

Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Department of Pennsylvania  
Program Booklet  
2025-2026

State Commander William Roland



**“Teach-Coach-Mentorship”**

# Teach – Coach - Mentorship

## ***All State Post/District Commanders and Quartermasters Worksheet***

**To be considered for All State Status this worksheet must be submitted to  
Department Headquarters, 4002 Fenton Avenue. Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943  
Postmarked no later than April 30, 2026 to receive Cap at Convention  
*ALL STATE WORKSHEET IS MANDATORY***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Post # \_\_\_\_\_ District# \_\_\_\_\_

**Commander's Hat Size; \_\_\_\_\_ Mandatory Criteria Quartermaster Hat Size: \_\_\_\_\_**

- Membership Properly Reported as attaining percentage goal of 101%
- All Post and Home Association By-Laws (if Applicable) **must** be Current (within 5 years) Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Post/Home Association **must** have Articles of Incorporation on file with Department Headquarters. Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Purchase Buddy Poppies. (minimum 100 Poppies) Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_
- Voice of Democracy Entry. Yes [ ☐ ] No [ ☐ ] Must have minimum of one (1) entry to District Judging
- Patriot's Pen Entry. Yes [ ☐ ] No [ ☐ ] Must have minimum of one (1) entry to District Judging
- Donation to Commander's Special Project (at least \$100.00) Must be sent to Department Headquarters **Earmarked Special Project (Pittsburgh Warriors Hockey)**. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_
- All Posts must submit a total of four Community Service reports for 2025-2026: One report each Quarter starting July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 . Filing monthly is an option and preferred.
- Donation to Arthritis (\$50.00) Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_
- Donation to Diabetes (\$50.00) Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_
- Donation to Barger Nursing Scholarship (\$50.00) Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check: \_\_\_\_\_
- Donation for National Home (\$50.00) Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check: \_\_\_\_\_
- Post/District must have submission of one EMT or 911 Dispatcher or Firefighter or Police Officer Candidate for Dept. Safety Award **(Entries must be received in Dept. Headquarters by December 15, 2025)**
- All Post Quarterly Trustee Reports Including June 2025 must be on file.  
Dates Trustee Reports sent to Dept. June: \_\_\_\_\_ September \_\_\_\_\_ December \_\_\_\_\_ March \_\_\_\_\_
- Post must have QM Bonded and on record at Department HQ. **by November 30, 2025** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_
- Post Commander and/or Sr. Vice Commander and/or Jr. Vice Commander and/or Quartermaster **must attend all District Meetings (Post/District CMDR must attend at least attend 50% of ALL District Meetings)**.
- Post/District must not be in arrears for the current or prior year (e.g., dues, audits, Reports, etc.)
- Post Inspection is recorded for 2025-2026 by January 31, 2026. Date Inspected \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_
- All-State requirements must be completed July 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026, to receive cap at Convention.

**Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Pennsylvania**  
**Buddy Poppy Program Contest**  
**2025-2026**

**Goals of the Program:**

1. 100% Post and Auxiliary participation throughout the Department.
2. Place Pennsylvania in the "**One Million Poppy Club.**"
3. Encourage every member to wear a Buddy Poppy at all VFW functions and in their communities.
4. Remember our fallen by blanketing our communities with Buddy Poppies.
5. Increase participation of Posts and Auxiliaries in Buddy Poppy Display contest.

**DEPARTMENT CONTESTS FOR 2025-2026**

1. **District Chairperson** who attains 100% Post participation with three (3) poppies per member, by **December 31, 2025** (ordered from Department) will receive a Certificate of Appreciation, and a \$100.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate. These awards will be given out at the Mid-Winter Conference, January 15-18, 2026.
2. **District Chairperson** who attains 100% Post participation and exceeding last year's purchases by 25% before **April 30, 2026**, will receive a \$100.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate.
3. The first three (3) **District Chairperson** to have purchases of/or exceeding five (5) Buddy Poppies per member by **April 30, 2026**, will receive a \$100.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate for the District.
4. If the Department makes it into the "**One Million Poppy Club**" by **April 30, 2026**, each **District Chairperson** will receive a special Commanders Choice Award and every **Post** will receive a specially designed certificate.
5. All **Posts** participating in the Buddy Poppy Program will receive a Certificate of Participation. These certificates will be given out at the State Convention.
6. **Posts** must purchase one (1) Buddy Poppy per member (minimum of 100 Poppies) to qualify for All-State
7. **Posts** exceeding ten (10) Buddy Poppies per member in purchases will receive a Buddy Poppy Pin for the Post Chairperson. These Pins will be given out at the State Convention.
8. The top **Post** from each division purchasing the most Buddy Poppies per member by **April 30, 2026**, will receive a Buddy Poppy Award Plaque and \$75.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate. These Plaques will be given out at the State Convention.

**Group 1: Divisions 1 through 2 based on the National Membership Divisions.**

**Group 2: Divisions 3 through 6 based on the National Membership Divisions.**

**Group 3: Divisions 7 through 11 based on the National Membership Divisions.**

## **BUDDY POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST RULES**

1. While Poppies purchased in a prior year may be used in the Display, the 2025-2026 minimum Poppy Purchase is required to submit an entry.
2. All Buddy Poppy Display entries must adhere to the National Convention Buddy Poppy Display guidelines (Attachment C).
3. At least one Poppy used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.
4. All Displays will be judged on effectiveness, purpose, clarity of theme, suitability, originality, beauty and number of Poppies used. Where a sample of a large number of identical items (such as corsages or wreaths) is entered, full credit shall be given for the total number of Poppies used.
5. All Buddy Poppy Displays will be judged based on the following categories:

**Category 1. Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign.**  
**Category 2. Memorial or Inspirational Displays**  
**Category 3. Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies.**
6. All displays must have been assigned a category by the sponsoring Post or Auxiliary. Displays will not be judged if not categorized. Any display not meeting the qualifications for Categories 1 or 2 shall automatically be entered in Category 3.
7. All displays must have an official display entry form filled out completely. (Attachment A).
8. All Posts/Auxiliaries will bring their poppies display to their perspective District Convention to be judged.
9. All 1<sup>st</sup> Place District winners in each category will advance to the Department Judging.
10. Buddy Poppy Display Entries will be judged during the 2025-2026 Department Convention following the Patriotic Rally.
11. The display area will be announced. All displays **MUST** be set up prior to the opening of the VFW Friday morning business session.
12. There will be five (5) judges, two each selected by the VFW and Auxiliary Department Chairpersons. The Chairperson will select the fifth judge. Judging will be completed in a closed forum.
13. Contest winners will be announced on Saturday prior to the nomination of officers.
14. Prizes will be awarded for 1<sup>st</sup> place, 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in each category.
15. Displays placing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Department Contest are eligible to advance to the National Contest. The Post or Auxiliary **must** notify the Department Adjutant in writing by June 30, 2026 if they are attending the National Convention.
16. **The Department will not transport** any displays to or from any convention.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Buddy Poppy Display Form  
2025-2026**

Theme Explanation:

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**Fill out completely (print), separate and place under your display.**

Number of Poppies used: \_\_\_\_\_

Category of Display: \_\_\_\_\_

Post or Auxiliary - Name and Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**ATTACHMENT B****Winner Transmittal Sheet**

POST: \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_

**Category 1: Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign** (window, booth, parade, poster displays, campaign promotions, etc.)

- Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message soliciting a donation for and wearing of the VFW Buddy Poppy.
- At least one Poppy used in the display must be in its original form and color, with a label attached.

**Please state the THEME, POST, DISTRICT below**

1st Place Category 1: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Category 1: \_\_\_\_\_3<sup>rd</sup> Place Category 1: \_\_\_\_\_

**Category 2: Memorial or Inspirational Displays** (wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes).

- Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and Country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the Buddy Poppy.
- At least one Poppy used in the display must be in its original form and color, with a label attached.

**Please state the THEME, POST, DISTRICT below**

1st Place Category 2: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Category 2: \_\_\_\_\_3<sup>rd</sup> Place Category 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Category 3. Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies.** (Post Home displays, table centerpieces, corsages, pictures, plaques, models, scenes, hats, novelty pieces, etc.)

- Any display not meeting the qualifications for Categories 1 or 2 shall automatically be entered in Category 3.
- At least one Poppy used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

**Please state the THEME, POST, DISTRICT below**

1st Place Category 3: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Category 3: \_\_\_\_\_3<sup>rd</sup> Place Category 3: \_\_\_\_\_

A Buddy Poppy Display Contest will be held at the National Convention. Rules have been designed to put emphasis on the purpose and effectiveness of the displays. It is suggested that Department Contest rules be set up in conformance with this outline.

**DISPLAYS WILL BE PRESENTED AND JUDGED IN THREE CATEGORIES:**

**Category 1. Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign.** (window, booth, parade, poster displays, campaign promotions, etc.)

- Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message soliciting a donation for and wearing of the VFW Buddy Poppy.
- At least one Poppy used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

**Category 2. Memorial or Inspirational Displays.** (wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes).

- Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and Country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the Buddy Poppy.
- At least one Poppy used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

**Category 3. Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies.** (Post Home displays, table centerpieces, corsages, pictures, plaques, models, scenes, hats, novelty pieces, etc.)

- Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and Country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the Buddy Poppy.
- Any display not meeting the qualifications for Categories 1 or 2 shall automatically be entered in Category 3.
- At least one Poppy used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.
- Departments purchasing over 250,000 Poppies will be allowed two displays in each of the three categories for the National Display Contest. All others will be allowed one display in each of the three categories, no deviations.
- The Department Adjutant will notify the Buddy Poppy Director, in writing, by June 30 of the Posts that will represent the Department in each category. This will allow the necessary time to ensure each entry has sufficient space to set up at the National Convention. **NOTE:** The National Buddy Poppy Committee shall have no responsibility in setting up, taking down, or returning displays.
- Displays may be entered and set up at any time from 9 a.m. Saturday until 4 p.m. on Monday of the Convention week.
- Displays shall be set up in space provided in the Convention facility. At the time the display is set up, the responsible person must complete an entry form which will show the category of competition, the number of Poppies used, the purpose of the display, the Post and/or VFW Auxiliary number and location, and the name of the person who will dismantle and remove the display at the close of the Convention.
- Displays may be accompanied by a white card, not to exceed 4 inches by 6 inches in size, on which is lettered in black ink an explanation of the theme for the display or other information of interest to the viewers or the judges.
- Post name, number or location may not be visible on display entries. **Failure to comply will result in disqualification.**

## **Judging**

Judging displays will be based on effectiveness, purpose, clarity of theme, suitability, originality, beauty and number of Poppies used. Where a sample of a large number of identical items (such as corsages or wreaths) is entered, full credit shall be given for the total number of Poppies.

### **VFW Buddy Poppy Chairperson:**

Roger Miller (Post 2493)  
145 Fig Tree way, Manchester, PA. 17345  
Email: [rfmillervfw@gmail.com](mailto:rfmillervfw@gmail.com) Phone: 717-654-1446

### **Auxiliary Buddy Poppy Chairperson:**

Bev Kemmerer (Auxiliary Post 8317)  
15 Pine Run Lane, Shickshinny 18655  
E-mail: [bevkemmerer@gmail.com](mailto:bevkemmerer@gmail.com) Phone: 570-332-4706



**EFFECTIVE 7/1/23 NATIONAL VFW INCREASED THE COST OF  
BUDDY POPPIES**

**PLEASE USE THIS NEW FORM WHEN ORDERING BUDDY POPPIES – REV. 7/1/2023**

RETURN ORDER FORM WITH CHECK TO  
Department of PA, Veterans of Foreign Wars  
4002 Fenton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943  
1-717-234-7927  
**ATTN: BUDDY POPPY ORDER**

<b>QUANTITY REQUESTED</b>	<b>MERCHANDISE</b>	<b>QUANTITY COST</b>
	BUDDY POPPIES	<b>100 @ 30.00</b> Increased 7/1/23
	BUDDY POPPIES	<b>500 @ \$150.00</b> Increased 7/1/23
	BUDDY POPPIES	<b>1000 @ \$300.00</b> Increased 7/1/23
	BANKS	10 @ \$50.00 Increased 9/1/22
	VOLUNTEER BUTTONS	25 @ \$15.00
	POPPY BOARDS	50 @ \$25.00 Increased 9/1/22

**NOTE: ALL ORDERS MUST INCLUDE SHIPPING CHARGE BELOW**

100/1,999 POPPIES - \$7.00  
2,000/3,999 POPPIES - \$10.00  
4,000/ 7,999 POPPIES - \$14.00  
8,000/11,999 POPPIES – \$21.00  
12,000/15,999 POPPIES - \$28.00  
16,000/20,000 POPPIES - \$32.00  
BANKS/BUTTONS/BOARDS - \$7.00

**ALL ORDERS MUST BE PAID BEFORE THEY CAN BE SHIPPED**

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY ALL INFORMATION**

**Ship to:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**ALL BUDDY POPPY ORDERS MUST INCLUDE SHIPPING  
CHARGE – IF NOT INCLUDED THE ORDER WILL BE  
RETURNED**

CHECK# \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT \$ \_\_\_\_\_ INCLUDING \_\_\_\_\_ SHIPPING CHARGE  
POST# \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT # \_\_\_\_\_  
AUX# \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT # \_\_\_\_\_

For Department use only: Order received at Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Shipped: \_\_\_\_\_ Credited under Post: \_\_\_\_\_



**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars**

**Arthritis Program**  
**2025-2026**

**Contest Rules:**

It's time for the annual Arthritis contest.

The program is very simple. For every donation of \$25.00 by a Post, Auxiliary, or District, an entry ticket will be put in for a chance to win a lifetime membership.

There will be two (2) drawings at the next state convention.

Please Note: A \$50.00 donation is a requirement for the All-State Membership Program.

Thank you for all your support of this program in the past and please continue your support.

**Please send check to:**

Department of PA VFW  
4002 Fenton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17109  
Earmark the Check "Arthritis"

**If you have any questions, please contact:**

Larry Hawthorne  
VFW Department of Pennsylvania Arthritis Chairperson

Cell: 724-699-2521

Email: [larry.hawthorne@att.net](mailto:larry.hawthorne@att.net)



**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Jack Barger Sr. Memorial Nursing Scholarship Program  
2025-2026**



A Memorial Nursing Scholarship Fund was established at the 1989 VFW State Convention held in King of Prussia, PA. This fund is in honor of Jack E. Barger Sr., Department Commander, 1987-1988, who passed away during his term of office.

A \$500.00 scholarship was awarded in 1990 and over the past 30+ years the amounts and number of scholarships awarded has increased to six (6) \$1,000.00 scholarships per year. The two main efforts to raise money for these scholarships are requesting donations from VFW Posts and Auxiliaries and the Annual Nursing Scholarship Golf Scramble.

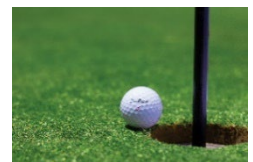
Candidates for this award will be solicited through the Pennsylvania Nursing Association (PNA) and its contacts with nursing schools in Pennsylvania. Chairpersons and deans of nursing schools will be asked to submit names of worthy candidates. The recipient(s) will be chosen by means of a lottery conducted by the Pennsylvania Nursing Association.

There are two qualifications placed on the candidate(s) by the VFW: (1) the individual be a veteran or the son or daughter of a veteran; (2) be a resident of Pennsylvania.

With the help of VFW posts and auxiliaries within Pennsylvania supporting the Golf Scramble by buying advertisements in the program book we will be able to increase the donation for the golf scramble to over \$10,000.00 each year. All monies for advertisements in the Golf Scramble Program Book and any monetary donations will go directly to the scholarship fund. Remember that none of this money supports the golfers participating in the scramble; however, they do support the scholarship program. **Please Note: A \$50.00 donation is a requirement for the All-State Membership Program**

Yours in Comradeship,

Roxann Shearer  
Barger Scholarship State Chairperson  
717-654-2453



**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars**

**Diabetes Program  
2025-2026**



This program is in support of anyone who has Diabetes whether they be young or old.

Please Note: A \$50.00 donation is a requirement for the All-State Membership Program.

Thank you for all your support of this program in the past and please continue your support.

**Please send check to:**

Department of PA VFW  
4002 Fenton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17109  
Earmark check "Diabetes"

**If you should have any questions, please contact:**

Larry Hawthorne  
VFW Department of Pennsylvania Diabetes Chairperson

Cell: 724-699-2521

Email: [larry.hawthorne@att.net](mailto:larry.hawthorne@att.net)

**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
VFW National Home Program  
2025-2026**

The VFW National Home is a place where military veterans and their families can get a fresh start by living rent free for up to four years and have access to case management services, life skills training, tutor, and other educational services as well as other recreational and community services needed to aid the healing process. It provides a safe and peaceful environment for the entire veteran's family.

The humble beginnings of the VFW National Home can be traced to a 23-year-old Michigan woman Amy Ross who in 1922 made it her mission and legacy to help find jobs for thousands of unemployed Veterans in her home city of Detroit. News of Ms. Ross' efforts reached millionaire cattleman Corey Spencer, who gifted her 472 acres of land near Eaton Rapids, Michigan. On January 7, 1925 the VFW National Home was founded, helping to honor the pledge of **"Honor the dead by helping the living."**

The home welcomed its first family, a widow with six children, into an old, framed farmhouse. The home has since grown into a vast sprawling campus of tree lined streets with playgrounds, parks, childcare facilities, community center, multiple family-oriented facilities, a guest lodge, chapel, administrative offices and forty-two single family homes.

All the homes are named for the states that sponsor them, after a sponsor, or after an organization. Department of Pennsylvania VFW sponsors House # 1. The majority of contributions used for funding are from VFW's and other donations. National Home is forever evolving to meet the changing needs of veterans and military families to better assist them with reintegration, post-traumatic stress, high unemployment, rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, emotional wounds, financial stress, or fractured family relationships, among other issues that can affect a parent serving our country and his/her family. In accepting a family to the program, it is asked that they must be committed to making changes in their lives.

To remain at National Home, they must demonstrate consistent progress toward family goals. In partnership with them the home is dedicated to helping each family succeed in reaching their full potential.

