Inaugural
AMERICAN FREEDOM HONORS AWARDS

This Instruction Sheet establishes criteria and objectives for the "American Freedom Honors" Awards.

1. **General:** The "AMERICAN FREEDOM HONORS" awards are to recognize outstanding military men, women, veterans, and organizations serving our military and veteran communities. The recognition is open to military members of all branches to include Active Duty, Reserve, Guard, Veterans, and Community Service Organizations who have served in honorable conditions. This instruction packet outlines the criteria and details of the selection process, along with specific information regarding the nomination process.

2. **Purpose:** To recognize unique and exceptional achievements, outstanding performances, and extraordinary contributions to the overall mission accomplished by members of the armed forces and those who have served honorably in our nation's military and community organizations serving our military and veterans.

3. **Definition of a Hero:** A hero is someone that is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities. AFH heroes may also be a model in a community organization, or an ideal representative of the military, or veterans who have gone above and beyond outside of their military or community service. These heroes may have served abroad in actual combat situations or stateside protecting our basic freedoms.

4. **Geographic Area:** Units anywhere in the world may nominate individuals for these awards and community service organizations (USA only)

5. **Selection Criteria: The nominees for these awards are considered based on the following criteria:**

A. **Leadership:** Nominees must have demonstrated exceptional leadership traits within their respective service or organization as evidenced in their character, conduct, achievements, and willingness to accept additional responsibility.

B. **Military Accomplishments:** Address job knowledge and leadership qualities as applied to resolving specific service issues, combat situations, or development of new techniques, procedures, or processes that resulted in increased mission effectiveness of the armed services.

C. **Service to Others:** Participation in social or cultural activities in the military and/or civilian community that tangibly contribute to community or group welfare, morale, or status.

D. **Best Unit:** Nominees must have demonstrated exceptional qualities as applied to specific service issues, combat situations, or development of new techniques, procedures, or processes that resulted in increased mission effectiveness recognized by their Battalion, Fleet or Wing.

Award Categories:
Military and local leadership may submit applications for the following categories:

Hero of the Year – Veteran Only
Exceptional valor or service above and beyond the call of duty.

Leadership Excellence
Outstanding leadership that inspired and guided others in the field.

Community Service Organization
Outstanding service and support of our military and veteran communities.

Unsung Hero Award – Veteran Only
For those who served quietly and faithfully without seeking recognition.

Lifetime of Service
Honoring a career of distinguished military service and enduring dedication.

Best Non-Commissioned Officer

Recognizing outstanding NCOs who lead from the front. Three awards will be presented — one for Active Duty, one for Guard and one for Reserve.

Best Officer
Honoring commissioned officers who exemplify leadership and excellence. Three awards will be presented — one for Active Duty, one for Guard and one for Reserve.

Best Unit
Celebrating units that demonstrate exceptional performance, cohesion, and mission readiness. Three awards will be presented — one for Active Duty, one for Guard and one for Reserve.

Military Spouse of The Year
To be considered for the **American Freedom Honors Military Spouse of the Year**, a nominee must meet the following criteria:

The nominee must be a spouse of an Active Duty, Guard or Reserve service member of the U.S. Armed Forces: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force or Coast Guard.

The nominee cannot currently be serving on Active Duty, as a Reservist, as Individual Ready Reserve, or as a National Guardsman in any branch of the military.

The nominee must be at least 18 years of age and up.

Nominees will be required to submit a letter of recommendation from their spouse's commander and agree to submit a one-minute video to be played at the gala.

The **American Freedom Honors Blue-Ribbon Panel** categories include:

- Leadership skills shown in past efforts within the military spouse community; exhibits leadership.
- Active involvement in the military community, with a focus on supporting the different needs and experiences of military spouses.
- Passion/Advocacy shows inclusiveness for all military spouses; has the passion to support all military spouses.
- Ability to communicate effectively in public settings, work with media outlets; has actively contributed to the media on military spouse issues.
- Share a story that inspires and reflects the diverse realities of military spouses.

