

COURAGE

LEADERSHIP

HONOR

SERVICE

SCHOLARSHIP

PATRIOTISM



## THE AMERICAN LEGION

# SCHOOL AWARD MEDAL PROGRAM

### OBJECTIVES

I.

Place emphasis on the development of the qualities of COURAGE, HONOR, LEADERSHIP, PATRIOTISM, SCHOLARSHIP and SERVICE.

II.

Develop those ideals of Americanism among young people which will make them citizens of the highest type.

III.

Give recognition through the award of American Legion School Award Medals to the boy and to the girl who are deemed most worthy of the high qualities of citizenship and of true Americanism.

The Award Medal represents the educational symbolism of the School Award Medal Program and associates it with The American Legion and its purposes. The medal is applicable for award to either boys or girls in the graduating class of elementary, junior and senior high schools, and colleges.



The American Legion School Award Medal Plan is a project of the National Americanism Commission, and is put in effect by Legion Departments, Districts and Posts according to the instructions in this leaflet.

This plan has now been in effect for a number of years, and most Posts have worked out a program which fits their individual situation. For those Posts that are new, or that have not participated in years, here are some suggestions.

## ■ Qualities to Be Developed ■

### COURAGE

Bravery in the face of opposition and danger; determination and force to do right without public applause and regardless of personal advantage. A quality of the intellect.

### HONOR

Highly-developed moral character; moral excellence; strength and stability of character; high standards of conduct; devotion to duty; adherence to truth; keen sense of what is right; practice of clean speech and thoughts.

### LEADERSHIP

Ability to lead and to accomplish through group action; ability to work in harmony and in unison with other leaders in accomplishing group results; desire and ability to fill the voids in the lives of others caused by timidity, illness and other handicaps.

### PATRIOTISM

An ideal of loyal Americanism, religious tolerance, righteous freedom and the willingness to defend our Flag against all enemies – foreign and domestic. Perhaps best defined in the American's Creed.

### SCHOLARSHIP

Attainments in school studies, quality of school work reflecting the fine traits of industry; perseverance efficiency and intelligence.

### SERVICE

Kindliness; unselfishness; fellowship; protection of the weak; promotion of the interests and the welfare of associates, and, constructive aid for the upbuilding of schools and of community.

## ■ Method of Award ■

First, the Post Commander will appoint a committee of not more than three members to contact local school authorities. Through them a basis of friendly cooperation, on the part of the faculty and students, should be established. When this had been done, it will be possible to design and activate a smooth, coordinated program.

Such a program would almost of necessity include the following:

- A series of talks to the students, and faculty, on the six traits which are the basis of the program. These talks should be delivered by Legionnaires, tuned to the students' level of understanding, of good grammatical structure, and short. The customary weekly assembly period would be an excellent opportunity for such presentations.
- Arrangements on how the recipients are to be selected should be made well in advance of the elections. Members of the graduating class and the faculty are to cast secret ballots to determine the boy awardee and the girl awardee. Traits underlying the selection of the boy and the girl will be Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service. Make sure that the voters understand the meaning of the qualities and their weights in the selection. The Post Committee upon the recommendation of faculty members and school administration should make the final selection.
- Students, patrons and the entire community should know and understand the entire program. Suitable publicity should be arranged to handle this. The sole purpose of the undertaking by The American Legion is the cultivation of high character and wholesome ideals in youth approaching active citizenship. No trace of politics, sectarianism or favoritism should be allowed to attach itself to the School Award Program.
- At the medal presentation ceremony, it is only fitting and proper that the local American Legion Post take the major role. A member of The American Legion should present the awards. The school principal is to be consulted before any speaker is named in order to be certain that the speaker is acceptable to the local school authorities. All speakers should be cautioned not to take up too much time on the commencement program. World War II, Korean and Viet Nam veterans can serve admirably in presenting awards.

## ■ Awards ■

Awards shall be made to the boy and to the girl of the graduating class\* in elementary, junior and senior high schools and colleges. Awards are limited to the graduating classes because of the candidates' positions on the threshold of entrance upon a more extensive period of education, or upon entrance into the wage-earning world.

Illustrations of the awards, with the exception of the certificates, and information on how they may be obtained will be found on page 4 of this leaflet. The certificates, one for each of the medal winners as indicated under the illustrations and others for the runners-up, are handsomely engraved on heavy paper suitable for framing.