If your Post or individual member knows of a family who may need assistance encourage them to:

- Call the Helpline at 1-800-313-4200
- Email [help@vfwnationalhome.org](mailto:help@vfwnationalhome.org)
- Visit [vfwnationalhome.org/help](http://vfwnationalhome.org/help)

The way that the VFW supports the National Home is through your donations. The fund supports the following:

- Maintenance of VFW sponsored buildings including emergency repairs and needed renovations.

**Donations can be made through the Department of PA, by mail or in person.**

Send checks to: Department of PA VFW  
4200 Fenton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17109  
Earmark Checks: National Home

**Become a Life-Member:**

VFW members are encouraged to become life members of National Home. Life members may vote for Trustees who represent their National Home District and approve any changes to the bylaws and articles of incorporation.

Any individual or organization not associated with the VFW can also support the National Home by becoming an Associate Life member. These members do not receive voting privileges.

The cost of becoming a life member is a one-time fee of \$50.00 and includes a membership certificate, a wallet card, and a pin.

Visit [vfnationalhome.org/membership](http://vfnationalhome.org/membership) for more information, an application, or to purchase a life membership.

**Other ways to give:**

Tribute Bricks are available to purchase, donations to the Tribute Park and fundraisers are other ways you can support National Home. I encourage everyone to visit their website at: [vfnationalhome.org](http://vfnationalhome.org)

We need to spread the word of the many wonderful programs they do and have done for our veterans and the veterans' families.

**Please Note: A \$50.00 donation is a requirement for the All-State Membership Program**

**If you have any questions, or if you need applications, Please Contact**

Ben Mastridge  
VFW Department of PA National Home Chairperson  
Cell: 267-254-9062  
Email: [bensmaryhotmail.com](mailto:bensmaryhotmail.com)

**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
POW/MIA Recognition Day  
2025-2026**

**National League of POW/MIA Families POW/MIA FLAG HISTORY**

The National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia was incorporated in the District of Columbia on May 28, 1970. The League's sole purpose is to obtain the release of all prisoners, the fullest possible accounting for the missing, and the repatriation of all recoverable remains of those who died during the Vietnam War.

Its Web site is [www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org).

POW/MIA Recognition Day honors the commitments and the sacrifices made by our nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action.

By custom, it is on the third Friday in September.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day is one of the six days specified by law on which the black POW/MIA flag shall be flown over federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices and military installations.

The VFW will not rest until we achieve the fullest possible accounting of all missing American military service members from all wars. The VFW encourages the U.S. government to continue its missing personnel accounting efforts and is directly engaged with former enemy nations urging their fullest cooperation and assistance in obtaining information about American POWs/MIAs. VFW national officers make periodic trips to Pacific, Asian and European countries where they meet with senior host country officials to stress the importance of conducting investigation and recovery operations, as well as gaining access to documents and archival research facilities.

**VFW's Stance on POW/MIA Issues**

1. Never quit on achieving the fullest possible accounting of all American POWs/MIAs from all wars.
2. Urge Congress to fully fund the requested amounts for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting agencies involved in the Full Accounting Mission.
3. Encourage POW/MIA public awareness projects and events.
4. Support POW/MIA Recognition Day.
5. Encourage the flying of the POW/MIA flag on all local, state and federal government buildings as a reminder that this issue is a matter of national importance.
6. Immediately drape all transfer cases containing recovered remains of military members with the U.S. flag upon departure from foreign soil.

7. Solicit and provide information to assist the government of Vietnam in accounting for their own missing in action during the war with the U.S
8. Keep the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs intact in mission, personnel, and funding.

Each human carries around a cellular dog tag called nuclear DNA—genetic material inherited in equal shares from a person’s mother and father at the moment of conception. It is unique to each individual and a sure-fire identifier. Law enforcement uses nuclear DNA to convict criminals, and military investigators use it to identify current battlefield and accident victims. Usually, this is done by comparing a known sample of the victim’s DNA to DNA taken from the bodily remains. But first there must be a sample on file. Please help in giving a DNA sample.

POW/MIA stands for prisoners of war and missing in action. National POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed on the third Friday of September each year.

In 2025, it will be on Friday, **September 19th**. It is a day to honor and remember the service members who were captured or who remain unaccounted for and please remember to have a ceremony at your post to honor those veterans.

**For any other questions, please contact:**

PSC Ron Peters  
Pennsylvania VFW POW/MIA Chairperson  
1075 S. Kendal Avenue  
Bradford, PA. 16701  
Email: [acavrp@hotmail.com](mailto:acavrp@hotmail.com)



## **Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars Safety Awards Program 2025-2026 Public Servant Award Citations for**

### **Emergency Medical Technicians, Law Enforcement Personnel, Firefighters, Dispatchers and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technicians (EODT).**

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects emergency medical technicians, law enforcement, firefighter, dispatcher and explosive ordnance disposal technicians' personnel to receive VFW Public Servant Awards.

Post Safety Chairpersons are to submit a candidate for these awards to Department Headquarters by December 15th.

#### **VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Public Servant Citation:**

Any individual, who actively gives emergency medical treatment, provides rescue service or civil disaster assistance as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to give emergency medical care, provide rescue and civil disaster assistance to our nation's citizens.

#### **VFW National Law Enforcement Public Servant Citation:**

Any individual, who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with enforcement of the laws pertaining to their area of responsibility. This award does not apply to individuals employed by private companies or security services.

#### **VFW National Firefighters Public Servant Citation:**

Any individual, who actively fights fires as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to fight fires and give assistance to our nation's citizens.

#### **VFW National 911 Dispatcher Public Servant Citation:**

Any individual, who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with providing the vital link between callers in distress and emergency response teams by obtaining essential information to send the appropriate responders to the right location.

#### **VFW National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Public Servant Citation:**

Any individual, who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with the enforcement of the laws and special handling pertaining to disposal of explosive threats to our nation's citizens.

#### **Documentation required for all Candidates:**

- 1) Nomination letter from the post commander, containing the candidate's name, title, address, telephone and identifying the award for which the individual should be considered.
- 2) One (1) page resume of the candidate's overall background.
- 3) One (1) page resume of the candidate's background in their field.

- 4) One (1) page listing of the candidate's accomplishment and awards in their field.
- 5) Photograph (preferably a head shot) of the candidate.
- 6) NEW One (1) page VFW Public Servant Award Citation Post Entry Form is now available under the VFW website log in to assist in obtaining nominations

Post Safety Chairperson should send the above information to their Department Headquarters to arrive no later than December 15.

Please Send Completed Forms, Resume, and Letter to:

Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars  
4002 Fenton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943  
717-234-7927

PLEASE Remember THAT NO APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THE LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT FROM THE VFW POST COMMANDER.

If you have questions, please contact:

Brian Delaney  
VFW Department of PA Safety & Recognition Chairperson  
52 Carey Street  
Ashley, PA. 18706  
E-mail: [vfwpost4712adj@outlook.com](mailto:vfwpost4712adj@outlook.com)  
Phone: 570-575-3589

## **Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars**

### **FIREFIGHTER AWARD**

Every community certainly has at least one **“Outstanding Firefighter”** nominee who should be recognized. Each Post Commander is urged to direct his appointed safety Chairperson to find a nominee or name a special Chairperson to submit an **“Outstanding Firefighter”** nominee. The Post Chairperson is responsible for coordinating this program and selecting the Post’s most worthy candidate. After the judging is complete at Post level, the post must select their first-place winner and the Post must send **all entries** to the District to be forwarded to the state Chairperson so that all the Post receives credit for all entries.

All Districts **will** have a safety Chairperson. If your district does not have a Safety Chairperson, then submit **all entries** to Department HQ.

If your District has a District Chairperson, the Post will then submit all entries to the District Safety Chairperson for judging. After the judging is complete at District level, the District must select their first-place winner and the District must send **all entries** of the District to the state Chairperson so that the Post get the credit for all entries. All District winners and all entries are to be forwarded to Department for state judging.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

1. Recognition by colleagues of their service, whether that service be one of quiet dedication, or one achieving wide publicity, to the best and highest interest of the nation and community.
2. Unswerving loyalty to, and active performance in, the defense, safety, and security of the nation’s citizens; on a full time, part-time or a volunteer basis.
3. Dedication to their official responsibilities over a period of years and continuous growth in responsibility and experience, not only in fields within fire safety but in those fields which safeguard the community, the state, and the nation.

**Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars**

**FIREFIGHTER AWARD**

NAME OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Resume of Nominee's Background:

(2) Resume of Nominee's Background in Firefighting Work:

(3) Nominee's Accomplishments in the Firefighting Field:

(4) Letter of endorsement from Post Commander: (This is a necessity)

Post Commander Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Number: \_\_\_\_\_ District Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Commander Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Send Completed Forms, Resume, and Letter to:**

Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars

Firefighter Award

4002 Fenton Avenue

Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943

717-234-7927

**NO APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THE LETTER OF  
ENDORSEMENT FROM THE VFW POST COMMANDER.**

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS DECEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>**

## Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN AWARD**

Every community certainly has at least one **“Emergency Medical Technician”** nominee who should be recognized. Each Post Commander is urged to direct his appointed safety Chairperson to find a nominee or name a special Chairperson to submit an **“Emergency Medical Technician”** nominee. The Post Chairperson is responsible for coordinating this program and selecting the Post’s most worthy candidate. After the judging is complete at Post level, the post must select their first-place winner and the Post must send **all entries** to the District to be forwarded to the state Chairperson so that all the Post receives credit for all entries.

