

MEDAL OF HONOR BEYOND VALOR

WHAT: The South Carolina State Guard Foundation and The Citadel are hosting the 2010 Congressional Medal of Honor Society's Convention in Charleston, South Carolina, from September 29-October 3, 2010. Additionally, this will be a celebration honoring 91 surviving Recipients of our Nation's highest award for bravery—The Medal of Honor. The State Department of Education will endorse a statewide campaign in the state's schools to focus on the Medal of Honor and to sponsor a state-wide Essay Contest for middle and high school students. This is a non-political event.

WHY: The Congressional Medal of Honor Society places great interest on promoting patriotism and encouraging the youth of America to become worthy citizens. The State Department of Education endorses this celebration and encourages social studies, history and civic teachers and JROTC Commanders to include a classroom activity highlighting our state's Medal of Honor Recipients and the meaning of the Medal of Honor. Classroom presentations, activities, and discussions about the Medal of Honor and its significance will support the Department's Curriculum and Standards.

WHEN: The celebration of the Medal of Honor Recipients may occur any time this school year and into the next. The Convention in Charleston begins September 29 and runs through October 3, 2010. Classroom Medal of Honor activities will depend on local schedules and resources.

WHO: All social studies, history, civics teachers and librarians are encouraged to participate, regardless of grade. JROTC students may particularly find these activities interesting.

WHERE: Medal of Honor activities may occur in the classroom, assembly hall or on field trips.

HOW: The Essay Contest for middle and high school students present a great opportunity for individual students. Activities in the classroom focusing on Medal of Honor Recipients and the Medal of Honor in general may include: presentations by students or a military veteran (Speakers Bureau); instruction by a teacher; student projects or a field trip to the Medal of Honor Museum at Patriots Point in Charleston.

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Present Day Variations of the Medal of Honor



Navy



Army



Air Force

The first Medal of Honor was the Navy's Medal, which was authorized by Congress on December 21, 1861. It was created to recognize gallant actions of Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard petty officers and enlisted personnel. The Army followed shortly thereafter with Congress authorizing its Medal on July 12, 1862. The Air Force Medal was adopted on August 10, 1956; however, it was not introduced until 1965. It is slightly larger than the other two, but its design has not changed. The designs of the Navy and Army Medals of Honor, however, have evolved since they were first struck in 1862.

The Navy Medal today is essentially the same as it was in 1862, except with the addition of the blue-starred ribbon. The original Army Medal was struck from the same die as the Navy Medal. The Army design replaced the anchor with an eagle. Both early Medals featured a scene of "Minerva Repulsing Discord." Taken in the context of the Civil War, Minerva, goddess of war and wisdom, was seen as overcoming the discord of insurrection by southern states. Notably, there are thirty-four stars circling the scene representing all of the states in 1862, including the Confederate States.

In 1904, the Army redesigned its Medal creating the "Gillespie" Medal of Honor after Brigadier General George Gillespie, a Civil War Medal recipient, who obtained a patent on the new Medal and transferred it to the Army. A green enameled laurel wreath was added along with the highly recognizable star-spangled blue ribbon which replaced the red, white and blue ribbon. The Minerva scene was replaced by the helmeted-head of the goddess of war and the encircling stars were replaced with the inscription, "United States of America." For a brief period between 1918 and 1942, the Navy awarded the Tiffany Cross for the highest feats of gallantry, saving the Medal of Honor for non-combat acts of bravery. In 1963, Congress declared that the Navy Medal of Honor could only be awarded for combat actions. The Air Force followed the Army design based on its heritage with the Army Air Corps, but replaced the goddess of war with the crowned head of Lady Liberty and instead of an eagle; it placed wings, talons and lightning bolts above the inverted star.

During World War II, it became standard practice to drape the Medal of Honor around the recipient's neck upon presentation. To assist with the drape, an eight-sided pod was designed with thirteen white stars to which the blue silk neck-ribbon was attached. The Medal of Honor is the only U.S. military medal that may be worn around the neck and that has an authorized rosette, which may be worn on civilian attire. Today, all three Medals are strikingly similar with the blue neck ribbon and inverted five-pointed star.

Readers are encouraged to visit the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's web site for more detailed information: www.cmohs.org.



Original Navy 1862



Original Army 1862



Army 1896



Army 1904 Gillespie



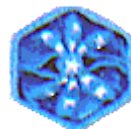
Navy 1913



Tiffany Cross Navy 1919



Uniform Ribbon



Rosette

History of The Medal of Honor



The Medal of Honor is the highest medal awarded by the United States. It has been presented only 3,446 times in the nation's history. The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.

