

The Gold Star Journal receives three awards, continuing to set a high standard of academic distinction at The Citadel - The Citadel Today

7–8 minutes

[*The Gold Star Journal*](#) has promoted academic excellence at The Citadel since its creation in the '90s. More than 20 years later, the journal is continuing to distinguish itself as a prestigious, academic publication, not only on campus but throughout the country.

The [*2022 edition of The Gold Star Journal*](#) earned three prestigious awards from two different organizations. The first two awards were presented by the American Scholastic Press Association, which awarded *The Gold Star Journal* First Place with Special Merit and the Most Outstanding College Magazine for 2022.

More recently, the South Carolina State Library awarded the journal with the South Carolina Notable State Documents Award – making it one of the few college publications to be recognized.



Photo: Editor in Chief Elissa Reckdenwald and Communications Editor Annika Ford stand with Sheila Dorsey from the SC State Library along with their advisor, Suzanne Mabrouk, Ph.D. The group attended the SC State Library 2022 Notable State Document Award Ceremony.

The Gold Star Journal, or GSJ, is run by an editorial team, along with their advisor [Suzanne Mabrouk, Ph.D.](#), Chemistry professor at The Citadel, who originally founded it. For Cadet Elissa Reckdenwald, the editor in chief of the GSJ, her time spent on the journal has been nothing short of gratifying.

“My biggest moment of clarity was during last year’s spring break, when I was first able to physically see the journal. I knew there wasn’t a part of it that wasn’t ours, or that didn’t belong to the Corps or the graduate college,” said Reckdenwald. “Winning these awards and knowing they are proof of the collaboration and the work of our editors, our authors and photographers is a testament to the success of our academic standards at The Citadel. It is extremely rewarding to be celebrated and recognized for our hard work.”

Reckdenwald, a senior Intelligence and Security Studies and Spanish major from Charleston, South Carolina, said the job is tough but unlike anything else on campus.

“The Gold Star Journal is different from other clubs on campus in the sense that, if someone doesn’t want to put the work into any other club, it’s fine and it would still continue on. But with the journal, if it doesn’t get done, there is no journal. We have so many different moving parts and they’re all connected. If someone falls shorts, it halts operations,” said Reckdenwald.

The accolades earned by the 2022 edition are even more meaningful, considering the challenges the journal’s cadet staff had to overcome last year.

“We had a completely new editorial team. That was one of the things we had to work through – learning the Adobe platform and, essentially, what to expect throughout the process of creating the 26th edition. It was a fun challenge, and some weeks were better than others, but in the end it was worth it,” said Cadet Ken Galsgaard, this year’s assistant editor in chief and a senior from

San Francisco, California, studying Political Science and English. “I joined *The Gold Star Journal* because I wanted to expand my academic opportunities on campus and contribute to a leadership role, and I couldn’t be happier with my involvement. I’ve loved every second of it.”



*Photo: 2021-2022 Gold Star Journal staff. **Back row:** Jesse Quimby, '23; Hampton Dennis, '23; John Morris, '23; and Dr. Suzanne T. Mabrouk, Advisor. **Front row:** Dylan Young, '24; Ken Galsgaard, '23; Elissa Reckdenwald, '23; and Trey Stevens, '22.*

In order to streamline the process, this year marks the first time a *GSJ* class has been offered, giving the staff scheduled times to work on the journal and earn grades for their work. In addition to bettering communication and workflow, the class also allows for more time to train newer staff.

Cadets and students can submit their academic research papers, photographs or artwork to *The Gold Star Journal* for publication opportunities. Those who submit their work to the *GSJ* not only get a chance for the research papers to be published in an academic journal – they also know their work will live on.

“*The Gold Star Journal* is one of the only organizations on campus that is solely promoting academic excellence. We spend and give so much of our time to make sure that the cadets and students who’ve put the work in, done the research and created great academic papers get their work shown off. I think we are an integral

part of the servant leadership that goes into getting a paper published,” said Cadet Dylan Young, a *GSJ* editor and junior from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, studying Intelligence and Security Studies.

While Reckdenwald and Galsgaard are seniors, they’re confident the journal will continue to thrive after they graduate. They, along with Young, have worked one-on-one with many *GSJ* members to ensure their knowledge will be passed to the next generation. While being on the editorial team has held them to a high standard of responsibility, they all agreed — being part of *The Gold Star Journal* has been the highlight of their cadet career.



*Photo: 2022-2023 Gold Star Journal staff. **Front row:** Mason Hand, '23; Ken Galsgaard, '23; Elissa Reckdenwald, '23; and Annika Ford, '23. **Second row:** Catherine deBuisseret, '23; Dr. Suzanne T. Mabrouk, Advisor; and Gage Timberlake, '25. **Third row:** Niki Kincaid, '26; and Jillian Aylsworth, '25. **Back row:** Noah Miller, '26. **Absent:** Dylan Young, '24; and Andrew Palmer, '25*

“The journal is fully dependent on the cadets and students and their participation. Because honestly, if it weren’t for them and their work, the journal wouldn’t exist. We’re taking their work and their talent and exemplifying it, turning it into a creation that can be seen by the entire community,” said Reckdenwald.

The 2022 edition of *The Gold Star Journal*, and additional details on the featured papers and photographs, can be found [online](#).

The seventh *Gold Star Journal* Academic Conference will be held on Thursday, April 6, giving this year's published cadets and students the opportunity to show off their academic achievements, as well as highlight their unique research. Physical copies will be available during the conference; they can also be found on campus the week leading up to Corps Day, which is March 25.

The *GSJ* provides an outlet for the publication of research papers, photographs and artwork from members of the Corps of Cadets and The Citadel Graduate College. For more information on how to submit work to future editions of the *GSJ*, [click here](#).

For information on becoming an editor of the *GSJ*, contact Suzanne Mabrouk, Ph.D., at mmabrouks@citadel.edu.