Silver Helmet Award History

The Silver Helmet was first presented at the AMVETS 10th Anniversary Dinner to World War II hero and diplomat General of the Army George C. Marshall, in recognition of his contributions as a soldier, statesman and American. This unique silver replica of the World War II GI helmet, has over the years acquired a well-deserved reputation as the most prestigious of all the awards given by veterans organizations and is now known as the “Veterans Oscar.”

Symbolizing General George C. Marshall’s leadership, the award is given to recognize excellence and achievements in fields such as Americanism, Defense, Rehabilitation, Congressional Service, Civil Service and Peace.

In addition to the Silver Helmet Awards, the AMVETS Auxiliary, since 1976, presents the Humanitarian Award to an outstanding American who serves our country in peace and war, who builds and maintains the welfare of the United States of America toward lasting prosperity and peace for all its inhabitants. The Sons of AMVETS also recognize a distinguished civic leader for their National Aid and Support.

Nominations for the Silver Helmet Awards originate with individual AMVETS members and AMVETS posts, and are endorsed by the respective state AMVETS honors and awards committees prior to the AMVETS national convention in August.

The AMVETS National Honors and Awards Committee, composed of all past national commanders and the last five “AMVET-of-the-Year” awardees, reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the convention to determine the recipients.

The Silver Helmet Awards Banquet is held annually in conjunction with the AMVETS Spring National Executive Committee meeting. In addition to AMVETS members, the audience includes cabinet members, members of Congress and military officials who come to pay tribute to the recipients of the award and AMVETS.
Silver Helmet Honorees of Note

Patrick Hallinan, 2015 Civil Service
Judge Robert Russell, 2015 Rehabilitation
Gus Bilirakis, 2014 Congressional
Donald Driver, 2013 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Judge Robert P. Milich, 2012 Civil Servant
Edward R. Boyer, 2011 Rehabilitation
Mike White, 2010 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Tammy Duckworth, 2009 Civil Servant
Jerry Reed Hubbard, 2009 Special Award
Shauna Fleming, 2008 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Morrill Worcester, 2008 Americanism
Charlie Daniels, 2007 Americanism
McCormick Tribune Foundation, 2006 Americanism
Wayne Newton, 2005 Americanism
Mary Kay Rena Tarbet, 2004 Special
Cloyd C. Pinson, Sr., 2004 Americanism
George W. Bush, 2003 Gold Helmet Award
Bart Starr, 2003 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Rudolph Giuliani, 2002 Civil Servant
Dolly Parton, 1999 Humanitarian
William S. Cohen, 1999 Defense
Max Cleland, 1999 Rehabilitation
Zachary & Elizabeth M. Fisher, 1997 Aux Humanitarian
Jennifer Wilson, 1996 Americanism
Hillary Rodham Clinton, 1996 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Joe “Jah Paul Jo” Ramsey, 1995 Special
Kimberly Clarice Aiken, 1995 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Irv “Kup” Kupcinet, 1995 Americanism
Marlo Thomas, 1994 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Pete Coors, 1994 Americanism
Silent Crew of the U.S.S. Arizona, 1993 Memorial
(Posthumous)
Rosalyn Carter, 1993 Auxiliary Humanitarian
George H.W. Bush, 1992 Gold Helmet Award
Barbara Bush, 1992 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Norman Schwartzkopf, 1992 Defense
Colin Powell, 1991 Defense
Arthur Kaplan, 1991 Americanism
Kevin Dobson, 1990 Americanism
Abigail (Dear Abby) Van Buren, 1990 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Jimmy Crum, 1989 Special
Sam Nunn, 1988 Meritorious Achievement
Lee Greenwood, 1988 Americanism
Jack Klugman, 1987 Auxiliary Humanitarian
the Special Olympics, 1987 Special
Nancy D. Reagan, 1986 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Elizabeth H. Dole, 1986 Civil Servant
Bill Kurtis, 1985 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Lee Iacocca, 1985, Americanism
Dom and Carol DeLuise, 1984 Americanism
John McCain, 1984 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Danny Kaye, 1983 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Frank Sinatra, 1982 Special Award
Bob Dole, 1982 Congressional
Ronald Reagan, 1982 Gold Helmet Award
Alan Cranston, 1981 Congressional
Pope John Paul II, 1981 Peace
Martha Roundtree, 1980 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Rocky Bleier, 1980 Rehabilitation
Hugh O’Brien, 1980 Americanism
Eunice Shriver, 1979 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Robert W. Miller, 1978 Americanism
Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, 1978 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Gerald Ford, 1977 Gold Helmet Award
Ralph Nader, 1977 Special Award
Kathryn “Kate” Smith, 1977 Americanism
Mrs. Spencer Tracy, 1977 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Corrine “Lindy” Boggs, 1976 Auxiliary Humanitarian
Daniel J. “Cappie” James, Jr., 1976 Defense
Gordon Sinclair, 1975 Special
Joe DiMaggio, 1974 Americanism
Johnny Mann, 1973 Americanism
Raymond Burr, 1973 Special
John Wayne, 1972 Americanism
Henry Kissinger, 1972 Peace
Pope Paul VI, 1971 Peace
Danny Thomas, 1971 Special
Richard “Red” Skelton, 1970 Americanism
Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, 1970 Special
Richard Nixon, 1970 Gold Helmet
W. Averell Harriman, 1969 Peace
William C. Westmoreland, 1969 Defense
Lyndon Johnson, 1968 Gold Helmet
Walter Winchell, 1968 Americanism
Martha Raye, 1967 Special
Richard K. Mellon, 1966 Special
Carl Vinson, 1965 Defense
Adlai E. Stevenson, 1965 Peace
John F. Kennedy, 1964 Peace (Postumous)
Carl Sanders, 1964 Americanism
Edmund S. Muskie, 1963 Congressional
Robert S. McNamara, 1963 Defense
Eleanor Roosevelt, 1962 Peace
Hyman G. Rickover, 1962 Defense
J. Edgar Hoover, 1962 Americanism
Astronaut Team of Project Mercury, 1962 Special
Bob Hope, 1961 Special Award
Henry Cabot Lodge, 1961 Peace
Lyndon B. Johnson, 1960 Defense
Richard M. Nixon, 1960 Peace
Dwight Eisenhower, 1959 Peace
Harry Truman, 1958 Americanism
Phil Silvers, 1957 Americanism
John Foster Dulles, 1952 Peace
General George C. Marshall, 1957*

* First Silver Helmet Award