## ■ The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy ■

Through the generosity of Past National Commander Ralph T. O'Neil, a beautiful plaque, known as "The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy," will be awarded annually to that Department showing the greatest Americanism activity in the use of the American Legion School Award Medals. The conditions governing the award of this trophy are as follows:

- Title of this trophy is to remain in The American Legion. A plaque replica is awarded permanently to the winning Department annually.
- The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy will be awarded annually to that Department of the United States showing the greatest Americanism activity in the use of The American Legion School Award Medals. The winning Department will be determined by: (a) the number of "American Legion School Awards Medals" recorded in the Consolidated Post Report form; (b) the number of awards per Department is then divided by the number of Post in the Department; and (c) the Department with the highest percentage will be declared the winner of the Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy.
- This award shall be confined to the 51 Departments of the United States.

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\*In schools where there are many graduates, and where there are several classrooms or homerooms making up the graduating class, an award for each group may be given. Special arrangements to cover this situation are left to the discretion of the Post Committee working with the school authorities.

## ■ Suggested Address ■

Here is a short speech which may be used to get your speaker (or speakers) started in preparing talks to the student body. A series of short talks, using the six qualities as their subjects, should be delivered at judicious intervals.



You are all familiar, in varying degrees, with the history of our country. You know that our way of life didn't "just happen." It is the product of work and an active interest on the part of good citizens from its beginning to the present.

The American Legion is an organization dedicated to the service of God and Country. We believe that one of the best ways to perform this service is to take an active interest in the preparation of our youth so that they will become patriotic, freedom-preserving citizens. It is in this interest that The American Legion School Awards Plan was born and is maintained on a National level through the Americanism Commission of The American Legion.

We want you, the citizens of the future, to realize that your democracy is in constant need of protection and improvement. The liberty, the rights, the duties we all enjoy are by no means perfect, nor is it likely that they will ever be perfect. I say this because these rights are the product of people like you and me. These people had ideas, gave them time and thought, talked them over with other people, and then acted to make them into rules of conduct. These we call laws. You know that some of these rules are being changed, new ones are being written, and you will add others. You will also change or amend some of the rules now in effect, which you will consider inadequate to the demands of your problems. This process is Liberty in motion. This is why we call democracy "a living thing." It lives in the body and spirit of each and every one of us. The rights and duties are yours and mine. They are the property of all the people. They are the responsibility of all the people, as individuals and as groups.

What are you willing to do to get and keep the kind of world you really want? Are you willing to give time for thinking? Are you keeping the high purpose of Liberty in mind? Past Wars, and the times between them, indicate that such vigilance is fundamental if we are to attain and maintain a society of people governing themselves through their chosen representatives. Take an active part in choosing those to represent you and keep them informed of your dislikes and desires.

Courage...Honor...Leadership...  
Patriotism...Scholarship...Service

Let these six qualities be the stones of the foundation upon which you construct your lives. There is a law much older than any found on the books of our land. ...The Golden Rule. ...Use it as a basis for other rules of conduct you may see fit to set up.

Remember. Liberty and Democracy didn't "just happen," nor will it continue to grow or even exist without the thoughts and actions of every one of you.

## ■ Suggested Presentation Program ■

The Color Bearers advance the Flag of our Country.

"To the Colors" is played by a school bugler.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

The meeting is formally opened by one of the members of the Post Committee.

The Post Chaplain delivers a prayer.

A very brief address is delivered telling of the activity and why The American Legion is interested in education activities designed for building good citizens.

A brief presentation using highlights in American history, as a theme is appropriate. You may also use respect for the flag in your message.

Here is a short address, which may be used in the declaration of medal recipients.

"This is the highest honor awarded American Youth by The American Legion. It is a medal that proclaims to the world you are the kind of boy (or girl) that we, the comrades of men and women who gave their lives in battle, believe worthy of such honor. It is our desire that wherever you go, and whatever you do, you will always be guided by the highest ideals."

(Chaplain)

"Now, may the love of God Almighty abide within you, and, like an armed band of invincible and immortal warriors, guard and guide your soul.

"Please stand here until after the closing of the Post and the Commander bids you be seated." (Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ will place the boy (or girl) between the emblems.)

