**_____

LIST THE NAMES OF ANY VOLUNTEERS ON THE BACK OF THE SHEET

Section 1 – Items or Money Donated to Hospital

Name of Hospital the donation was made_____

Date of Donation_____Approx Dollar Amt._____

Section 2 – Hospital Party, Non-sponsored Hospital parties or any other activity

Name of Hospital/Facility the Party was held_____

Type of Activity_____

NUMBER of **VOLUNTEERS**_____Number of Hours_____

Number of Students_____Number of Hours_____

Section 3 – Reporting Regularly Scheduled Volunteers

Name of Volunteer_____

Name of Hospital/Facility_____

Total Hours for this Report_____Dates Volunteered_____

Does this Volunteer qualify for a Hospital Service Pin----Yes_____No_____

If yes, **Auxiliary Name and Number**_____
Membership Number of Qualifing Volunteer_____

Total Number of **Members** that participated_____

PLEASE SEND THIS REPORT IN ON A TIMELY MANNER

Proposal for a Statewide VFW Auxiliary Legislative Day

Spectacular September to you, and Happy Labor Day!! We're doing something different this year – "*A Statewide VFW Auxiliary Legislative Day*". A successful Legislative Day requires careful planning and preparation. Our National President, Donna Mills, emphasized the importance of our Auxiliary's grassroots efforts to support Veterans. Together, we serve as a powerful force multiplier, making a significant impact in advocating for their needs, being the "Most Valuable Player". To ensure a successful Legislative Day, it is essential for me as your Department Chairman to connect with all District Presidents and District Legislative chairman for assistance in coordinating efforts within your respective regions.

Purpose

The VFW Auxiliary Legislative Day is designed to unite Auxiliary members across the state in a coordinated day of advocacy. Rather than traveling to a single location, members will meet with their own state senators and representatives in their local legislative districts on the same day. This statewide approach allows more members to participate, increases the number of legislators reached, and ensures every community has a VFW Auxiliary presence advocating for veterans, service members, and their families.

Goals

- Engage every legislative district in the state.
- Build relationships with state legislators before issues arise.
- Educate elected officials on current veterans' issues.
- Present a unified legislative message across the Department.
- Encourage Auxiliary members to become active legislative advocates.
- Increase participation by reducing travel time and expense.
- Demonstrate the strength and reach of the VFW Auxiliary throughout the state.

Theme

"One State. One Mission. One Voice for Veterans"

Every Auxiliary member can be the **Most Valuable Player (MVP)** by advocating for veterans in their own communities. Attached is the projected planning timeline. **More to come!**

Planning Timeline 4–6 Months Before

- As your Department Legislative Chairman, I will select our State Legislative Day.
- I will Coordinate with Department President Camilla Albano.
- Notify District Presidents.
- Publish "Save the Date."
- Develop legislative priorities and talking points.

3 Months Before

Districts will identify:

- Local legislative offices, State Senators and State Representatives

Proposal for a Statewide VFW Auxiliary Legislative Day

-

Each Auxiliary will schedule appointments with their legislators.

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2 Months Before

I will Conduct a statewide virtual training covering:

- How to meet with legislators
- Legislative etiquette
- How to make "The Ask"
- Veterans' issues
- Leave-behind materials
- Reporting procedures

---

1 Month Before

I will provide every participating District with the following items for each Auxiliary:

- Legislative packets
- Fact sheets
- Current legislative priorities
- Contact information
- Appointment checklist
- Sample introductions
- Sample meeting agenda
- Social media graphics

Legislative Day Schedule Morning

Auxiliary members meet in their home districts.

Suggested attire:

- VFW Auxiliary shirt or blazer
- Name badge

Bring:

- Legislative packets
- Business cards
- Department information

Meeting Agenda (20–30 Minutes) Welcome

Introduce yourselves.

Explain who the VFW Auxiliary is.

Thank the legislator(s) for meeting.

Share the Mission Discuss:

Who the VFW Auxiliary serves

Proposal for a Statewide VFW Auxiliary Legislative Day

-
- Programs
- Community service
- Veteran outreach

Discuss Legislative Priorities Examples:

- Veteran healthcare
- Mental health
- Suicide prevention
- Homeless veterans
- Caregiver support
- VA funding
- Women veterans
- Rural healthcare access
- Transition assistance
- Military family support

The ASK

Every meeting should include a clear and specific request.
Example:
"Representative/Senator, we respectfully ask for your support of legislation that improves the lives of veterans, service members, and their families. We also ask that you keep the VFW Auxiliary as a trusted resource when veterans' issues come before the legislature." Additional asks may include:

- Visit your local VFW Post.
- Attend a veteran’s event.
- Meet with veterans annually.
- Support future veterans' legislation.
- Become familiar with issues affecting veterans in your district.

