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SUBJ//2026 AMERICAN LEGION SPIRIT OF SERVICE AWARD//

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RMKS/1. The American Legion will present its Spirit of Service Award for calendar year 2026 to an enlisted member (E-5 and below) from each branch of the Armed Forces. The award, given annually since 2000, will be presented by the National Commander on stage at the American Legion National Convention in Louisville, KY, August 28-September 3, 2026.

2. Eligibility. The main criterion of the award is the amount of volunteer community service that a Sailor performs off-duty in the local community. Command-sponsored volunteer activities, either on-duty or off, will not be counted. The period of service is 1 January 2025 - 31 December 2025, and nominees must be E-5 or below during the period of service. Nominees may be active or reserve, and must be outstanding military professionals. Previous winners of this award are not eligible. If chosen as the recipient, the awardee must attend the American Legion National Convention.

3. Travel and lodging. Within CONUS, the American Legion will provide travel and lodging expenses for the individual winner. The winner is responsible for travel expenses for family members or guests.

4. Nominations. Nomination packages must contain the Commanding Officer's (CO) nomination, a description of the volunteer service performed, a biography of the Sailor, and a high-resolution JPEG head and shoulder photograph taken by their respective command in service dress uniform. Also required is a signed consent form for release of information. The American Legion requires the service member's record brief to include a list of schools and awards.

a. Commanding Officer nomination. COs may nominate one Sailor from their command. Nominations must be on command letterhead and indicate the CO's confidence in the Sailor's professionalism and as a representative of the Navy, the validity of the volunteer efforts and a commitment to facilitate their nominee's attendance at the national convention, if selected. Nominees must have a recommended award citation from their command. Endorsements are not required.

b. Volunteer efforts. Description of volunteer efforts must include quantitative data such as hours, days, or months spent on off-duty volunteer community service (e.g., provided 38 hours at the community center as a coach). Command sponsored volunteer activities, either on duty or off, will not be counted. This description should be provided in a bullet format.

c. Nominee photo. An 8x10, high-resolution JPEG head and shoulder photograph of the Sailor is required. If chosen as the award recipient, the

nominee's photo will be used in printed and online material used to publicize and document the award ceremony. The photo should be similar to those commonly associated with Navy leader biographies and official portrait photos. In addition, a new requirement (not shown in the sample package below) is a full-length photograph.

d. Nominee biography. If chosen as the award recipient, the biography will be used in the Legion's magazine and convention program. The biography should include hometown information as well as professional highlights and qualifications, similar to those annotated in Navy leader biographies.

e. Signed consent for release of information. A written and signed statement of consent by the Sailor, authorizing release of information contained in the nomination, is required per the Privacy Act of 1974. The following statement is a sample of written consent:

"I, (rate/rank/full name), do hereby authorize the release of all information enclosed in this nomination package to those persons involved in the selection process."

f. All parts of the package should be contained in one PDF.

g. For a sample package of a previous winner, go to <https://www.outreach.navy.mil/Outreach/ExecutiveOutreach/>

5. Nomination submission. Nominations must be received by 01 April 2026. Nominations must be submitted electronically to [katryn.a.mccalment.civ\(AT\)us.navy.mil](mailto:katryn.a.mccalment.civ(AT)us.navy.mil). Email subject line should read "AMERICAN LEGION SPIRIT OF SERVICE AWARD [SERVICE MEMBER'S LAST NAME]"

6. Selection process. The Navy Office of Community Outreach (NAVCO) will consolidate all nominations, organize a ranking board, and recommend the top candidates to the American Legion, which will make the selection.

7. Released by RDML John A. Robinson III, Chief of Information.//

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