

Patriot's Pen

Each year, VFW offers scholarships to those in grades 6-8 who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States and its territories. Submittals are sent to the local Post (address for Ship 1774 can be found on our web site) to arrive not later than 1 Nov 2011. Winners at each level (Post, District, State) win monetary awards and their submittal is advanced to the next level, with the ultimate judging being at National Hq and a chance for \$10,000.00 U.S. Savings Bond and other awards. **The theme for the 2011-2012 year is: "Are You Proud of Your Country?"**

VFW believes strongly in good citizenship and fostering patriotism. That's why we encourage youthful minds to examine our nation's history and their own experiences in modern American society through our Patriot's Pen youth essay-writing contest. Annually, roughly 112,000, students from grades 6-8, enter to win one of several savings bonds totaling \$1.2 million, as well as an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the National first place winner. Students draft a 300-400 word essay, expressing their views based on an — always patriotic — annual theme chosen by the VFW Commander-in-Chief.

In recent years, interviews with teachers and school leaders have indicated that teachers are often reluctant to encourage participation in our scholarship competition if they are required to take class time to have their students all complete entry forms and record their scripts. For this reason, we offer the teachers the following options: Teachers/youth leaders are encouraged to simply use Voice of Democracy as a written patriotic exercise. The teacher/leader has the option of:

1. Submitting all scripts and recordings to the Post for judging. Or:
2. Conducting a judging within the group and advancing one winner for every fifteen (15) participants.

Which option above is used is ultimately the decision of the Post chairman, working closely with the teacher, school official or youth group leader."

What does this mean? If the school takes option 2, then the Post may advance those winners provided by that school in addition to any other essays judged by the Post. To do this, get a list of all students that participated in the school competition on school letterhead. The Post then can take credit for all the students that participated at the school. Remember, 1 student may be selected for every 15 participating, same as at the Post level.

ADVANCING POST WINNERS: Posts may advance one winner for every fifteen (15) entries.

Application and information can be found at <http://www.vfw.org/>