

National Capital Model Soldiers Society

65th Annual Washington Show

Categories, Awards & Contest Rules

(As of August 2, 2026)

This September 12th the NCMSS Washington Show is returning to its previous venue at the Hotel Belvoir Springfield in Northern Virginia. Exhibitors will receive Gold, Silver, and Bronze awards for their entries according to the “Chicago” or “Open” system used by judging teams. All show attendees will have the opportunity to vote for the “People’s Choice Best of Show”.

These are the categories for this year’s show:

Junior Level – The Junior Level is intended for novice painters and modelers under the age of 18. Awards for qualified exhibits the same as the General/Advanced Level. *Note: If a modeler is under 18 and if they feel their work is competitive at the General/Advanced Level, they are free to put their work in that level.*

General/Advanced – The General/Advanced Level is geared to all modelers of different levels of ability who have or may not have entered similar exhibitions in the past. Awards are Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medals in each division. Judges will select a “Best of” in each of the divisions.

Division Descriptions

Exhibits can be entered in one of eleven divisions:

- Junior (under 18 years only)
- Historical Painters
- Historical Open
- Fantasy/Science Fiction Painters
- Fantasy/Science Fiction Open
- Flats
- Wargame
- Ordnance (split into four equal subdivisions)
 - Ordnance/Armor/Military Vehicles
 - Maritime/Ships
 - Aircraft
 - Civilian Vehicles
- Gundam Painters
- Gundam Open
- Diorama

In the Historical, Fantasy/Science Fiction, Gundam Painters, Wargame, and Flats Divisions judging is based entirely upon painting skill along with some other lesser considerations listed under the OPEN SYSTEM criteria. Exhibitors should note on the Registration Forms the kit manufacturer. Although scratch-built and converted figures may be entered in the Painters Division, these figures will be judged solely on the quality of the painting.

The Historical, Fantasy/Science Fiction and Gundam Open Divisions are intended primarily for scratch-built and converted figures, but also vignettes with two or three figures; exhibits are judged on equal measures of imagination, presentation, and painting/modeling skill. Exhibitors should note on the Registration Forms the kit manufacturer. If the work is a conversion, a short description of what was done to convert the figure or note that the figure is scratch built is helpful. For vignettes the figures and/or vehicles need not be conversion or scratch built.

The Ordnance Division consists of four equal sub-categories for models without figures, including ordnance (armor/weaponry/military vehicles), aircraft, maritime (ships, etc.) and civilian vehicles. In these categories NCMSS does not differentiate stock/commercial kits from converted or scratch-built kits and models. Judging will be based solely on modeling and painting skills. *Note: Figures may be included, but they will not be considered in the judging.* **This Division is sponsored by Northern Virginia Modelers.**

Diorama Division is a combination of models with a believable setting that tells a story, or sets a mood, or creates a charged atmosphere. In addition to evaluating the modeling of a diorama's individual elements, the judges will consider the strength of the diorama's storyline or mood and the overall presentation of the diorama. These three factors are equally important. For dioramas, the figures and/or vehicles need not be conversions or scratch built. **This Division is sponsored by Northern Virginia Modelers.**

Category Awards

- **Best Junior** *Sponsored by NCMSS*
- **Best Historical Painters** *Sponsored by NCMSS*
- **Best Historical Open** *Sponsored by NCMSS*
- **Best Fantasy/Science Fiction Painters**
- **Best Fantasy/Science Fiction Open**
- **Best Flat** *Sponsored by NCMSS/Little Tin Soldier*
- **Best Wargame** *Sponsored by Northern Virginia Gamers*
- **Best Ordnance** *Sponsored by Northern Virginia Modelers*
- **Best Maritime** *Sponsored by Northern Virginia Modelers*
- **Best Aircraft** *Sponsored by Northern Virginia Modelers*
- **Best Civilian Vehicle** *Sponsored by Northern Virginia Modelers*
- **Best Gundam Painters** *Sponsored by Huzzah Hobbies*
- **Best Gundam Open** *Sponsored by Huzzah Hobbies*
- **Best Diorama** *Sponsored by Northern Virginia Modelers*

Special Awards***

For 2026 the club has special awards for the following categories – please help us out by indicating if your model is eligible for any of these in the comments section on the entry form.

- **Best Bust Award.** For the best painted bust, any era or category.
- **Best World War I Figure Award.** For the best painted World War I figure.