Closing

Thank them.
Present VFW Auxiliary information.
Take a group photo.
Invite them to visit the Post or Auxiliary.

Statewide Participation Throughout the day:
Members post photos using hashtags.
Examples:

Proposal for a Statewide VFW Auxiliary Legislative Day

-
- #VFWAuxiliaryLegislative
  #OneVoiceForVeterans
- #VFWAuxiliaryMVP
  I can even create a hashtag for our Department!!!!!

After the Meetings Each
Auxiliary submits:

- Legislator(s) visited
- Members attending
- Issues discussed
- Commitments received
- Photos
- Follow-up needed

Reports are compiled into a statewide Legislative Day Report.

Follow-Up
Within two weeks:

- Send thank-you letters.
- Provide any requested information.
- Continue building relationships.
- Invite legislators to Auxiliary events.

Legislative advocacy should be an ongoing effort, not a one-day event.

Expected Outcomes

- Every legislative district represented.
- Increased visibility of the VFW Auxiliary.
- Stronger relationships with elected officials.
- Greater member involvement in advocacy.
- A coordinated statewide voice for veterans.

There will be more information to come soon in order to get the ball rolling for this Statewide VFW Auxiliary Legislative Day!! Please get very excited as we prepare to get this initiative off the ground!

Sincerely,
Victoria L Hendrix – Department Legislative Chair
Email: legal.vhendrix@gmail.com #(856)577-1314
Address: P O Box 385 Mount Holly, NJ 08060



MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM 2026-2027

SEPTEMBER COMMUNICATION

Margaret Russo
732-887-7947
jerseymom1207@aol.com

15 Grant St.
Sewaren, NJ 07077

I'm so excited about our 2026-27 Membership Facebook Page. It will keep you informed on how we're doing, give you a boost etc. Please follow the page I would love to have hundreds of followers, let's show everyone what a great team NJ has (the QR code is below).

Now on to real business as of this week we only have 37 Auxiliaries that are at or above our first team goal of 80% by August 31st. I'm hoping to report in my next promotion that all our Auxiliaries have met the challenge and moved the yardage down toward the goal line.

As summer is quickly leaving us and school is starting soon, let's not forget those end of the year Street Fairs, School Open Houses, there will be potential new members there. Don't keep the ball of information to yourself, throw it out to let new members catch it.

As always let's not forget that the game is always on. We are one team coming together to Ignite Our Passion of ***Serving America's Heroes***.





DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES

$35 for Auxiliaries that reach 80% by August 31, 2026
$50 for Auxiliaries that reach 90% by October 31, 2026
$100 for Auxiliaries that reach 100% by December 31, 2026
$150 for Auxiliaries that reach 104% by March 31, 2027

DEPARTMENT AWARDS FOR DISTRICTS

$50 for Districts that reach 100% by December 31, 2026
One drawing of $100 for Districts that reach 100% by April 30, 2027

Fall and Spring Conference Auxiliary Drawings:

Three (3) $50 drawings for Auxiliaries that reach 90% in membership by the week before Fall Conference 2026!

Three (3) $50 drawings for Auxiliaries that reach 100% in membership by the week before Spring Conference 2027!

Individual Member Awards:

Just One Card Drawings

One (1) $25 drawing to the recruiter who threw a new member into the Team: Fall Conference

One (1) $25 drawing to the recruiter who threw a new member into the Team: Spring Conference

One (1) $25 drawing to the individual who threw a new member into the Team: Dept. Convention

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

All America Auxiliary Recognition Contest

September Promotion

As your Auxiliary starts the new 2026-2027 year. Remember to keep track of your auxiliaries activities of supporting your community an National programs. and any other activities your auxiliary is doing for our veterans. I know many of your auxiliary members do a lot of work. Now its time for to put your actions together and share with your brothers and sisters . Presidents your are the leader and your participation in the Nation Program along with your Post, Auxiliary, and even your District. This is the best way to show what you are doing as you dive into The All America Auxiliary Recognition Contest, you get to share not only auxiliary news but wonderful things you are doing as auxiliary members.