EARLY RELUCTANCE

A study of past Medal of Honor awards clearly shows a connection with the tenor of the times. The colonists were wary of European titles, medals, badges and ribbons, reflecting the first Americans' abhorrence of royalty and privilege. However, the Continental Congress awarded General George Washington the first American medal for driving British forces from Boston in 1776. Later, General Washington in 1782 established an award for military merit in the figure of a heart cut from purple cloth with narrow binding around its edge. In the developing American psyche, it was believed that a common man rose to fame or fortune based on his resourcefulness, hard work and personal honor, not upon birthright. This attitude was reflected in the reluctance to establish awards—even for gallantry. Perhaps this is why available historical records reveal that only three of Washington's Purple Hearts have been awarded. Prior to World War II, the Purple Heart was revived and modified as a combat award to honor those killed or wounded in hostile action.

Very little was done by Congress or the military in the way of decorations for meritorious military duty until 1847, when Congress authorized a "Certificate of Merit" after the outbreak of war with Mexico. However, no medal was authorized; just a certificate was given, signed by the President and placed in the soldier's military file. Although just over 500 Certificates were awarded, it was interpreted that the Certificate was authorized only for the Mexican War, and after that War the Certificate was no longer awarded to honor notable gallantry.

THE CALL FOR A MEDAL

It was not until after the first shots at Fort Sumter and the start of the Civil War that Congress seriously considered a medal for meritorious military activity. In the early days of the Civil War, the Confederacy took the fighting north, exhausting Union regiments and leading to low enlistments and rampant desertions. Colonel Edward Townsend, an assistant adjutant general in the Union Army, proposed an individual medal to boost morale. But upon review, General of the Army Winfield Scott quashed the idea, citing the same fears voiced by George Washington and the early colonists that awards smacked of privilege and European nobility. However, the Navy, faced with waning spirits and poor seamanship from naval personnel, found support for awarding medals to recognize courage in battle, thus infusing the Navy with new strength, purpose and esprit de corps.

In December 1861 Senate Bill No. 82 was introduced and passed, authorizing the production of two hundred medals “to promote the efficiency of the Navy.” The award was to be given only to “petty officers, seamen, landsmen and marines as shall distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action and other seamanlike qualities during the present war [Civil War].” President Abraham Lincoln signed Public Resolution 82 into law on December 21, 1861, authorizing the award of “suitable emblematic devices.” Thus was born America’s first (Navy) Medal of Honor.

In the meantime, General Scott retired and on July 12, 1862, President Lincoln signed a similar bill authorizing “the President to distribute medals of honor” in the name of Congress “to such non-commissioned officers and privates in the Army of the United States who shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities, during the present insurrection.” Although commissioned officers were initially ineligible for the medal—promotion, it was thought, was enough—a year later Congress made Army officers eligible. A similar measure for Naval and Marine officers did not occur until 1915. The prestige of the medal grew and in 1863 Congress established the Medal of Honor as a permanent decoration for valor. At this time there were no lesser medals for valor.

FIRST ACTS OF VALOR

The first heroic act for which the Medal was awarded occurred on February 13, 1861, when assistant Army Surgeon Bernard Irwin, through his own initiative, rescued 60 soldiers from Indian warriors at Apache Pass, AZ. The award, however, was not presented until 1894. On May 24, 1861, Army Private Francis Brownell performed the first gallant act of the Civil War meriting the Medal of Honor. The first presentation of the Medal of Honor occurred on March 25, 1863, when Private Jacob Parrott and five others received the award for their part in the “Great Locomotive Chase” of April 11, 1862. A controversial civilian physician, Dr. Mary Walker, received the Medal of Honor for her medical assistance under fire at the Battle of Bull Run and in other battles. After

the War, Dr. Walker lobbied for a commission in the Army. Her application was denied, but in an effort to placate her, President Andrew Johnson awarded her the Medal of Honor in January 1866. Twenty Army soldiers received the Medal of Honor for their heroic acts at Antietam. For their actions at Fredericksburg, nineteen soldiers received the Medal and ninety-six soldiers for their actions at Vicksburg. A clerical error allowed 864 members of the 27th Maine Volunteer Infantry to receive a Medal for four days of extra service to guard Washington, D.C. after their enlistment had ended. At Fort Wagner, near Charleston, South Carolina, the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry went into their first battle; a former slave, William Carney, became the first African-American to earn the Medal of Honor for heroic action by saving the National Colors during heaving fighting. Fifty-six soldiers earned the Medal at the Battle of Deatonsville (Sailor's Creek), VA.

