



**DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA  
1708 Commonwealth Ave.  
Richmond, VA. 23230**

**MEMORANDUM**

May, 2009

Subject: The American Legion Department of Virginia Law Officer of the Year Award

To: Department Law and Order Committee Members, District Commanders, District Law and Order Chairmen, Post Commanders and Post Law and Order Chairmen

1. This memorandum sets forth the procedures and criteria to be used in the Department of Virginia for the submission of candidates for subject award.
2. **Scope:** Virginians in recent years have been experiencing an unprecedented crime wave which has permeated throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia which is rapidly becoming our foremost domestic problem. The Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion includes as one of its objectives...”to maintain Law and Order”. As concerned citizens and veterans, Legionnaires have always fostered a strong sense of law and order and upheld the protection of American citizens and the American way of life. They have always held law enforcement officers of various jurisdictions who daily lay their lives on the line in the highest regard.
3. **Purpose:** The purpose of this memorandum of instruction is to specify the guidelines, eligibility criteria and application requirements to be used by the Department of Virginia in submitting a candidate for this most prestigious award. Our goal is to select a well-rounded Law Enforcement Officer who has exceeded, above and beyond, the duty requirements expected of his/her position and has demonstrated a distinct pattern of community service coupled with professional achievement. Episodes of heroism will, of course, also be included where noted. A major secondary purpose of this award is to encourage the further development of District and Post Law and Order Committees in all Districts and Posts in recognition of law enforcement officers throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.
4. **Award Designation:** This award shall be known as: “The American Legion Department of Virginia Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award” and it will be presented annually at the Department Convention. All Posts are encouraged to participate in this most prestigious program. The “Law Enforcement Officer of the Year” will receive an appropriate Plaque and a distinctive lapel pin.

5. **Guidelines for Posts:**

- a. All Posts are urged to select a Law Enforcement Officer to be considered for the Department of Virginia award. Posts should submit their nominee for this award to "Chairman Law and Order Committee, The American Legion, Department of Virginia, 1708 Commonwealth Ave, Richmond, Va. 23230 no later than February 15 of each year.
- b. The inclusive dates for this award cover the calendar year January 1 Through December 31 and until the following February 15 deadline for submission to the Department
- c. Posts may submit only one nominee per year. Once a nominee has been entered in the award competition he/she will not be allowed to be submitted for another year.
- d. The resume and application for the nominee from each Post must conform to the criteria as contained herein. The eligibility and criteria stated in this memo will be used to select the Department Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

6. **Eligibility Criteria:** To be eligible for consideration Post nominees must meet the following criteria:

- a. Be a citizen of the United States, male or female
- b. Be a living, active, full-time and paid, sworn law enforcement officer entrusted with full authority and the powers of arrest.
- c. Consideration for a posthumous award will be accepted only if the nominee's death has occurred after he/she was selected as the Department winner.
- d. Be assigned to or fully recognized by Municipal (City) (Town), County, State Police (e.g. University Police etc.), Sheriff's Office or as a sworn Federal Officer (e.g. FBI, Secret Service, Federal Marshall, National Park Police, Capitol Police, etc.)
- e. Nominees are not required to be veterans or members of The American Legion.
- f. Nominees selected for this award must be available to receive this award at the Department Convention.
- g. Military police officers or investigators are not eligible for this award.

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7. **Application Packets:** Nominee packets should include: (1) a completed

application form, (2) a 5"x7" photograph of the nominee, and (3) a maximum of 18 one-sided pages 8 1/2"x11" bond paper of service documentation. The first six or seven pages should contain the individuals service narrative. The additional pages may include supporting citations and other documentation to include press articles. Two copies of the application packet need to be submitted. The following documentation should be included:

- a. Application form - Complete the attached application form and use it as the cover page of the application. This cover page shall not count as part of the maximum 18 pages of service documentation.
- b. Service narrative and supporting documentation. The goal of the Department Law and Order Committee is to select a well-rounded law enforcement officer who has exceeded above and beyond the duty requirements of his/her position, who exemplifies the virtues of professionalism and dedication, has demonstrated a distinct pattern of community service to his/her community and has also proven his/her dedication to societal security and protection. **The nominee must be recommended by his/her Commanding Officer or Supervisor for this award.** Specific acts of community service, heroism and meritorious performance recognized by his/her law enforcement agency should be included and documented.
- c. Community Service: Outstanding service to the Community, State or Nation by the officer in both on-duty and off-duty should be explained for the past year and may include previous years. Cite, for example, awards and/or supporting letters from Town, City, County, State or National officials. Letters from American Legion Officials at the National, Department or Post level as well as from citizens attesting to and commending the officer for his/her community service should also be explained.
- d. Citations for heroism and meritorious performance of duty should be explained for the past year and may include previous years. Include citations and any supporting letters from the officers chain of command as well as other documentation from government officials, American Legion officials, citizens and civic groups as further evidence of heroism and meritorious performance of duty by the officer.
- f. Include a copy of your nominee's State or Federal certification as a law enforcement officer as well as pertinent training and education certificates as appropriate.

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## 8. **Selection of the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year:**

- a. As soon as practical after the February 15th deadline, the Department staff will provide a copy of each application packet to the Chairman of the Law and Order Committee as well as a copy to each of the three committee advisors.
- b. The three advisors will review the packets, rank the nominees and provide a written report with recommendations to the Committee Chairman. They will also return the packets to the Department staff.
- c. The Law and Order Committee Chairman will notify all committee members that they will be reviewing and selecting a candidate at the Department Spring Conference. At the conference, committee members will review the packets, discuss the candidates, read the reports and recommendations of the committee advisors and then vote to select a winner.
- d. At the Department Spring Conference during the Department Executive Committee meeting the Law and Order Chairman will present the recommended candidate for approval.
- e. As soon as practical after the Spring Conference the Post whose nominee is the winner will be notified. It is the responsibility of the Post submitting the winner to ensure he/she is present at the Department Convention to receive the award.
- f. The Department no later than January 15th of the following year will prepare a new application sheet with the signature of the Department Commander and forward the packet to American Legion National Headquarters 1608 K St. NW, Washington D.C. 20006. Attn: National Security-Foreign Relations Division.

It is hoped that these procedures will make preparation and submission of nominees applications an easier process. Please remember that failure to follow these procedures and all eligibility criteria will be cause for rejection of your nominee. Let's get behind this program and make it one of the Department of Virginia's premier programs.

Patrick Kelly  
Chairman, Law and Order

**The American Legion  
Department of Virginia  
Law Enforcement Officer of the Year  
Application Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/County \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_ Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Service as Law Enforcement Officer \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Director \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town/County \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Post Submitting Nomination \_\_\_\_\_

Post Law and Order Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town/County \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Post Commander \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

Post Adjutant \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)