

Alton's Jacob and Blake Schaper Capture Top Alton VFW Patriot Pens Honor

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The Alton VFW Post 1308 12th District Awards Banquet honored several area students recently in the annual Patriot's Pen Essay Contest.

This year, a total of 883 students submitted entries the Patriot's Pen competition. Alton's Jacob Schaper was awarded the first-place medal, Patriot Pins, a \$150 cash prize, and a

standing ovation after reading his essay to the 200-plus people who gathered to honor the essay winners in attendance.

The second-place medal went to Alton's Blake Schaper, also sponsored by Alton Post 1308. He won \$100. The third-place medal went Hunter Hancock sponsored by Litchfield Post 3912 Litchfield who won \$50. Blake Schaper now advances to the Illinois state Patriot's Pen competition.

Jacob Schaper is a homeschool student at Fortitude School in Alton. His parents and both sets of grandparents joined him at the 12th District Awards Banquet held in his honor. Blake Schaper, 13, won second place in the contest. Blake and Jacob Schaper are the children of Tyler and Christy Schaper, Alton.

When asked about his essay and submission to the contest, Jacob said: "It is a great honor to have my voice heard and my essay valued by the great leaders of our country. The men and women who have fought for the freedoms that I wrote about in my essay are the reason America is such a great country and I am honored to be included and take part in this contest. I think all students should spend time with our nation's veterans and learn about their past, our history as a country, and the wisdom they have to share with all of us."

Other area students who placed were Livia Mallory, Payton Crane, Isabel Gernigan, Maya Stephan, Cameryn Adams of Wood River, Reagan Rexford of Wood River, Alexander Arnold of Wood River.