All Districts **will** have a safety Chairperson. If your district does not have a Safety Chairperson, then submit **all entries** to Department HQ.

If your District has a District Chairperson, the Post will then submit all entries to the District Safety Chairperson for judging. After the judging is complete at District level, the District must select their first-place winner and the District must send **all entries** of the District to the state Chairperson so that the Post get the credit for all entries. All District winners and all entries are to be forwarded to Department for state judging.

The emergency medical technician award will be presented so that those brave and honest men and women in the field of emergency service might know that their dedication and goodwill are appreciated.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

1. Recognition by colleagues of their service, whether that service be one of quiet dedication, or one achieving wide publicity, to the best and highest interest of the nation and community.
2. Unswerving loyalty to, and active performance in, the defense, safety and security of the nation’s citizens; on a full time, part-time or a volunteer basis.
3. Dedication to their official responsibilities over a period of years and continuous growth in responsibility and experience, not only in fields within fire safety but in those fields which safeguard the community, the state, and the nation.

**Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars**

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN AWARD**

NAME OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ PA \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Resume of Nominee's Background:

(2) Resume of Nominee's Background in Emergency Services Work:

(3) Nominee's Accomplishments in the Emergency Services Field:

(4) Letter of endorsement from Post Commander: (This is a necessity)

Post Commander Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Number: \_\_\_\_\_ District Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Commander Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Send Completed Forms, Resumes, and Letter to:**

Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars

Emergency Medical Technician Award

4002 Fenton Avenue

Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943

717-234-7927

**NO APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THE LETTER OF  
ENDORSEMENT FROM THE VFW POST COMMANDER.**

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS DECEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>**

## Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars

### **JOHN RADKO AWARD**

Every community certainly has at least one “**Outstanding Police Officer**” nominee who should be recognized. Each Post Commander is urged to direct his appointed safety Chairperson to find a nominee or name a special Chairperson to submit an “**Outstanding Police Officer**” nominee. The Post Chairperson is responsible for coordinating this program and selecting the Post’s most worthy candidate. After the judging is complete at Post level, the post must select their first-place winner and the Post must send **all entries** to the District to be forwarded to the state Chairperson so that all the Post receives credit for all entries.

All Districts **will** have a safety Chairperson. If your district does not have a Safety Chairperson, then submit **all entries** to Department HQ.

If your District has a District Chairperson, the Post will then submit all entries to the District Safety Chairperson for judging. After the judging is complete at District level, the District must select their first-place winner and the District must send **all entries** of the District to the state Chairperson so that the Post get the credit for all entries. All District winners and all entries are to be forwarded to Department for state judging.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

1. Recognition by colleagues of their service, whether that service be one of quiet dedication, or one achieving wide publicity, to the best and highest interest of the nation and community.
2. Unswerving loyalty to, and active performance in, the defense, safety and security of the nation’s citizens; on a full time, part-time or a volunteer basis.
3. Dedication to their official responsibilities over a period of years and continuous growth in responsibility and experience, not only in fields within fire safety but those fields which safeguard the community, the state, and the nation.

**Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars**

**JOHN RADKO AWARD**

NAME OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF NOMINEE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Resume of Nominee's Background:

(2) Resume of Nominee's Background in Law Enforcement Work:

(3) Nominee's Accomplishments in the Law Enforcement Field:

(4) Letter of endorsement from Post Commander: (This is a necessity)

Post Commander Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Number: \_\_\_\_\_ District Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Commander Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Send Completed Forms, Resume, and Letter to:**

Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars

John Radko Award

4002 Fenton Avenue

Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943

717-234-7927

**NO APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THE LETTER OF  
ENDORSEMENT FROM THE VFW POST COMMANDER.**

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS DECEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>**



## **911 DISPATCHER AWARD**

Every community certainly has at least one **“Outstanding 911 Dispatcher”** nominee who should be recognized. Each Post Commander is urged to direct his appointed safety Chairperson to find a nominee or name a special Chairperson to submit an **“Outstanding 911 Dispatcher”** nominee. The Post Chairperson is responsible for coordinating this program and selecting the Post’s most worthy candidate. After the judging is complete at Post level, the post must select their first-place winner and the Post must send **all entries** to the District to be forwarded to the state Chairperson so that all the Post receives credit for all entries.

All Districts **will** have a safety Chairperson. If your district does not have a Safety Chairperson, then submit **all entries** to Department HQ.

If your District has a District Chairperson, the Post will then submit all entries to the District Safety Chairperson for judging. After the judging is complete at District level, the District must select their first-place winner and the District must send **all entries** of the District to the state Chairperson so that the Post get the credit for all entries. All District winners and all entries are to be forwarded to Department for state judging.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

1. Recognition by colleagues of their service, whether that service be one of quiet dedication, or one achieving wide publicity, to the best and highest interest of the nation and community.
2. The nominee must demonstrate his or her professional interaction with the caller(s), coworkers, and responders by applying skills such as multitasking, customer service and the operation of the equipment used. Most of all, the nominee must show the due respect to the Telecommunicator position.
3. Dedication to their official responsibilities over a period of years and continuous growth in responsibility and experience, not only in fields within fire safety but in those fields which safeguard the community, the state, and the nation.

Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Student Veterans Program  
2025-2026

**CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT**

**HOW TO GET INVOLVED**



## University Contacts

To link up with Veterans on campus, speak to the following Campus Personnel:  
Admissions Department  
VA Certifying Official

## Student Activity

Events to consider becoming a part of at local campuses:

College Visit  
Days Admissions  
Events Alumni



**For more information or further assistance, Please Contact:**

Jesse Olson

VFW Department of Pennsylvania Student Veterans Chairperson

706-577-7293

Email: [vfw.pa.sva@gmail.com](mailto:vfw.pa.sva@gmail.com)

## **Scout of the Year**

### **WHO CAN ENTER**

Scouts who are registered, active members of a Boy or Girl Scout Troop, Venturing Crew, or a Sea Scout Ship who have received the Eagle Scout Award, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Award or Sea Scout Quartermaster Award.

There is no minimum age requirement for applicants as long as all other eligibility criteria has been met.

The maximum age requirement for applicants is 18 years old and if an applicant reaches their 18th birthday during the nomination year they remain eligible as long as they are still in high school at the time of the submission deadline.

### **HOW TO ENTER**

Scouts should download and submit a completed VFW Scouting Scholarship form, resume of high school activities, scouting record, community service record and letters of recommendation to a local VFW Post no later than March 1. Locate your local Post [here](#).

Note: A Scout can enter through ONE VFW Post only.

### **HOW IT WORKS**

Local VFW Posts submit their winning candidates with full entry criteria to their respective VFW Department (state) by April 1. Ensure that if a District judging is taking place that entries are forwarded to the District first and that enough time is allotted to ensure that the Department still receives the entry by April 1. From there, the Department selects a winner and forwards the entry to the VFW National Headquarters by May 1 for recognition.

#### **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
Office 816.756.3390  
Fax 816.968.1157

#### **WASHINGTON OFFICE**

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Office 202.543.2239  
Fax 202.543.6719

[info@vfw.org](mailto:info@vfw.org)  
[www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)

# SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program



## WHAT IS THE SCOUT OF THE YEAR PROGRAM?

Annually, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States recognizes individuals who are: Eagle Scouts, Girl Scout Gold Award recipients, Venture Summit Award recipients and/or Sea Scout Quartermasters who have risen above their peers in exemplifying the qualities of that rank.

## AM I ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for the award, the candidate must:

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

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

## WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES?

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

Questions should be directed to 816.756.3390, ext. 6787 during normal business hours Monday through Friday or emailed to [scouting@vfw.org](mailto:scouting@vfw.org).

## Official Entry Form

## SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program

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

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

( )

Home Phone

Email

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Scout Troop Number

## SCOUT/VENTURE CERTIFICATION

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

Scout/Venture Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

## UNIT LEADER'S CERTIFICATION

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

Unit Leader's Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

## PARENT'S CONSENT

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

Father, Mother or Guardian Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

# SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program

## VFW DEPARTMENT SCOUTING CHAIRMAN

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

## SPONSORING VFW POST

POST NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

POST COMMANDER'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DISTRICT CERTIFICATION

IF APPLICABLE, CHECK WITH THE VFW  
DEPARTMENT SCOUTING CHAIRMAN

DISTRICT #: \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT CDR.: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DEPARTMENT CERTIFICATION

MUST BE COMPLETED BY DEPARTMENT VFW  
SCOUTING CHAIRMAN OR DEPT. COMMANDER

DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBMITTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED?

