

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

As I write this, we are in a blizzard with no power. Thank goodness for backup battery on my computer. Prior to this first full snowstorm, we were blessed with a beautiful fall. I hope that the nice weather in November allowed our Auxiliaries to attend those Veteran's Day Programs that some of our grade schools, middle schools and high schools presented and that our Auxiliaries were able to thank them for doing those programs. Please don't forget to continue to reconnect with our teachers and remind them of our "Youth Activities".

Wishing everyone a blessed Merry Christmas and safe travels this holiday season.

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 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

Official form, details on requirements and contest rules can be found in MALTA, Member Resources, or on the VFW Auxiliary website.