

## Dynamite in a Small Package by Stu Hoyt

Youth Awards programs are so important in promoting the mission of the Sons of the American Revolution. Each year the state societies strive to find contestants to compete in the various competitions. Occasionally a jewel is discovered and that was the case for the William Hightower Chapter of the Texas Society. One of the chapter members Will Moravits, a teacher at Byron P. Steele II High School in Cibolo, encouraged the JROTC Instructor to submit one of his top cadets as a candidate in the Enhanced JROTC competition. Shortly after that submission, Covid-19 cloaked the various campuses in a shut-down where each student was required to attend school from home via virtual computer mode.

Those applicants for the chapters were some of the best that the state has seen in a while and the William Hightower contestant placed a very close second to a Dallas area cadet. We were all looking forward to the awards ceremony at the state conference. When it was postponed, then cancelled, due to the pandemic, everyone was disappointed. The winners actually had their awards mailed to them and when the schools finally opened, the students were allowed to return in the fall but restrictions on visitors remained in full force. Even the chapters were encouraged to restrict their meetings to a virtual environment.

A window of opportunity came open in December for the chapter to allow a few members to make a surprise visit to second place winner's ROTC classroom to make the presentation of the chapter level award. Our winner, Amerie Hernandez, was the shortest person in the class but package of dynamite. Her performance is so outstanding that she was selected as the Corp Commander for this year. Her goal is to attend the University of Texas Business School, be accepted in the ROTC Program there and eventually be commissioned in the Air Force.

The William Hightower Chapter members presented her with a medal, a certificate and a check for her outstanding work. From left to right are Jim Clements, TX SAR State Secretary and member of the Patrick Henry Chapter, Amerie Hernandez, Kris Krueger, William Hightower Chapter Secretary, and Stu Hoyt also of the William Hightower Chapter.