The following documentation should be submitted:

- **Photograph of the Scout** — must be attached to this form. The Scout must appear in correct, complete uniform for their current rank. Recommended size 3" x 5".
- **School Participation Record** — a single page, one-sided resume of the candidate's school activities indicating academic achievements, offices held, honors received and significant participation in other activities.
- **Scouting Record** — maximum of three pages, one side only, listing of all Scouting participation beginning with Cub Scouts or Brownies - years of participation, unit numbers and sponsors. Also include when Eagle, Gold, Summit or Quartermaster Award was received and Palms. Identify leadership positions held at all levels, participation in Scouting activities (jamborees, Order of the Arrow conferences, etc.) and the candidate's Eagle Scout, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster Project.
- **Community Service Record** — a single page, one-sided resume listing participation in community and religious service organizations (excluding Scouting and school), noting leadership positions held and any recognition received.
- **Letters of Recommendation** — Submit three letters, no more than two pages in length from:
  - A scout leader.
  - A community member.
  - A teacher/faculty member (if homeschooled, a parent letter is allowed).
  - In addition, you may include one or two additional letters, no more than two pages in length from local community members who have special knowledge of the candidate's abilities/accomplishments.
- **Completed Entry Form** — submitted to a local VFW Post. Local Posts can be identified by zip code at [vfw.org/FindaPost](http://vfw.org/FindaPost).

## WHO MAKES UP THE VFW SCOUTING TEAM?

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

Appointed by their Department Commander, they are responsible for promoting scouting in their state. They are available to encourage Posts to sponsor units, support units and individual Scout projects. They should be the Department's "expert" on all phases of scouting. Many Departments have multiple members of the VFW Scouting Team, but every Department should have at least one individual to promote the values of scouting to youth and to the VFW itself. For more information on the VFW Scouting Team call 816.756.3390, ext 6787, or email [scouting@vfw.org](mailto:scouting@vfw.org)



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Healthcare Award Program  
2025-2026**

Guidelines for Healthcare Awards

1. A narrative of no more than 500 words will be submitted to the posts no later than February 28, 2026.
2. Once a winner is chosen from your post, the narrative will be submitted to the Chairperson of Healthcare awards no later than March 15, 2026.
3. When you send your winner in, make sure the nomination support form is filled out and attached.
4. The winner in each category will receive a plaque at the state convention. If the winner cannot attend the state convention the plaque will be given to the post/district commander to be awarded.

Category 1 - VA Volunteer of the Year Award - Nominees for this award must be a regularly scheduled volunteer and must volunteer and work with one of the following: hospitalized veterans, CBOC veterans, veterans in community living centers, homeless veterans or veterans confined to their homes.

Category 2 - Outstanding VA Healthcare Employee of the Year Award - The goal of this award is to provide recognition to a VA healthcare provider who takes the extra steps to provide exemplary service to our veterans and their families.

Category 3 - Outstanding Community Healthcare Employee of the Year Award - The goal of this award is to provide recognition to a healthcare provide who takes the extra steps to provide exemplary service and support to our veterans and their families within the community.

**Department of Pennsylvania  
Healthcare Award  
Program 2025-2026**

AWARD NOMINATION SUPPORT FORM

Name of Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Hospital Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nomination Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitting Post: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitting District: \_\_\_\_\_

Post/District Commander: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to Health Awards Chairperson no later than March 15<sup>th</sup> to:

Ruth A. (Fairchild) Altman  
VFW Department of Pennsylvania Health Awards Chairperson  
160 Lakewood Road  
New Castle, PA 16101  
Email: [fairchildra64@aol.com](mailto:fairchildra64@aol.com)

**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Homeless Veterans Program  
2025-2026**

**HOMELESS VETERANS OUTREACH**

Many veterans, especially those who served in combat zones, leave the military with significant physical and emotional wounds that make transitioning to civilian life difficult. Unfortunately, one of the largest groups of America's homeless population are veterans. There are too many of our nation's heroes living on our streets that have special needs and require a helping hand.

The VFW supports homeless veterans in many ways including donations to homeless shelters, support of regional "stand downs," donating clothing and personal hygiene items, fighting for more government resources to reduce the homeless population, and put veterans back to work.

Posts and individuals can send donations to the Department's Homeless Veterans fund in any amount which will be shared with veterans' and shelters.

***See Homeless Veterans Report Form on the next page.***  
***The reports are due monthly.***

David "Spike" Gyger  
VFW Department of Pennsylvania Homeless Veterans Chairperson  
111 Cameron Avenue  
Hummelstown, PA 17036  
717-991-1473  
Email: [djc57@verizon.net](mailto:djc57@verizon.net)



**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Homeless Veterans Chairman's Monthly Report**

Period Covering: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of events during this period: \_\_\_\_\_

How many Post and Auxiliary members participated? \_\_\_\_\_

Hours spent at event: \_\_\_\_\_

Mileage (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Donation type:

Clothing: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Food: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Monetary: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please give a brief description):

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Was it a fundraiser? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

What organization will benefit from it?

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Amount raised: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ District Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail or email this report to:**

Pennsylvania VFW Homeless Veterans Chairperson

David "Spike" Gyger

111 Cameron Avenue

Hummelstown, PA 17036

Email: [djc57@verizon.net](mailto:djc57@verizon.net)

*Revised – Jun 2023*



## **Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars National Legislative Overview 2025-2026**

We are Rich Cassey Jr and James Rice, your VFW National Legislative Representatives for the Department of Pennsylvania. We have been appointed by State Commander Loncar to represent ALL veterans and their families from the State of Pennsylvania, in Washington DC. This is an extreme honor that has been bestowed upon us, and we take fighting for veterans' legislation very seriously!

There is a wide variety of legislation that we as a National Legislative Team are working on with guidance from our VFW DC office. These bills impact suicide, female veterans' healthcare, and MST (Military Sexual Trauma), retirement pay and claim sharks who are working loopholes to take you hard earned entitlements (if you let them). These are just a few examples of the legislation that we on the VFW National Legislative Team continue to fight for.

Recently, the Honoring Our PACT Act was passed and put into law. This is one of the largest pieces of legislation to ever get passed to benefit our veterans! The PACT Act covers many veterans, from various time frames, that served and/or are still serving in different areas around the world. Pieces of legislation like this only get passed with the help of all of YOU! Please contact an Accredited VFW Service Officer, to see if you qualify for benefits under the PACT Act.

We need YOU to help US help our fellow Comrades and their Families by signing up for Action Corps (see next page). Action Corp let's YOUR voice be heard. It is a direct link to some of the legislation, we as the VFW National Legislative Team, are working on. Action Corps also gives you a POW/MIA weekly update.

Signing up for Action Corps is important and may be done by anyone who cares about veterans and their families. This includes our Auxiliary members, and any other individuals of voting age who want to advocate for our veterans and their families. So PLEASE be sure to share the sign up link and QR code with everyone you can. Placing signs in your post and newsletters is also very helpful

Responding to Action Alerts is paramount! This is where your voice is heard. Action Alerts are pre-filled messages to YOUR Representatives (based off the address you used when signing up), telling them how YOU and the VFW want them to vote on a particular piece of legislation heading to the floor. Your replies will be seen by Your Representatives and reenforces our stance when we tell them in our meetings how the veterans in Pennsylvania feel about the proposed bills.

Pennsylvania has over 100,000 VFW & Auxiliary members, and just over 17,000 Action Corp Members. And worse yet, we only average around 350 responding to Action Alerts. We, as Pennsylvanians, need to have a stronger response to these Action Alerts, so our Representatives in DC take us seriously!

Jess and I are here to serve you on Capitol Hill and We will do our best, to ensure the veteran legislative fight for benefits continues until all Veterans needs are met.

WE are your voice on the Hill, YOU are the amplifier to make our voice is heard!

Yours in Service,

*Rich Cassey Jr*

Rich Cassey Jr

VFW National Legislative Chair/PA

James Rice

VFW National Legislative Co-Chair/PA

To sign up for Action Corp got to: <https://votervoice.net/VFW/register>

OR

Text "VFW" to 50457

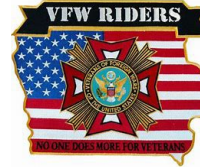
OR



<https://vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts>

**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
VFW Motorcycle Riders Program  
2025-2026**

Do you like to ride? Are you looking for quality people to ride with?  
**Join the VFW Motorcycle Riders!**



The purpose of the VFW Riders is to support the VFW by promoting the public visibility of the VFW, its programs, and the VFW National Home through community service and participation in veteran's service events, through responsible motorcycling in our community.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the VFW Riders, you must first be a member in good standing with one of the following:

1. Regular Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
2. Auxiliary Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars
3. Social Member "Supporter" of a Veterans of Foreign Wars Post / Home Association

**For More Information Contact:**

(EAST) Larry Bills (Post 845) Larry Bills @ 717-824-1614 or [LBills70@yahoo.com](mailto:LBills70@yahoo.com)

(WEST) Anthony Warner (Post 945) [anthony@gowarner.com](mailto:anthony@gowarner.com) 412-983-8669



**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Patriot's Pen Youth Essay Contest  
2025-2026**

**“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support  
For Our Country?”**

Info To: Department Commander William Roland  
Department President Robin Kohler  
Department VFW Officers and Department Auxiliary Officers  
Department Auxiliary Scholarships Chairpersons  
District Patriot's Pen Chairmen and District Auxiliary Scholarships Chairpersons  
Post Commanders and Post Auxiliary Presidents

From: William D. Lamond III  
VFW Department of Pennsylvania Chairperson

Subject: 2025-2026 Patriot's Pen Patriotic Youth Essay Competition

Theme: “How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”

Fellow Comrades and Auxiliary Members,

Welcome to another exciting year of the Annual State Patriot's Pen Youth Essay Writing Contest. I know that with all your hard work and dedication to this program we will have yet another successful year. This year, the theme **“How are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Your Country”** encourages young minds to examine America's storied history as well as their own experiences in American society. I thank each of you for your hard work and dedication to this program. With your support, we will have a very successful year. The following information should help you get started:

Post and District Chairpersons can access the program guides, find participating Posts, download student brochures or purchase them online (Item #04420) from the National VFW website [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org). Students can also complete a Patriot's Pen entry form on the National website using the Patriot's Pen link. The Department website is [www.vfwpa.org](http://www.vfwpa.org); where you will find Department deadlines and the student entry brochure.