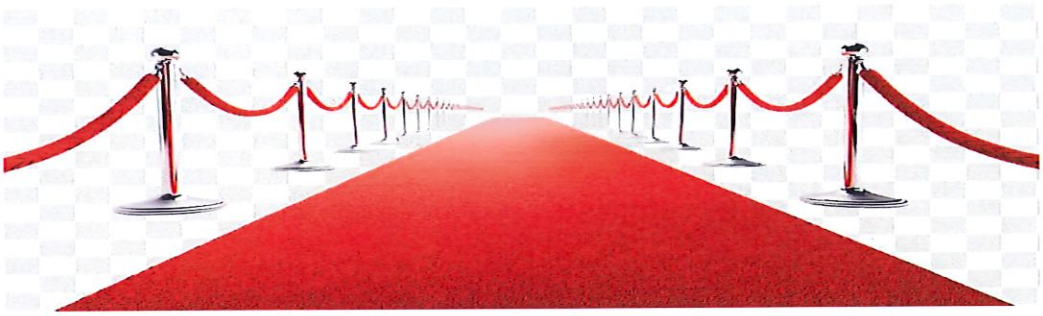
I'm looking forward in seeing members out in the communities and doing the National Programs. Have fun and have a great year

Cecelia Watkins

All American Recognition Contest Chairman

Scholarships
SEPTEMBER 2026
Chairman – Diane Merfert
732-616-1813 dianemerf@aol.com





As we roll out the RED CARPET.. I've attached some tools you can use to promote the programs.. Please share them. Watch for the deadlines.

School starts in NJ the beginning of September so you still have time to order brochures for the Patriots Penn and Voice of Democracy programs. Bring them to the schools and remember you are representing our Organization. Dress like YOU are on that red carpet.

I've also included the applications for both programs.

Deadline for both programs on the Auxiliary level is October 31, 2026.

Start planning for the Patriotic Art Contests for all levels of students.

Need additional help- Just reach out and I will do my best to assist.

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

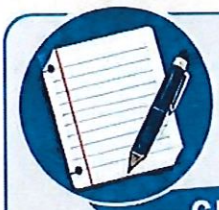
VFW AUXILIARY

VFW YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Turn Your Patriotism Into Scholarship Dollars!

2026–2027 THEME

"What a Veteran Taught Me About America."



Patriot's Pen

GRADES 6–8

WRITTEN ESSAY CONTEST

- 300–400 words
- Share your thoughts on this year's patriotic theme
- National awards up to **$5,000**



Voice of Democracy

GRADES 9–12

AUDIO ESSAY COMPETITION

- Record a 3–5 minute original audio essay
- Compete for more than **$2 MILLION** in scholarships
- National First Place Scholarship: **$35,000**

ENTRY DEADLINE
OCTOBER 31, 2026

Submit your completed entry to your local participating VFW Post.

Scan to Learn More!

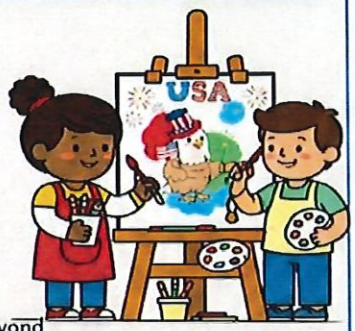
- RULES
- ENTRY FORMS
- ELIGIBILITY
- FIND A LOCAL VFW POST



INSPIRE. WRITE. COMPETE. SUCCEED.

VFW AUXILIARY
NATIONAL PATRIOTIC ART CONTESTS
2026-2027

ILLUSTRATING AMERICA



WHO:
Students in Grades K–8

WHAT:
Patriotic Art Contest

WHERE:
U.S.A. & Beyond
(See Official Rules)

WHEN:
New Deadline
December 15, 2026

WHY:
Win Up to $100 & Showcase Students' Artistic Abilities!

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Grades K–2	Grades 3–5	Grades 6–8
1st: $100	1st: $100	1st: $100
2nd: $50	2nd: $50	2nd: $50
3rd: $25	3rd: $25	3rd: $25

YOUNG AMERICAN CREATIVE PATRIOTIC ART CONTEST



WHO:
Students in Grades 9–12

WHAT:
Patriotic Art Contest

WHERE:
U.S.A. & Beyond
(See Official Rules)

WHEN:
Deadline
March 31, 2027

WHY:
Win Up to $15,000 & Showcase Artistic Abilities!

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

1st Place – $15,000
2nd Place – $7,500
3rd Place – $3,500
4th Place – $2,500
5th & 6th Place – $1,500
7th–10th Place – $1,000
11th Place – $750
12th–23rd Place – $500

3-DIMENSIONAL PATRIOTIC ART CONTEST



WHO:
Students in Grades 9–12

WHAT:
3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest

WHERE:
U.S.A. & Beyond
(See Official Rules)

WHEN:
Deadline
March 31, 2027

WHY:
Win Up to $2,500 & Showcase Artistic Abilities!

