

MEDALS AND AWARDS PRECEDENCE PROJECT

Report of Sub-Committee Statement of Objectives and Guidelines

7 December 2021

The genesis of this Project arose from the identification of certain inconsistencies in the current order of precedence of the SAR Medals and Awards. For example, the Meritorious Service Medal is currently ranked #12 regardless of the ranking authority. This leads to the placement of a Meritorious Service Medal awarded by a Chapter above a Roger Sherman Medal awarded by a State. While a simple solution to this problem is to produce the Meritorious Service Medal with different colors (i.e. Gold, Silver, and Bronze) to reflect the awarding authority, it does not completely resolve other precedence conflicts.

The Sub-Committee sought to establish a set of guiding principles as a bedrock from which to build the medal precedence structure. We returned to the founding documents of the organization. In Title 36 USC. Patriotic Societies and Observances, Chapter 1C. Sons of the American Revolution, Sec. 20b. Purposes of the Corporation, we find our origin. From this document we distilled the following purposes and objectives:

- To be patriotic, historical, and educational
- To perpetuate the memory of our Patriot Ancestors
- To unite and promote fellowship among their descendants
- To inspire research of the American Revolution
- To acquire and preserve the records, relics, and landmarks of the Revolution
- To celebrate the anniversaries of the Revolutionary period
- To foster true patriotism

Staying mindful of these guiding principles, the Sub-Committee defined the specific goals for this project.

1. Identify inconsistencies of medal and award precedence in the current system by carefully examining Handbook V and related materials
2. Consider and evaluate various structure models for their utility to reflect the purposes and objectives above
3. Identify and implement a precedence structure that reflects the core values of the organization:
 - Service to the organization
 - Military service
 - Service to the Nation
 - Service to veterans
 - Service to the community
 - Service to partner organizations
4. Identify criteria for establishing the hierarchy within each sub-group:
 - a. Respect the current precedence assigned to each medal and award
 - b. Identify objective measures within the current criteria to receive a specific medal or award
 - c. Identify relative number of presentations of each medal and award annually
 - d. Recognize intangible hierarchical placement of certain medals and awards

5. Ensure the utility of said precedence structure to assess and place future medals within the order of precedence
6. Generate a separate listing for the medals and awards for ladies
7. Evaluate the advantages of stratified versions of the Meritorious Service Medal (i.e. Gold, Silver, and Bronze)

The Sub-Committee recognized that since the inception of the current precedence ranking system, many medals and awards had been added. Certainly, each addition was inserted with due care and consideration at the time. However, the precedence ranking began to develop unintended inconsistencies. A consistent approach was required for reexamination of current medal placement and future medal additions.

Numerous ranking modalities were explored. Each had their strengths and weaknesses. For example, a Holistic Model, whereby individual medal ranking was amended based on the relative “value” of each medal, was attempted, but lacked objective guidance and carried over many of the weakness of the current system. Therefore, it was rejected.

Ultimately, the Sub-Committee agreed to utilize the Awarding Authority Model whereby the various medals and awards would be grouped according to the level by which they were authorized. In this model, medals awarded at the National level would rank higher than the District level which would rank higher than the State level and so on.

Prototyping revealed certain limitations adhering to a strict Awarding Authority Model. Some medals did not fall neatly into a single authority category. To accommodate said medals, additional categories were added to the precedence structure, while within the primary category the level of the awarding authority remained a determining factor in relative precedence. The Sub-Committee therefore proposes the following hierarchical structure for assigning precedence to the SAR medals and awards:

Primary:	Service to the National Society and/or the Nation
	Service to a District
	Service to a State Society
	Service to a Chapter
Secondary:	Service to the community
Tertiary:	Service to partner organizations
Quaternary:	Other

The above model intentionally mirrors the organizational structure utilized in the narrative portion of Handbook V.

Respectfully submitted,
 Keith A Weissinger, MD
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