State Deadlines for the 2025-2026 Patriot's Pen Program are listed below:

- 1.) October 31, 2025 - Student Deadline Entry is at midnight
- 2.) November 18, 2025 - Post judging completed
- 3.) December 3, 2025 - District judging completed
- 4.) December 9, 2025 - District Winner Entry Form, Typed Essay, Head and Shoulders Photo of good quality, District Summary Report and District Participation report **in the hands** of the Department Chairman, William D. Lamond III, 3360 Nashotka Road,

Madison Township, PA 18444. **THESE MUST BE MAILED. NO EMAILS, PLEASE.**

**\*\*\*DO NOT MAIL TO DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS\*\*\***

- 5.) December 11, 2025 - Department judging (Time and location to be announced)
- 6.) January 02, 2026- Department Winner and Reports submitted to National Headquarters
- 7.) January 17, 2026 - Annual Voice of Democracy Banquet at the Eisenhower Hotel, Gettysburg. The Patriot's Pen first place winner for the Department will attend.

Please note that all Patriot's Pen participation reporting is completed on the All-American Dashboard, starting at the Post level. Once the Post completes their judging and forwards their winners to the District Chairperson, the Post must enter the participation stats (Post and Auxiliary participation, number of participating students, number of winners advanced, monetary awards and additional money expended) into the dashboard. When the District and Department approves your participation report, National will approve and turn status to MET in the dashboard. This process will ensure each Post receives credit. For more information on reporting program participation visit, [vfw.org/my-vfw/all-American-dashboard](http://vfw.org/my-vfw/all-American-dashboard).

The State Auxiliary Chairperson is Karen Mooney. If you have any questions or concerns, Karen and I can be contacted as follows:

William D. Lamond III  
3360 Nashotka Road  
Madison Township, PA 1718444  
(570) 241-5875  
Email: [ta30chev@gmail.com](mailto:ta30chev@gmail.com)

Karen Mooney  
81 Greenwood Drive  
New Cumberland, PA. 17070  
717-580-3994  
E-mail: [karenmooneycpc@comcast.net](mailto:karenmooneycpc@comcast.net)

If your Post is unable to get a Patriot's Pen submission, please contact Bill Lamond. He will get you a student's submission!

Thank you!

In Support of our Troops and Friendship in the VFW and Its Auxiliary,

*William D. Lamond III*

William D. Lamond III  
VFW Department of Pennsylvania  
Patriot's Pen Chairperson

## 2025-2026 Theme

# “How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2025

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.

## 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. You can submit your essay and entry form electronically by email upon the Post's approval. Entries sent to the VFW National Headquarters directly will be returned.

## 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 2025-2026 theme is:

## How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?"

## 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)**



# 2025-2026 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: \_\_\_\_\_







**Department of Pennsylvania  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
78<sup>th</sup> Annual Voice of Democracy Youth Essay Contest  
2025-2026**

**“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”**

Info to: Department Commander Bill Roland  
Department President Robin Kohler  
Department VFW Officers and Department Auxiliary Officers  
Department Auxiliary Scholarships Chairpersons  
District Voice of Democracy Chairpersons  
District Auxiliary Scholarships Chairpersons  
Post Commanders and Post Auxiliary Presidents

From: Vince Gavin  
State Voice of Democracy Chairpersons

Subject: 2025-2026 Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Competition

Theme: **“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”**

Fellow Comrades and Auxiliary Members:

Welcome to another exciting year of the Annual State Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Competition. I know that with all your hard work and dedication to this program we will have a very successful year. The following information should help you to get started:

Post and District Chairpersons can access the program guides, find participating Posts, download student brochures, or purchase them online (Item #04420) from the National VFW website [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org). Students can also complete a Voice of Democracy entry form on the National website using the Voice of Democracy link. The Department website is [www.vfwpa.org](http://www.vfwpa.org); where you will find the following Department information: Department deadlines and the student entry brochure, and the Department Perpetual Scholarship information and donation form. For more information on reporting program participation visit, [vfw.org/my-vfw/all-American-dashboard](http://vfw.org/my-vfw/all-American-dashboard).

State Deadlines for the 2025-2026 Voice of Democracy Program are listed below:

1. October 31, 2025 - Student Deadline Entry is at midnight.
2. November 16, 2025 - Post judging completed.
3. December 1, 2025 - District judging completed.
4. December 9, 2025 - District Winner Entry Form, Flash Drive of Essay, Typed Essay, Head and Shoulders Photo of good quality, District Summary Report and District Participation Report **in the hands** of the Department Chairperson.
  - a. **These Items Must Be Mailed.** If you have a digital recorded essay, please download it to a flash drive and mail it, for ease of judging.

**DO NOT MAIL TO DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS.**

1. December 11, 2025 - Department judging (Time and location to be announced)
2. January 02, 2026 - Department Winner and Reports submitted to National Headquarters.  
January 17, 2026 - Annual Voice of Democracy Banquet, Eisenhower Hotel,  
Gettysburg

The 2025-2026 State Auxiliary Chairperson is Karen Mooney. If you have any questions or concerns, Karen and I can be contacted as follows:

Vince Gavin  
658 Miller Street  
Eynon, PA 18403  
(570) 862-2955

Email: [vincentdangavin@gmail.com](mailto:vincentdangavin@gmail.com)

Karen Mooney  
81 Greenwood Drive  
New Cumberland, PA. 17070  
717-580-3994

E-mail: [karenmooneycpc@comcast.net](mailto:karenmooneycpc@comcast.net)

We are looking forward to meeting and talking with each one of you during this program year. Please review the Program and Entry Form as well as the PA State Perpetual Scholarship Fund information and donation forms. Please make copies for your Post Chairpersons, Auxiliary Chairpersons, and the Members so that they can promote and work this very important Youth Activity. As you promote the programs, please encourage participation in the Perpetual Scholarship Fund.

Thank you!

In Support of our Troops and Friendship in the VFW and Its Auxiliary,

*Vince Gavin*

VFW Department of Pennsylvania Voice of Democracy Chairperson  
[vincentdangavin@gmail.com](mailto:vincentdangavin@gmail.com)  
570-862-2955



**76th Annual Voice of Democracy  
Scholarship Program  
Department Of Pennsylvania  
VFW 2025-2026  
“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”**

Info to: Department Commander Bill Roland  
Department President Robin Kohler  
Department VFW Officers and Department Auxiliary Officers  
Department Auxiliary Scholarships Chairpersons  
District Voice of Democracy Chairpersons  
District Auxiliary Scholarships Chairpersons  
District Commanders and District Presidents  
Post Commanders and Post Auxiliary Presidents

From: Vince Gavin  
State Voice of Democracy Chairperson

Subject: Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars Perpetual Scholarship Fund  
2025-2026

Dear Comrades and Auxiliary Members:

The Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars Perpetual Scholarship Fund was started a few years ago to give every District Winner in the state a minimum \$500 cash. Because of declining interest rates, the fund is not financially self-sustaining. All 25 prizes have been sponsored. However, there are still many Private Party Individuals, Posts, County Councils, District VFW and Auxiliaries that have inquired about continuing to support the Perpetual Scholarship Fund. To give recognition to all of those who so generously donate, we have established a fund entitled **“DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA PERPETUAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND TO THE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY PROGRAM”**. In order to become a member of this esteemed program, the minimum donation is \$500.00 or above. All these donations will be acknowledged annually at the Voice of Democracy Banquet (both verbally and in the program booklet).

Private Party Individuals, Posts, County Councils, District VFW and Auxiliaries that would like to donate \$499.00 or below; your name or unit will become a **“PERPETUAL SCHOLARSHIP PATRON DONATION”**. All these donations will be acknowledged annually at the Voice of Democracy Banquet. Please use the enclosed forms to make your donations.

**VERY IMPORTANT!** All Perpetual Scholarships will remain open and additional donations can be added at any time. Example—Two \$500.00 donations will become a \$1,000.00 Perpetual Scholarship Donation.

Vince Gavin  
State Voice of Democracy Chairperson

**PERPETUAL SCHOLARSHIP DONATION FORMS  
2025-2026**

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT**

-----

**\$500.00 AND ABOVE  
DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS PERPETUAL  
SCHOLARSHIP DONATION TO THE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY PROGRAM**

**AMOUNT OF DONATION:**

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**CHECK NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_**

**PLEASE BE SPECIFIC AS TO HOW YOUR DONATION SHOULD BE ANNOUNCED  
AND PRINTED IN THE AD BOOKLET OR ADD TO EXISTING DONATION**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

-----

**\$\$499.00 AND BELOW  
PERPEUTAL SCHOLARSHIP PATRON DONATION**

**AMOUNT OF DONATION:**

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**CHECK NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_**

**PLEASE BE SPECIFIC AS TO HOW YOUR DONATION SHOULD BE LISTED AS A  
PATRON PERPETUAL SCHOLARSHIP DONATION OR ADD TO EXISTING  
DONATION**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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***MAIL FORMS TO:  
DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS PERPETUAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM  
4002 FENTON AVENUE  
HARRISBURG, PA 17109-5943***

## 2025-2026 Theme

### “How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”

**Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2025**

**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. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is, “How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”

#### Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. National winners will be notified of their scholarship & placement.

