

General Orders February 2026
Youth Activities 2025-2026
Darnell Bohlander, Dept. Chairman
515 21st Ave NE
Aberdeen, SD 57401
(605) 290-8942
darnellbohlander@yahoo.com

Hope this finds everyone well. I know we are in the middle of influenza season. If you are unable to get to your local schools to support "Youth Activities" in person, you can always reach out to school art teachers and librarians through email. I pulled up Aberdeen's schools' websites to obtain the art teachers and librarians email addresses and emailed them a message and included some attachments. I sent the Illustrating America information and Contest Entry Form to the art teachers and the Patriotism Through Literacy listing to the librarians. I have received some positive responses back. If you need any assistance with this process, please let me know. I would be more than willing to help you.

I have reached out to all Youth Activities Chairmen by email and attached Illustrating America information and Contest Entry Form along with the Year End Report. Those Chairmen without email addresses, I mailed out the information. I will follow up with another "email blast" to the Youth Activities Chairmen in the next month.

I will repeat some of the news from earlier General Orders:

Exciting news...Northern State University's Art Department will be judging our Department's "Illustrating Art" entries. Also, I did verify at Fall Council that we do not have any Districts who award a District Winner, therefore, I have removed the District Deadline for "Illustrating America".

I will quote from Shannon Stanley our National Youth Advisor; "Remember, keeping the youth involved in all your programs and Auxiliary functions will only help increase our membership in the future."

"Auxiliary Youth Activities" allows our members to interact with our youth. It is my hope that our interaction with our youth will be a positive experience, not only for the youth but also for each of us. Isn't it wonderful to be involved with our youth and watch them grow (along with help from their parents, teachers and other leaders) into responsible adults?

Patriotic Youth Award:

The "Patriotic Youth Award" is designed to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support to our veterans, service members and their families. A fillable, printable version of the Patriotic Youth Award is available in MALTA, Member Resources, under Youth Activities. "National Program Awards 2025-2026 Entry Form" is due to me by March 31, 2026. I will forward the Department-winning form to National Youth Activities Ambassador Shannon Stanley for judging.

Patriotism through Literacy:

Promote and support reading among our youth with this simple, fun and potentially free (use your local library) initiative. Introduce youth to historical figures and teach them about events in our nation's history while fostering a love of reading that can lead to a lifetime of learning.

Illustrating America:

Open to any student in grades K-8 who is enrolled in a public, private or parochial school, or home study program in the United States. Foreign exchange students and students age 15 or older are ineligible. National grade division winners of previous Illustrating America contests may enter the subsequent grade division but are ineligible for the same grade division of which they are a previous National winner.

Entries will be judged on patriotic theme and technique. The contest consists of three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8.

Deadlines (received by):

VFW Auxiliary – March 31, 2026

Department – April 15, 2026

National Headquarters – May 5, 2026