1. FORM 1: COMMANDER's NOMINATION: Includes unit and personnel data on the nominee and must be signed by the nominee's Commander or designated representative. Veterans must have form signed by Commander of an American Legion, DAV, VFW, etc...

2. FORM 2: NARRATIVE JUSTIFICATION: Must be completed using bullet format to highlight specific individual accomplishments for each category listed.

3. FORM 3: BIOGRAPHY OF INDIVIDUAL: Briefly highlight the nominee's career. The information provided should be a 500-word paragraph used in conjunction with the narrative justification to prepare the introductions for the award winners during the awards presentation, and in the award show program.

4. FORM 4: BIOGPAPHY OF UNIT OR CIVILIAN COMPANY: Briefly highlight the unit's accomplishments, awards, and community service. The information provided should be a 500-word paragraph used in conjunction with the narrative justification to prepare the introductions for the award winners during the awards presentation, and in the awards show program.

5. **PHOTOGRAPH:** You must submit a color head and shoulder photograph in service dress uniform without headgear. Please submit units' picture and picture of unit patch. Veterans must submit a photograph in formal wear.

Companies, please submit a group picture of your veteran employee's and company logo. We request a color jpeg file of high quality, the higher the better for photograph quality scaled to a wallet size picture.

6. **DIGITAL VIDEO:** Military members, units, veterans and civilian companies must submit an editable two-minute video explaining who you are, where you are, branch of service, and why you deserve to become an award winner. This will be used in conjunction with the narrative justification to prepare the introductions for the award winners during the awards presentation, as well as being used for the voting process.

Nomination Process:

A. Who may apply: Military units, service members, veterans, community service organizations, and military spouses.

Application window: November 1, 2026, through midnight CST on January 31,2 027.
How to submit: Email all required application materials to **applications@americanfreedomhonors.com**

B. The Blue-Ribbon Panel which consists of fellow veterans, Executive leadership and former military spouses that set the grading criteria and determine the three finalists of each category for the AMERICAN FREEDOM HONORS awards.

Recognition Ceremony:
This will be a gala event, during which time the approved category nominees(s) will be announced and recognized. Nominees will be notified by our committee by April 30, 2027. Nominees will be given two complimentary tickets; Military Units will receive a table of ten. Other personnel wishing to attend the ceremony in support of the winner(s) will be able to purchase tickets. Nominees will also be invited to a VIP/meet and greet reception at the TX. Airfare and hotel will be provided for each nominee and one (1) guest.

Awards Process Timeline:

1. November 1, 2026
- Notify public and Military that the AMERICAN FREEDOM HONORS award application process is open.

2. January 31, 2027
- Deadline for all nomination submissions to The AMERICAN FREEDOM HONORS Blue Ribbon Panel.

3. February 1, 2027
- Selection of nominees by a Blue-Ribbon Panel begins.

4. April 1, 2027
- Awards Blue-Ribbon Panel Audit ends.

5. April 30, 2027
- Notification to awards nominees completed.

6. May 1, 2027
- General public voting begins.

7. August 1, 2027
- General public voting ends midnight CST.
- ALL travel for nominees completed.

8. September 28-29, 2027
- Nominees and Guest arrive

9. September 29, 2027
- VIP and special guest Reception

10. September 30, 2027
- American Freedom Honors gala

11. October 1, 2027

- Check out by 12pm CST

Please send all fully completed packets directly to AMERICAN FREEDOM HONORS awards via e-mail submission no later than January 31, 2027. An electronic version can be downloaded at www.americanfreedomhonors.com.

AMERICAN FREEDOM HONORS AWARDS: NOMINATION PACKET CHECKLIST FOR MILITARY, VETERANS and CIVILIAN

Form I-Commander or local leadership Nomination attached

Form 2-Narrative Justification attached

Form 3-Biography attached

Form 4-Biography of Unit attached

Digital photograph in JPG format attached

Digital video of applicant – Name, Rank, Branch, Date Served, your story on why you should become a nominee

Completed By:

Date Submitted:

