



STATE OFFICE
TENN. ASSOCIATION OF RESCUE SQUADS
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2026 T.A.R.S. ANNUAL AWARDS

Following this page, you will find the guidelines for the following awards, which are given each year at our convention:

1. John Stiles Award
2. Hugh Skip Trotter Award
3. Costo McGhee Award
4. Lifetime Membership Award
5. John H. Bird Valor Award
6. Instructor of the Year (New)

If your squad has a member deserving recognition for their acts or services, write a detailed letter of nomination to the AWARDS COMMITTEE. The recipients of these awards will be presented with an engraved plaque at our Convention Awards Ceremony. Please send Nominations to:

T.A.R.S. Awards Committee
TARS State Office
2906 Tazewell Pike Ste C
Knoxville, TN 37918
shannon@tnars.org

All other nominations must be received by August 1, 2026 in order for the committee to make a selection and have the engraving completed.

Note:

The Julian S. Wise Award is given to the TARS Squad which enrolled the most new TARS members in the preceding year. The State Secretary determines the winning squad by the membership records at the State Office around the first week of September. Please update your membership list by September 1 to increase your unit's chances of winning this award.



Guidelines

For

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

This award will establish a group of individuals that potentially will be recognized as stable leaders that contribute significantly to the building of a historical organization, serving mankind and their respective community.

Each squad should submit one candidate from their squad to the Awards Committee, in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. T.A.R.S. member for at least 10 years.
2. Contributes significantly to the upbuilding of the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads
3. Provides outstanding leadership in the Rescue Squad Movement, own squad, and community.

The Awards Committee will select two candidates for the “Lifetime Membership” Award. Two Plaques will be prepared and presented at the Convention Awards Ceremony, along with the reading of the winner’s qualifications.

Prepared for the Bristol Lifesaving Crew by: Walter Salyer

Guidelines For John H. Bird Valor Award

Mr. John H. Bird, member of the Greeneville Emergency and Rescue Squad, Inc., is a Past President and Life member of the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads. He served as the first Executive Director of the Association for twenty years. Through John's many years of service, he has helped each and every Rescue Squad in Tennessee. The results of his dedication, hard work and his ability to work with the State Legislature will have a lasting effect on the rescue movement in Tennessee. John Continues to serve the Association and the State Office as a Volunteer.

The JOHN H. BIRD VALOR AWARD is to be given to the members of the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads who lose their life in the line of duty.

Nominations are to be made by the members' squad to the TARS Award Committee. All nominations that are approved by the committee will receive the award.

When making nominations consider the following information:

1. Date and place of occurrence.
2. Details of the occurrence.
3. Press releases or news clippings of the occurrence.

Plaques in honor of each recipient will be presented to their family and/or their squad at the TARS Annual Convention.

Prepared and submitted by the 1999 TARS Awards Committee

Guidelines For JOHN STILES AWARD

The “John Stiles” Award is given each year by the Kingsport Lifesaving Crew to a member of the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads, who is chosen from nominations sent to the Awards Committee by his squad.

John Stiles was a charter member and one of the organizers of Kingsport Lifesaving and First Aid Crew. He devoted much of his time in the early days to establishing progress and fellowship activities for members to become more involved in crew activities.

Activities to be considered when nominating a member for this award:

1. Current or life member of your squad.
2. Willingness to help maintain building and equipment.
3. Interest in promoting a well-trained squad.
4. Spend time with new members to build their interest and confidence in lifesaving activities.
5. Stays abreast of new training methods and procedures and passes them on to new members.
6. Build morale with good fellowship in squad.
7. Presents himself to the public in a responsible manner when engaged in crew activities.

Prepared for the Kingsport Lifesaving Crew by: Walter Salyer

Guidelines for The Costo McGhee Award

The Costo McGhee Award will be given to the rescue squad member who has been both an outstanding squads man and has been an asset to the citizens of their community through civic work outside their rescue squad.