### Sources for Civics Information

The American Heritage Foundation - [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org)

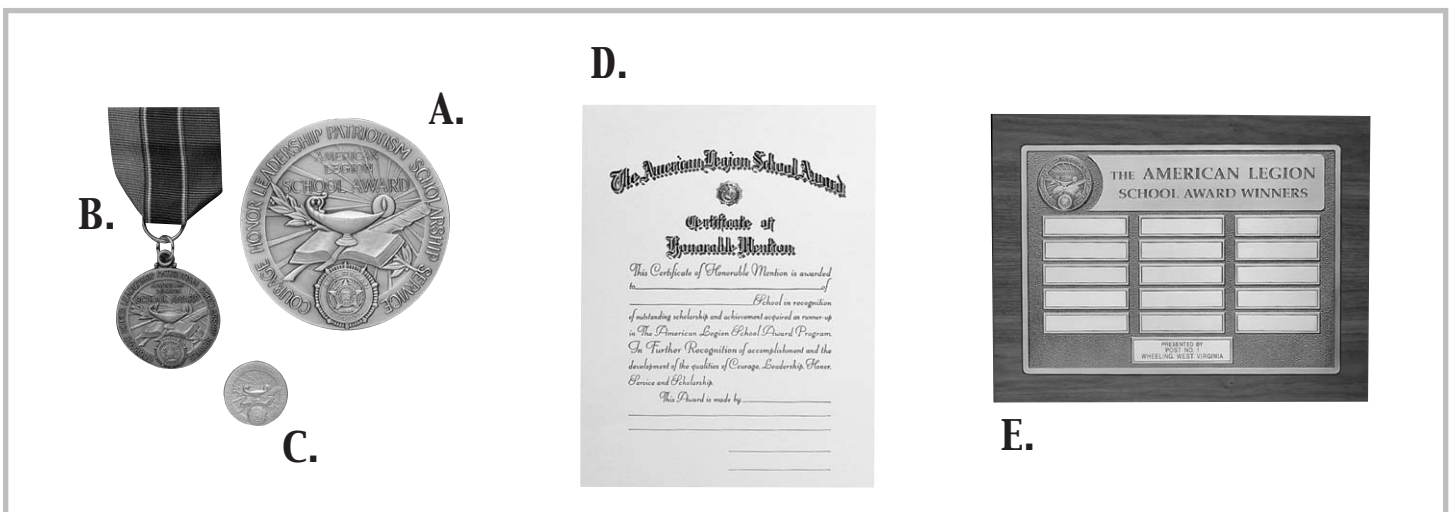
The Center for Civic Education - [www.civiced.org](http://www.civiced.org)

# SCHOOL AWARD MEDALS

## ▪ Plaques & Certificates ▪

For Better Citizenship and Americanism. The official American Legion School Award Medal is presented by Posts to a vast number of boys and girls in graduating classes of public and private schools. Recipients best represent outstanding qualities of character and ability. Award is based on Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service, which if cultivated, result in better citizenship.

Check current Emblem Catalog, or call 1-888-453-4466, or visit their Web site at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) for all prices on the following items:



**A. Medallion Type of Award**  
 2 1/2 inches, suitable for either boy or girl. Comes complete with easel and engraved certificate.  
 Catalog .....No. 717.201C

**B. Medal**  
 1 1/4 inches. Identical in design to large medal. American Legion ribbon with pin and catch. Complete with engraved certificate.  
 Catalog .....No. 717.200C

**C. 5/8" Lapel Pin**  
 Many Posts desire to supplement their present School Awards by presenting a Lapel Pin in addition to the present awards. Gold filled with joint pin and safety catch. Suitable for wear by either a boy or girl.  
 Catalog .....No. 715.904

**D. Certificate Of Honorable Mention**  
 For presentation only to runner-up in American Legion School Award Medal program in recognition of outstanding scholarship and achievement.

Catalog .....No. 733.106

**E. School Award Plaque**  
 School Award Plaque, with reproduction of one side of medal as integral part of design. Bronze plate, mounted on walnut stained backboard. Space at bottom of plaque for embossing the following inscription: "Awarded Annually By," plus the Post name, number, town and state location. Embossing is included in price. Four weeks for delivery.

Catalog.....No. 722.240

**ENCOURAGE BETTER CITIZENS TOMORROW — PRESENT SCHOOL AWARDS TODAY**

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