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

1st Place – $2,500
2nd Place – $1,500
3rd Place – $1,000

ALL CONTESTS U.S.A. & BEYOND
(See Official Rules for full details)

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

- ★ Illustrating America: Dec. 15, 2026
- ★ Young American Creative: March 31, 2027
- ★ 3-Dimensional: March 31, 2027

NATIONAL WINNERS
Announced at the VFW Auxiliary National Convention

★ SCAN FOR OFFICIAL RULES & ENTRY FORMS ★

ILLUSTRATING AMERICA

YOUNG AMERICAN CREATIVE PATRIOTIC ART CONTEST

3-DIMENSIONAL PATRIOTIC ART CONTEST

★ Questions? Contact your Department Young American Creative Chairman ★

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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** 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** 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.

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

Local VFW Post Information:

Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Best Time To Call: _____

Alternate Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Best Time To Call: _____

VFW VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Twisted X Brands
A Proud Sponsor

Revised 0/2026

PATRIOT'S PEN®

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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** 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** 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

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 Veteran's 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: _____

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Twisted X Brands
A Proud Sponsor

Veterans & Family Support Promotion

September 2026

Carolyn Rovito
251 Church Street, Apt 1
Lodi, NJ 07644
Crovito.2@gmail.com

Happy September! I hope everyone had a great summer and has prepared for the different programs you will be conducting with your Auxiliaries this year to support Veterans and their families.

September is National Suicide Prevention month. National Veterans Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day is September 22nd. Veterans and Military personnel are at significantly higher risk of suicide than a civilian. There are many impacts to these calculations and many ways we can support service members and Veterans during this month.

Make sure to publish the following

Veterans Crisis Line – Dial 988 or 1-800-27308255 to speak with a counselor to gain access to assistance

Or Text 838255 to chat with a VA responder

You can have these helpful numbers posted in your local Post and social network sites to make sure this information is accessible to any Veteran in need.

Your Auxiliary can show support for Military & Veteran Suicide Awareness by making stickers or pins of the blue tear drop that is the symbol for Military & Veteran Suicide Awareness.

Your Auxiliary can also show your support by conducting a fundraiser or simply donating to a Military & Veteran Suicide Awareness/ Assistance organization. At one point, my Auxiliary had purchased Suicide prevention awareness ribbons and sold them to our members and community then donated the proceeds to Stop Solider Suicide Foundation. Stop Solider Suicide is a great organization out of New Jersey that helps those in crisis directly.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES
September 2026

Terri Andryszczak
24 Beech Street
Kearny, NJ 07032
Phone: 732-322-9970
Email: vfwpost1302aux@gmail.com

NEW DEADLINE! DECEMBER 15, 2026 TO AUXILIARY!!

Illustrating America Contest entries must be submitted to the Auxiliary for judging by December 15th.

The contest is open to any student in grades K-8. The contest consists of three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. Each first-place winner at the Department in each grade division will be forwarded to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters. National awards first, second and third place in each grade division.

Contest rules are:

A. Entry must be completed during the current school year.
B. Entry must be two dimensional.
C. Entry must be on canvas or paper.
D. Canvas entries must be submitted on a stretcher frame or canvas board.
E. Paper entries must be reinforced with heavy paper or cardboard.
F. Do not frame art with wood, metal, plastic or glass.
G. Mats may be used, including mounted and floating mats.
H. Entries may not be smaller than 8"x10" and not larger than 18"x24", including the mat.
I. Crayons, paint, glitter, marker, pastel, pencil, watercolor, mixed or other media may be used.
J. If the American Flag is used, it DOES NOT need to conform to the Federal Flag Code in relation to colors or numbers of stars and stripes.
K. Completed contest entry form MUST BE submitted with art entry.
L. Student's name, age and grade level must be printed on the back of art entry.
M. Parent or guardian signature REQUIRED on contest entry form.
N. Coloring sheets, digital art and photography ARE NOT accepted.

Deadlines are:
December 15, 2026 – to Auxiliary
January 15, 2027 – to Department
January 31, 2027 – to National Headquarters

Entry forms can be found in MALTA or VFW Auxiliary website.

VFW Auxiliary National Patriotic Art Contest
Illustrating America
Official Rules and Eligibility 2026-2027

VFW Auxiliary is pleased to present this national art contest designed to introduce, encourage and recognize young artists with patriotism through artistic expression. Entries will be judged on effort and the process of creation through elements like line, shape and color with focus on patriotic themes and techniques.