#### The Rules

##### Who can enter?

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.

##### What do I need to enter?

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or - 5 second max.) audio essay on a flash drive, or other electronic device. You will submit the recording, typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or VFW Post for judging. In addition you can submit your emailed entry form, essay, and audio file to the VFW Post upon approval. 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.

#### Where Do I Submit My Entry?

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. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions: First, 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 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, 2025**. It is the responsibility of the student to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

#### What Are the Judging Criteria?

##### Originality is worth 35 points:

Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

##### 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.

##### Delivery is worth 35 points:

Speak in a clear and credible manner.

2025-2026 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: youthsponsorships@vfw.org

Local VFW Post Information:

Contact:
Phone: Best Time To Call:
Alternate Contact:
Phone: Best Time To Call:





## **2025-2026 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award**

Info to: Department Commander Bill Roland  
Department President Robin Kohler  
Department VFW Officers and Department Auxiliary Officers  
District Commanders and District Auxiliary Presidents  
Post Commanders and Post Auxiliary Presidents

From: Glenn Owen  
State Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teacher Chairperson

Subject: 2025-2026 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award

Welcome to another exciting year for the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award. Each year the VFW selects elementary(K-5), middle (6-8) and high school (9-12) teachers to participate in this program.

Post and District Chairpersons can access the program guides and entry forms from the National VFW website [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) or Department website [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org): The Department entry deadlines will be posted to Department website:

State Deadlines for 2025-2026 Smart/Maher Teacher Award are:

1. October 31, 2025 – Entry form to Post
2. November 17, 2025 – Entry form to District if applicable
3. December 22, 2025 – Post / District winners forward to State Chairperson Glenn Owen Address: 8563 Rt 467, LeRaysville, PA 18829.

**Do not mail to Department Headquarters**

4. January 02, 2026 - State Winners forward to National

Thank you,

*Glenn Owen*

VFW Department of PA State Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teacher Chairperson  
[buck012@frontiernet.net](mailto:buck012@frontiernet.net)  
570-878-5577



# 2025-2026 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award



**Entry Deadline: October 31, 2025**

## What is the Teacher Award Program?

Founded in 1899, the VFW highly supports the education of America's youth. VFW and its Auxiliary have developed a slate of programs dedicated to helping America's educators. VFW Citizenship Education programs stimulate interest in America's history, traditions, Americanism, civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism.

Teachers care deeply about America and its children. They're concerned about the perpetuation of America's noblest traditions and highest ideals. Wouldn't you like to see them get the honor they deserve? Now you can.

## Why Should I Enter?

VFW wants to identify and recognize America's best educators who instill a sense of national pride in students. The national awards include \$1,000 Smart/Maher award for each of the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses, \$1,000 award for each winning teacher's school, commemorative plaques and all-expense-paid trip to the VFW National Convention.

## Who is Eligible?

All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national VFW winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

## How are teachers nominated?

Fill out the official entry form contained on the next page, and provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo if available.

Please submit your completed entry form signed, along with the required documentation to your local VFW Post. Visit [vfw.org/FindaPost](http://vfw.org/FindaPost) for Post locations or call VFW Programs Department at 816.756.3390 ext. 6287 to find the Post nearest you.

## 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, 2025. It is the responsibility of the nominator to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

## What Are the Judging Criteria?

**Citizenship (1-25 points):** On a scale of 1-25, to what extent does the teacher encourage and/or model good citizenship and community involvement?

**Innovation (1-25 points):** On a scale of 1-25, how much innovation (new ideas, new tools, new resources, and new approaches) does this teacher utilize in the classroom? Does this teacher's effort reflect an ongoing desire to stimulate the students with new things?

**Resources (1-25 points):** On a scale of 1-25, to what degree has this teacher demonstrated an ability to identify and utilize new and exceptional resources to fund, facilitate and provide materials for his or her classroom? Does this teacher tap into outside agencies, organizations and individuals to acquire materials and expertise in the classroom? As an example – bringing speakers, finding in-kind and monetary donations, or utilizing local opportunities like museums, field trips and local events.

**Passion (1-25 points):** On a scale of 1-25, to what degree does this teacher appear to be passionate about the profession of teaching? Are they regularly seeking to upgrade their skills? Do they try and find ways to encourage their students? Do they take a personal interest in their student's individual success?

---

*If you have any questions, please call  
Mary Spencer, 816.756.3390, ext 6287 or  
[mspencer@vfw.org](mailto:mspencer@vfw.org).*

---

## Local VFW Post Information:

---

Contact: Name, Title

---

Phone

Best time to call

---

Alternative Contact: Name, Title

---

Phone

Best time to call



# 2025-2026 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award



**Entry Deadline: October 31, 2025**

## 2025-2026 Official Entry Form Teacher Award Competition

*Please tell us who you are nominating—below in box.*

Name: First, M.I., Last	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
( ) Phone	Email
Grade Level (K-5, 6-8, or 9-12)	
School Name	
School Address	
( ) School Phone	School Email

### Person Nominating Teacher

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this teacher has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Teacher Award Competition.

Post Commander's/Chairperson's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Post # \_\_\_\_\_

VFW Auxiliary President's/Chairperson's Signature  
(If Applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Post Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

VFW Post Email \_\_\_\_\_

No. of teachers 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 (If Applicable)

I certify that the teacher named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Teacher Award District Competition and is our entry into the Department judging.

District Chairperson's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Dist # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

( )  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson

I certify that the teacher named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Teacher Award Department Competition, is our entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
( )  
Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

### Where Do I Submit My Entry?

All entries will begin at the local VFW Post level. Individual nominees may submit their entry directly to the Post. This VFW Post should be within your local area and within your U.S. state of residence. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One Post winner can be submitted for each level, and to District by Nov. 15. If your Department does not have a District judging, then submit to your Department Headquarters by Jan. 1. Otherwise, one District winner, at each level, may advance to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post in your area, follow these instructions: First, visit [vfw.org/FindaPost](http://vfw.org/FindaPost) to find your local VFW Post. Be sure this Post is within the state you reside in. If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit [vfw.org/ContactUs](http://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 [mspencer@vfw.org](mailto:mspencer@vfw.org).



**DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS and VFW AUXILIARY**

Info: Department Commander William Roland Jr.  
Department President Robin Kohler  
Department VFW Officer and Department Auxiliary Officers  
District Chairman and Auxiliary Chairman  
Post Commanders and Post Auxiliary Presidents