Mr. Costo McGhee was an active member, a Board of Directors member, and a Charter member of the Knoxville Rescue Squad, located in Knoxville, TN. He had devoted more than 32 years of continuous hard work to the citizens of Knoxville and surrounding counties. Some of Mr. McGhee's accomplishments include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Original Founder of Knoxville Volunteer Rescue Squad, Inc.
- 2) Helped organize the Knoxville, Scott, Sevier, Loudon, Roane, Blount, Anderson, and Jefferson County Rescue Squads.
- 3) T.A.R.S. Region II Vice President for 4 years.
- 4) T.A.R.S. Vice President for 2 years.
- 5) Captain of the Knoxville Volunteer Rescue Squad for 9 years.
- 6) A long-time past Board of Directors member of the Knoxville Volunteer Emergency and Rescue Squad.
- 7) President of the Arainda Community Club on 5 Different occasions.
- 8) Part-time employee of the Civil Defense Office of Knoxville for 11 years.
- 9) Member of the Knox County Ambulance Review Committee.
- 10) Advisory member of the Knoxville Academy of Medicine.
- 11) Volunteer worker and instructor for the American Red Cross.
- 12) Recipient of the American Red Cross Clara Barton Award.
- 13) Recipient of the Sertoma Club Service to Mankind Award.
- 14) Recipient of the Hospital Corporation of America Park West Hospital Community Service Award.
- 15) Recipient of the Mayor of Knoxville's Merit Award.
- 16) Has been honored by the Knox County Commissioner's by having a "Costo McGhee Week" set aside in recognition of Mr. McGhee's Service to the Community.
- 17)17)

When considering a nominee for the "Costo McGhee Award", the following criteria should be used.

- 1) The contribution made to your squad.
- 2) The contributions made to civic organizations.
- 3) The amount of quality time spent promoting the purpose and cause of your squad.
- 4) The amount of quality time spent promoting the purpose and cause of the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads.
- 5) The individual's compassion for others.
- 6) The individual's dedication to helping others.
- 7)

The recipient of the "Costo McGhee Award" will receive an engraved plaque, which may be kept permanently by the recipient. In addition, a large trophy will be displayed at the recipient's squad until the next Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads Annual Convention.

Respectfully Submitted by: John F. Yu

Guidelines For Hugh Skip Trotter Award

Mr. Hugh Skip Trotter was a member of the Sevierville Emergency and Rescue Squad, Sevierville, Tennessee, a Past President and life member of the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads. Mr. Trotter devoted many hours, giving his knowledge and organizing ability to help promote the Association across the state.

The “Hugh Skip Trotter” Award is given to the member of the Tennessee Association of Rescue squads, who has “risked his life beyond the call of duty to save the life of another human being”. When submitting a member or member’s names, consider the following:

- (1) Give date and place of occurrence.
- (2) Details of risk taken.
- (3) News clipping relates to occurrence, if possible, even if member’s names do not appear.

The Award will not be presented for a year in which the Awards Committee does not receive a “risked his life” nomination.

Submitted by the Kingsport Lifesaving Crew by: Walter Salyer

Instructor of the Year Award

The TARS Instructor of the Year Award is to recognize TARS Instructors who have done an extraordinary job instructing official TARS and non-TARS classes for Rescue Units/Squads and Fire Departments from August through July each year.

Nominees should be TARS instructors with up-to-date certifications who have taught and turned into the State Office official TARS College or Squad level courses. (These will be verified by the Training Coordinator).

The letter of recommendation shall be completed and signed by the Unit/Squad Captain unless the captain is being nominated in which case the letter should be signed by another Unit/Squad officer and turned into the **State Chaplain by August 1st**.

Things to be considered to send in along with nomination letter:

1. Copies of instructor certificates the instructor holds.
2. All of classes taught or assisted with both TARS classes and non-TARS classes from August through July of the previous year including rosters.