- **Joe Bles “Semper Fi” Award.** For the best figure or diorama of the U.S. Marines any era. *Sponsored by James Pratt.*
- **Best U.S. Infantryman Figure Award.** For the best painted figure of a U.S. Infantryman any era. *Sponsored by the Army Historical Foundation.*
- **Best Napoleonic Figure Award.** For the best Napoleonic era figure (mounted or dismounted). *Sponsored by the National Capital Model Soldier Society (NCMSS) in honor of the late Chuck E. Robinson, owner of Red Lancers Military Miniatures.*
- **Victory in Europe Award.** The figure, diorama or display that best celebrates the allied victory in Europe in World War II. *Sponsored by the Army Historical Foundation.*
- **Gundam Award.** For the best painted Gundam all scales. *Sponsored by Huzzah Hobbies.*
- **Blast from the Past Award.** For the best-painted figure or figures from a kit first produced 25 years ago (2001 and before). If you have questions about eligibility, contact the show chairman. *Sponsored by the NCMSS.*
- **NOVA Open Capital Palette Awards.** Presented by our friends from the NOVA Open’s Capital Palette, these awards go to the best exhibit piece in any division. Sponsored by the Washington D.C. NOVA Open.
- **Founding Fathers Award.** For the best-painted figure from the NCMSS “Founding Fathers” bust series. *Sponsored by the NCMSS.*
- **Show Theme Award “Celebrating 250 Years Since the Signing of the Declaration of Independence”.** Figure, vignette, or diorama that best captures the core ideals of American freedom, unity, and courage. *Sponsored by the Army Historical Foundation*

Best of Show Awards

There are two categories of Best of Show Awards:

1. **Judges Best of Show** - The winner of this award will be chosen by the Show Judges.
2. **People’s Choice Award** - The winner of this award will be chosen by popular vote of show attendees. Each entrant will receive a ballot at entry on which to record their choice.

*****Other awards may be added at the discretion of the Show Chairman.**

Eligibility - *Anyone can enter a figure or model in the NCMSS 2026 Show, you don’t need to be a member of NCMSS to take part. If a model has previously been entered in an NCMSS show it cannot be entered again this year except as “for exhibit only”. However, any 2021 NCMSS Virtual Show entries are still eligible for this show!*

Disclaimer - *NCMSS will take all due care with your figures and models but will accept no responsibility for any damage that may occur. Every effort will be made to not handle your model during the show, but it may still be necessary for organizational and/or judging purposes. If your model is on a diorama or display base it should be securely attached to the base to avoid it sliding off if handled. Alternatively, a note warning that it is not attached to the base is recommended, but this is still not a guarantee of safety. Signs on our display tables will state, “Do not Touch!”*

JUDGING SUMMARY

The NCMSS uses the “Open” judging system used at most U.S. Figure Exhibitions (Chicago, Atlanta, MFCA etc.). <http://www.military-miniature-society-of-illinois.com/opensystem> Judging is done by two or more teams with each team consisting of three judges. Judges WILL NOT judge their own work. The basic judging procedure is as follows: the judges by concurrence select the pieces to be judged, and then judge them individually. The judging team selects for judgment the piece or pieces most likely to give the exhibitor the highest award. At least one piece or group of pieces is selected for each exhibitor, even if the judges feel the work is not likely to win an award. As the selections are made, each judge enters the title of the piece and the name of the exhibitor on his judging form.

The judges then award points independently of each other. Each judge awards each piece or group previously selected up to four points: 1-2 points for a Bronze Medal, 3 points for a Silver Medal, and 4 points for a Gold Medal.

These sheets with the numeric scores are then turned in to the Awards Committee. The Committee ensures the accuracy and integrity of the scores, and then tallies up the points given by each judge in order to determine the level of award given to each piece or group of pieces that were judged. The maximum point value any piece or group can receive is 12 points. The awards are assigned based on point totals. 11 to 12 points rates a Gold Medal; 8 to 10 points is a Silver Medal; 1 to 7 points is a Bronze Medal.

The Awards Committee Chairman supervises the judging. Experience with the system and detachment from the actual judging process gives him an overall view of the work on exhibition and the judging process. In the case of disagreement, or even a tie within the judging teams, the Awards Committee Chairman will have the final say.

Judging Criteria (not necessarily listed in order of importance or consideration):

- Degree of Difficulty
- Creativity
- Workmanship
- Painting Skill
- Presentation & Overall Effect
- Historical Accuracy