OFFICIAL STUDENT PATRIOT'S PEN COMPETITION ENTRY FORM
MUST BE COMPLETED BY ALL CONTESTANTS

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

( ) Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

Date of Birth _____ Grade in School _____ Essay Word Count _____

School Name, City, State

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTEST RULES

Signature of Student Participant _____ Date _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VFW/AUXILIARY POST
I certify that this student is an authorized entry in our VFW Post Level Patriot's Pen Competition.

Post Commander's/Chairman's Signature _____ Post # _____

Ladies Auxiliary President's/Chairman's Signature

Post Address

City, State, Zip

No. of students participating _____ No. of winners advanced to District ____

Amt. of Post/Aux. awards and bonds $ _____

Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (banquet, pins, etc.) $ _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VFW/AUXILIARY DISTRICT
I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Patriot's Pen Essay Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department finals.

District Chairman's Signature _____ Dist. # _____

Address

City, State, Zip

( ) Phone _____ E-mail _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VFW DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN
I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Patriot's Pen Essay Department Competition, and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairman's Signature

( ) Daytime Phone _____ ( ) Fax _____

E-mail

The winner ❍ has been ❍ will be (check one) notified that they are the first place Department winner on _____. **Note:** National Headquarters will contact your winner after this date to notify them of their national placement.

LOCAL VFW POST INFORMATION

CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____

BEST TIME TO CALL: _____

ALTERNATE CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____

BEST TIME TO CALL: _____

Patriot's Pen Competition
Veterans of Foreign Wars
& Ladies Auxiliary
Kansas City, Missouri
(816) 756-3390, ext. 220
E-Mail: swilson@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

Patriotic Essay
Writing Contest
Grand Prize:
$10,000 savings bond

Conducted nationwide, this VFW sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on democracy with the prospect of winning U.S. savings bonds. We invite you to join the more than 120,000 students who participated last year in this contest.

The top 45 national winners all receive at least a $1,000 savings bond. The first-place award is currently a $10,000 savings bond plus an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the winner and a parent or guardian.

What is Patriot's Pen?

Big National Prizes

Prizes include the various amounts of U.S. Savings Bonds listed below:

1st:	$10,000	Bond	7th:	$3,500	Bond
2nd:	$8,000	Bond	8-9th:	$3,000	Bond
3rd:	$7,000	Bond	10-11th:	$2,500	Bond
4th:	$5,500	Bond	12-13th:	$2,000	Bond
5th:	$5,000	Bond	14-15th:	$1,500	Bond
6th:	$4,000	Bond	16-45th:	$1,000	Bond

When is the deadline?

To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring VFW Post by **November 1, 2008**.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.

How does the contest work?

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by local VFW Posts. Post winners advance to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The one first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW National competition. The winner from each Department (state) then competes for the national prizes.

Who can enter?

Patriot's Pen is open to 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students enrolled in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Home-schooled students also are eligible.

Dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools can participate too. (Foreign exchange students and former winners that placed in the National finals are excluded from the contest.)

How do I get started?

- Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing competition.
- Contact a local VFW Post and indicate your interest in participating.
- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its Ladies Auxiliary.
- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of **Nov. 1, 2008**.

How am I judged?

You will be judged on how well you understand, develop and present the theme. A positive approach is recommended to express your viewpoint.

Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points:
You must show a thorough knowledge of the them 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 2008-09 theme is **Why America's Veterans Should Be Honored**.

What are the rules?

- Essay length: 300-400 typewritten words.
- You must write your own essay.
- All essays should be typewritten in English with no color or graphics and cannot be less than 300 words or greater than 400 words in length. (Essays under or over these word amounts will be eliminated.) Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.

Deadline —

The completed essay and entry form must be in the hands of the VFW Post Chairman by midnight **Nov. 1, 2008**.

In no way may contestants identify themselves in their essay. Do not put your name on your essay. The entry form is your essay's cover sheet. Secure the Official Student Entry Form with a staple or other fastener on top of your essay. Essays must be written exclusively for this competition. Use of the same essay for other competitions will result in disqualification. Contestants are allowed to enter only once (one Post competition). Contestants found in violation of this rule will face elimination from the competition and will be required to return any and all prize money awarded or received.

The essay must be a contestant's original work and a product of the contestant's own thinking. The approach to the Patriot's Pen theme should be positive and clearly focused. Poetry is not acceptable. Quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified wherever used. A contestant's teacher, counselor or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling, but the content must remain the contestant's. Contestants will be judged on the basis of their essay alone and are not required to present the essay orally. All essays become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW retains non-exclusive rights to use your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

Note: All entries must be submitted to a VFW Post competition. If you have difficulty identifying a sponsoring Post in your area, call the Patriot's Pen national office at:
(816) 756-3390, ext. 220 or e-mail: *swilson@vfw.org.*