FORM I: FREEDOM AWARDS NOMINATION

SERVICE AFFILIATION: USAF

CATEGORY: Name of category being submitted

INCLUSIVE DATES OF ACHIEVEMENT: 1 Jan 2010-1 Jan 2010

NOMINEE: John Doe. Jr. GRADE: Captain DOR: 29 June XXXX

ORGANIZATION: 375th Support Group

STATION: Carswell JRB. TX 76120-5000

PRESENT HOME ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER:

3012 Main Street,

Lexington, IL 40506, (311) 555-1214

EMAIL ADDRESS: id@af.mil

SUPERVISOR/LOCAL POLITICIAN:

Col. John James,

375th Support Group, Scott AFB, Illinois 62225-5000

PHONE NUMBER (618)-555-1212

SUPERVISOR EMAIL ADDRESS: jj@af.mil

I certify the information contained in this nomination is accurate and truthful to the best of my knowledge. Further, I certify this individual has no record of discipline, nor has this nominee performed any derogatory action within the award period that may cause embarrassment to our armed services or to the American Freedom Honors award. Finally, I certify this nominee is fully deserving of the recognition this award will afford.

SIGNED:

(Commander) Date

FORM 2: FREEDOM AWARDS NARRATIVE JUSTIFICATION

NOTE: Use bullet statements to provide factual and substantiated examples of the nominee's significant performance and achievements, above general job requirements that warrant this recognition. Describe how well the nominee improved operations; highlighted any support they provided for any special projects; explained any other outstanding services the employee provided that benefited the military mission.

NOTE: Use 12 pitch ARIAL Limited to one single-spaced typewritten page with 1" margins.

- NOMINEE: CAPTAIN JOHN DOE JR. USAF

- LEADERSHIP: Nominees must have demonstrated exceptional leadership traits within their respective service as evidenced in their character, conduct, and ability to achieve goals and accept additional responsibility. This is heavily weighed out of 100% (80%)

- Start typing here

- MILITARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Address job knowledge and leadership qualities as applied to resolving specific service issues, combat situations, or development of new techniques, procedures, or processes that result in increased mission effectiveness of the armed services. This is heavily weighed out of 100% (80%)

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- SERVICE TO OTHERS: Consider participation in social, cultural, or religious activities either in the military and/or civilian community, along with tangible contributions to the community or benefits to group welfare, morale, or status. This is moderately weighed out of 100% (60%)

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FORM 3 BIOGRAPHY

CAPTAIN JOHN DOE, JR., USAF

Captain John Doe is the Chief of Military Personnel Flight, assigned to the 375th Mission Support Group, Scott AFB, Illinois. In this capacity, he manages and integrates the activities of the Military Personnel Flight in support of human resource programs. He provides management oversight of career development, quality force management, and personnel entitlement programs and advises the 375th Airlift Wing leadership on personnel programs impacting over 3,800 assigned military personnel.

Captain Doe was born in Lexington, Kentucky, on 29 June 1977. He attended the United States Air Force Academy graduating in 1998 with a degree in Nuclear Physics and a commission as a second lieutenant. Upon entering active duty, Captain Doe received technical training as a personnel officer at Keesler AFB, Mississippi, where he was recognized as an honor graduate. He was subsequently assigned to Scott AFB where he assumed his current duties. In June 2003, Captain Doe was deployed to Baghdad, Iraq as part of a Personnel Contingency team supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. On 28 Jun 03, Capt. Doe's unit came under intense enemy fire from members of a terrorist group. Capt. Doe immediately assumed leadership of his element and initiated actions to establish a perimeter defense. Under his leadership, the team successfully defended their position until reinforcements were able to arrive.

Captain Doe is an active member in his local church, where he serves as youth counselor and elder. He was selected as the Outstanding Company Grade Officer of the Year in 2003 for the 375th Mission Support Group. Capt. Doe is the recipient of several military awards, among them the Bronze Star, the Air Force Meritorious Service and Commendation Medals.

Captain Doe is married to the former Jane Smith of Peoria, IL. Together they have three children, Eric (age 7), Sammy (age 5), and Trudy (age 2).

FORM 4 BIOGRAPHY OF Community Service Organization or UNIT

Non-Profit Name or for military - 123 Airlift Squadron, Scott AFB, IL USAF