From: Glenn Owen - Citizenship Education Awards Chairmen

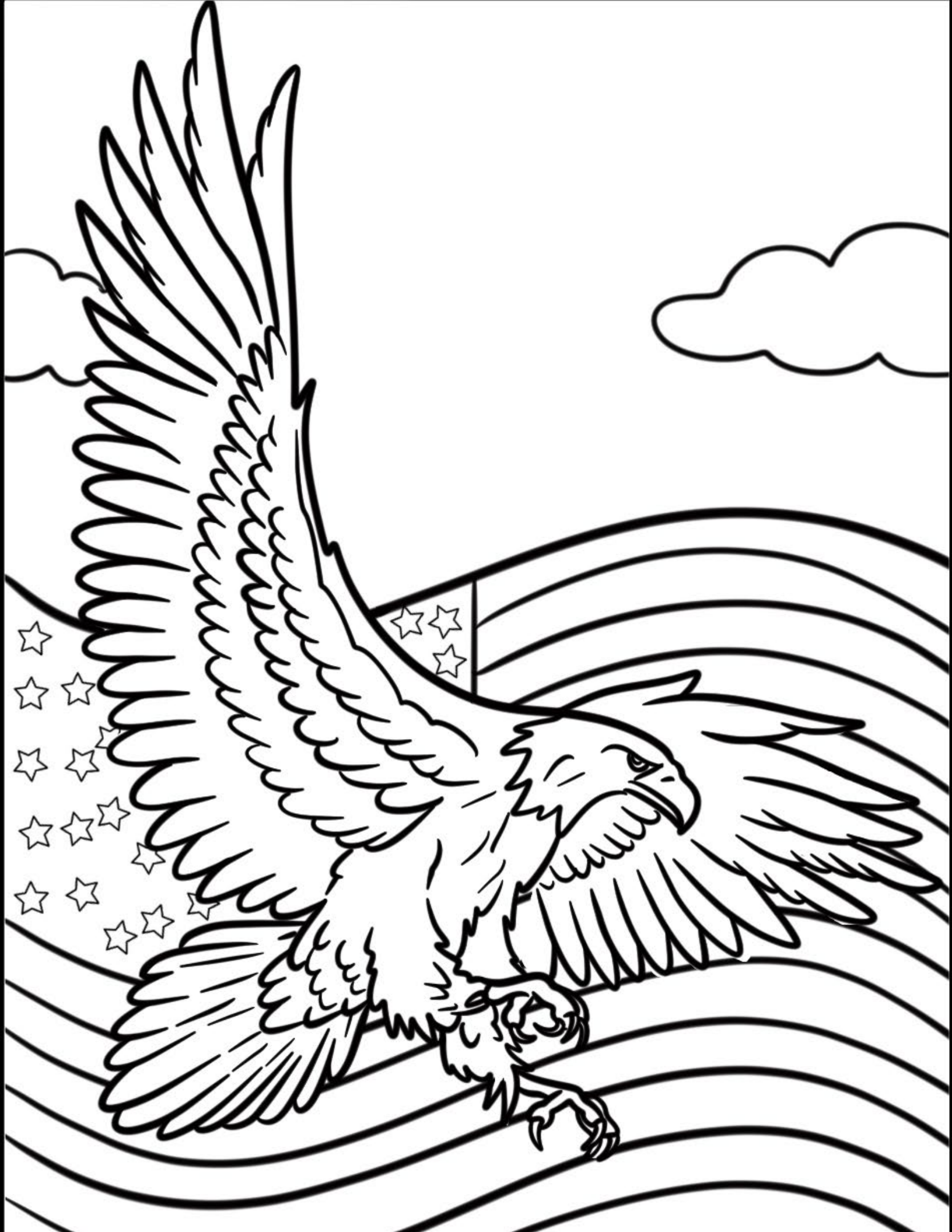
Subject: 2025-2026 Coloring Contest

Theme: Grade 2 Soldier with Flag  
Grade 3 Soldier with Flag  
Grade 4 Eagle  
Grade 5 Eagle

Fellow Comrades and Auxiliary Members:

Welcome to another exciting year for the state coloring contest for grades 2-5. There will be one winner per grade and the winners will receive a \$50.00 dollar check and a certificate. School will send their entries to local post not the state chairman. Post and District will set their own deadlines and the district will submit their winners for the four grades to State Chairman by 7 March 2026. If you have any question please contact me.

Glenn Owen  
8563 Rt 467  
Leraysville PA 18829  
[buck012@frontiernet.net](mailto:buck012@frontiernet.net)  
570-744-2028 (h)  
570-878-5577 (c)









## 2026 PA Women Veterans Conference & Resource Fair

March 27-29, 2026

Pittsburgh Cranberry Township

Sponsored by Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of PA

**All women veterans in Pennsylvania are welcome to attend**

*You do not need to be a member of the VFW in order to attend.*

Please join us for a time of fellowship, camaraderie, workshops and presentations by, for, and about women veterans—highlighting the issues that matter and impact them directly.

Each year is different, don't miss out!

Preregistration is required. This event fills quickly!

Register and view the agenda by using the QR code:

**Or visit [www.vfwpa.org](http://www.vfwpa.org)** (under the "Programs" tab)

Final Registration 01/31/2026 (*or until sold out*)



This event is organized and supported by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Pennsylvania, with financial contributions from Districts, Posts, Auxiliaries, & Individuals.

**Location: Pittsburgh Marriott North Hotel, 100 Cranberry Woods Drive, Cranberry Township, PA**  
2026 will offer a new, expanded format, consisting of breakout sessions, resource and informational vendors, an optional craft class and "down-time" to develop and renew personal connections. Each year is different, don't miss out!

**Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of PA**  
**Women Veterans Chairperson Amy MacKenzie**  
**717.575.3982      [pawomenvets@gmail.com](mailto:pawomenvets@gmail.com)**

## DONATION REQUEST



The VFW Department of Pennsylvania hosts an annual Conference for Pennsylvania Women Veterans to gather in a relaxed atmosphere to discuss various topics with fellow women veterans.

All women veterans are welcome to attend, not just VFW members!

**This letter is to ask for your financial support to continue to provide a quality program for our women Veterans, often times an overlooked and neglected part of our society.**

We provide access to much needed information related to Filing a VA Claim, Obtaining a Service Animal, Counseling for Military Sexual Trauma, Suicide Awareness and prevention, Homeless Veteran Treatment Options, Financial Planning, Leadership Development, and much more.

We hope your organization is able to donate to this program, to once again offer our Women Veterans access to much needed information regarding benefits, health care, leadership opportunities and camaraderie for women veterans.

I thank you in advance for your support. Please contact me if you have questions or require additional information.

Very respectfully,

Amy E. MacKenzie

VFW Department of PA Women Veterans Chairman

717.575.3982

[pawomenvets@gmail.com](mailto:pawomenvets@gmail.com)

Cut here -----Cut Here

Yes, our organization \_\_\_\_\_ is able to contribute financially to the VFW Pennsylvania Women Veterans Conference.

Enclosed please find our donation of      \$100.00      \$150.00      Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail donations to

VFW Dept of PA State Headquarters  
4002 Fenton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943  
Attn: Women Veterans Conference



The Pittsburgh Warriors is a 501c3 non-profit organization run by veterans, dedicated to aiding fellow veterans in overcoming the physical and mental challenges stemming from their military service. We achieve this through the unique avenue of veteran-branded ice hockey, where values such as teamwork, accountability, resilience, and shared service underpin the entire experience. Our doors are open to all who have served with honor, regardless of their level of hockey experience. We provide all the necessary resources for veterans to learn and enjoy the game at no cost, fostering a community of individuals who share a deep understanding of military service and the journey beyond.

Our primary objective is to offer veterans access to a lifelong sport that promotes their mental and physical well-being, ignites their spirits, and enhances the lives of both themselves and their families.

For Service-Disabled veterans, our hockey program provides a unique opportunity to learn and play the revered sport of ice hockey, promoting mental and physical well-being in a supportive environment surrounded by teammates who share a common bond forged through military service. As they stand side by side on the ice, they not only see fellow players but also brothers and sisters who have shared the experience of serving their nation. The camaraderie formed within the team mirrors the bonds forged during their time in uniform, laying the foundation for healing and growth.

Our locker room serves as a sanctuary for our veterans, offering a space to unwind and connect with teammates who understand their journey of transitioning back to civilian life post-military service. Our coaches adhere to USA Hockey guidelines, leading practices and games that focus on skill development, physical exertion, and the vital connection between mind and body health. Through a structured practice routine, goal-oriented gameplay, team-building activities, volunteer opportunities, and community outreach, we aim to bolster our veterans' self-esteem, reignite their spirit of service, and facilitate their integration back into civilian life. With gratitude, we can proudly say that our program now supports approximately 180 service-disabled veterans.

The Pittsburgh Warriors hockey program thrives thanks to the unwavering support of our community, including organizations like the Penguins Foundation, The Malone Family Foundation, and Operation Hat Trick, whose generosity sustains our operations and enables us to provide a program efficiency ratio of 89.6% and allows us to provide everything our players need at no cost. On behalf of our dedicated Board of Directors, I humbly request your support in helping our program expand and reach more veterans in need. Rest assured, every donation you make will directly benefit our program's initiatives.

If you have any questions about our organization, vision, or mission, please feel free to contact me directly at [samueljohnson82@gmail.com](mailto:samueljohnson82@gmail.com) or 724-579-2555. Thank you for standing alongside us in supporting our veterans. Welcome to the Pittsburgh Warriors Family. If you are inclined to donate, please visit our website below.

<http://www.pghwarriorhockey.org/page/show/5685794-donate>

*Samuel H. Johnson*

Samuel H. Johnson Colonel, US Army (Ret'd)  
Chairman of the Board, Pittsburgh Warriors Hockey





## PITTSBURGH WARRIORS HOCKEY MISSION STATEMENT

Pittsburgh Warriors Hockey is a 501(c)(3) organization of honorably discharged service members with a service-connected disability united around hockey and dedicated to provide a cathartic experience, promote physical and mental healing and growth as well as to enable team members to be even more productive members of society.

# PITTSBURGH WARRIORS HOCKEY

[PGHWARRIORHOCKEY.ORG](http://PGHWARRIORHOCKEY.ORG)

## CULTURE

Our time together will promote healing and we will help each other. There is no requirement for experience or ability to play. Pittsburgh Warriors Hockey can help shape a positive public perception of all veterans, and, because we also wear the Pittsburgh Penguins logo on our jerseys, we will strive to be examples of excellence in sport and community. Similar to our military service, we will promote brotherhood and camaraderie, seek to build friendships on and off the ice and foster a true team experience in our quest for victory. Recognizing the growing number of veterans dealing with substance abuse problems, depression, post-traumatic stress, and other unseen scars, excessive drinking will be discouraged. Unprofessional, inappropriate and/or illegal behavior will not be tolerated.

## VISION STATEMENT

**Pittsburgh Warriors Hockey, with the help of the community, will use the powerful sport of hockey as a catalyst to create a culture of healing for its members in perpetuity.**

## SUPPORT US

The Pittsburgh Warriors seek to help disabled veterans to continue to have access to ice time, participation in local and national tournament, and various organizational costs.

We need your support in order to continue our mission and grow our organization to help more Veterans.

If you have any questions, we would be happy to provide you with more information about how you can help support our mission.



For more info or to donate:  
[info@pghwarriorhockey.org](mailto:info@pghwarriorhockey.org)





[illegible]

***NO ONE DOES MORE FOR  
VETERANS***