VFW Auxiliary National level awards

Grades K-2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8
First place: $100 gift card	First place: $100 gift card	First place: $100 gift card
Second place: $50 gift card	Second place: $50 gift card	Second place: $50 gift card
Third place: $25 gift card	Third place: $25 gift card	Third place: $25 gift card

New Deadline Date

Student entry is due to a participating sponsoring VFW Auxiliary for judging.

December 15, 2026

Contest Eligibility

- Students do not have to be related to a VFW or a VFW Auxiliary member to enter.
- Students in grades K-8 by **December 15** deadline who are enrolled in a public, private, parochial or home school 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 resident (the application for which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen.
- Foreign exchange students are **not** eligible.
- Previous winners of VFW Auxiliary Illustrating America Art Contests on the National level are **not** eligible for the same grade division of which they are a previous national winner. However, the students may enter the subsequent grade division.

Contest Rules

- Entry must be original and created by the student, copying and tracing existing works is prohibited.
- Entry must be completed during the current school year.
- Entry must be two-dimensional art that has length, width and is flat.
- Entry must be on canvas or paper.
- Canvas entries must be submitted on a stretcher frame or canvas board.
- Paper entries must be reinforced with heavy paper, cardboard or foamboard.
- Do **not** frame art with wood, metal, plastic or glass.
- Mats may be used, including mounted and floating mats.
- Entries may **not** be smaller than 8"x10" and **not** larger than 18"x24" **including** mat.
- Crayons, paint, glitter, marker, pastel, pencil, watercolor, mixed or other media may be used.
- Coloring sheets, digital art, AI and photography are not accepted.
- If the American Flag is displayed in a manner that clearly identifies it as such, it **does not** need to adhere to the Federal Flag Code specifications regarding its colors and number of stars and stripes.
- Students' name, age and grade level must be printed on back of art entry.
- Completed typed or printed legible entry form including parent and/or guardian signatures.

VFW Auxiliary National reserves the right to modify these rules and eligibility without notice.

VFW Auxiliary National Patriotic Art Contest

New Deadline Dates!

Illustrating America

Entry Form 2026-2027

Please print or type. Incomplete and/or illegible entry forms will disqualify the entrant.

Student Name: _____ Age: _____

School Name: _____ Grade: _____

Title of entry: _____ Date completed: _____

Media used: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

*Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

*I certify that I have read the foregoing Official Rules and Eligibility **(page 1)** and fully understand and agree to the contents.

*I hereby grant permission for my child's art and name to be published on the VFW Auxiliary National website and social media and to be used for all promotional purposes by the VFW Auxiliary National organization.

*VFW Auxiliary is not responsible for entries which are lost, late, illegible, damaged, incomplete, misdirected, stolen, or reproduced. All scores are final as received from the judges. All contestants must agree to abide by the contest rules. Falsifying information on the entry form or any violation of these rules shall cause immediate disqualification and forfeiture of scholarship.

Participating Sponsoring VFW Auxiliary Contact Information

Contact Name: _____ Contact Phone: _____

Contact Email: _____ VFW Aux. No.: _____

To avoid entrant disqualification, this section is to be filled out completely **by VFW Auxiliary** at each judging level. VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters only accepts Department level first-place winning entries from the **Department President.**

Participating Sponsoring VFW Aux. Name & No: _____ **Dept:** _____

December 15: Student entries due to participating sponsoring VFW Auxiliary for judging.
Authorized VFW Aux. verification signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Artwork is the property of the student and must be returned immediately to the address listed above if not advancing to the next level.

January: (Optional) First place winner from each participating sponsoring VFW Aux. due to VFW Aux. District judging.
Authorized VFW Auxiliary District verification signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Artwork is the property of the student and must be returned immediately to the address listed above if not advancing to the next level.

January 15: First place winner from each participating sponsoring VFW Aux. or optional VFW Aux. District judging due to the VFW Aux. Department judging.
VFW Aux. Department President signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Artwork is the property of the student and must be returned immediately to the address listed above if not advancing to the next level.

January 31: First place winner from each VFW Aux. Department must be received at VFW Aux. National Headquarters for judging.

February/March: All students will be notified of entry status via email provided on entry form. Selected winning entries may be announced on VFW Aux. National social media pages and an image may be shown at the VFW Aux. National Convention.

March/April: Returning process begins. All art entries received at VFW Aux. National will be returned to students to the address provided on the entry form.

VFW Auxiliary National reserves the right to modify these rules and eligibility without notice.