THE FLOOD OF REQUESTS

These are just a few situations giving rise to the award of the Medal of Honor during the Civil War. By the end of the Civil War, 680 Medals had been presented, not counting those given to the members of the 27th Maine. Between 1866 and 1890 another 105 Medals were awarded and in the last decade an additional 683 Medals were awarded. A total of 1520 medals were eventually awarded for Civil War actions. With the scramble for recognition as war heroes, more Medals were awarded to veterans after the Civil War, between 1890 and 1900, than during the War itself. Unfortunately, many imposters passed themselves off as war heroes. To add to the confusion, several similar medals were created by various Army units and given to their veterans. Thus, in 1890, true Medal of Honor recipients formed the Medal of Honor Legion to properly identify official recipients to protect the integrity of the Medal. The Legion was the forerunner of the Medal of Honor Society, which was established its members in 1946.

After the Civil War, Congress was faced with over 700 applications from veterans and families for the Medal. As the Civil War dimmed with time, great concern began to develop regarding the integrity of awarding the Medal of Honor. A large number of submissions for the Medal flowed in after the Indian Campaigns, 1861-1898, causing a call for new standards to recognize singular acts of bravery rising above and beyond the normal or expected duty of a soldier. The Medal of Honor was America's only military decoration, but wholesale distribution of the Medal to units, individuals and families began to demean its value as a combat award.

Clearly, the award of the Medal had become diluted and subject to unregulated special interests. In 1897, President William McKinley directed the Army to establish new policies regarding Medal of Honor applications and awards. The new Army regulations established that the Medal of Honor could be awarded only for "gallantry and intrepidity" above and beyond that of one's fellow soldiers. Further, someone other than the proposed recipient must make the submission for the Medal. The regulations required sworn testimony of eyewitnesses and set a time limit of one year after the heroic act to submit the application for the award. Several months later the Army authorized that the

Medal of Honor could be suspended from a ribbon and hung around the neck of the recipient; however, draping the Medal did not gain popularity until World War II.

A NEW DESIGN, A NEW BEGINNING

Although the Navy and Army Medals of Honor were slightly different at their inception, in 1904 Congress authorized the Army to create a new design. A green laurel and a distinctive blue ribbon with white stars were added. Brigadier General George Gillespie, a veteran of the Civil War, had promoted this new design, and thus, it became known as the “Gillespie Medal.” This design is essentially maintained in the Medal that is awarded today. In 1906, by Executive Order, President Theodore Roosevelt directed that the presentation of the Medal of Honor will be awarded by the President in Washington, D.C. or if not practical, then as directed by the Chief of Staff, or if on campaign, then by a division or higher commander.

By 1916 in the middle of World War I, it became clear that too much variance had occurred in awarding the Medal of Honor. Faced with the prospect of another onslaught of Medal applications such as occurred after the Civil War, with the backing of Congress, President Woodrow Wilson authorized the Army to convene a Board of Generals to review past awards of the Medal of Honor. Every Army Medal of Honor since the Civil War was reviewed. As a result of this review, 911 names were stricken from the honor roll, including all of the 27th Maine, 29 members of President Lincoln’s funeral guard, 6 civilians (because they were civilians), including William (Buffalo Bill) Cody and Dr. Mary Walker, the only woman to received the Medal of Honor. The Board brought to a close the controversial and divisive scramble of Civil War veterans and families vying for the coveted award.

TIGHTENING THE CRITERIA

The pendulum was in full swing away from the wholesale bestowing of Medals merely for duty as was often done during the Civil War. During World War I only four Medals of Honor were awarded, the remaining 115 awards for gallant service in that War occurred after another review initiated by General John J. Pershing. In 1918, Congress eliminated the Certificate of Merit, which had already fallen into disuse anyway and established the “Pyramid of Honor” providing for lesser awards for gallantry—the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal and the Silver Star. The 1918 Act defined the Medal of Honor as the zenith of all United States military awards for gallantry. The President was authorized to present the Medal in the name of Congress to an Army service member who while in actual conflict with the enemy, distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. The 1918 Act was designed to avoid problems like those encountered with Civil War veterans. A two-year limitation was created for submission of the award after the heroic act, with a three-year limitation on its presentation. Although there had been nineteen double awards, the Act limited the award to only one Medal of Honor per recipient, subsequent acts of heroism would only be recognized with a lesser medal.

PEACETIME MEDAL

Since its creation in 1861, the Medal of Honor has generally been considered a wartime decoration. The Navy, however, awarded non-combat or peacetime Medals of Honor. Such peacetime awards went to explorers such as Admiral Richard Byrd and Colonel Charles Lindberg and to various seamen who risked their lives to save others. Congress authorized the Navy to create a second medal to award significant and brave actions before the enemy, but retained the original Navy Medal of Honor for awards for non-combat conditions. This new medal, designed by Tiffany & Company of New York in 1919, became known as the “Tiffany Cross.” By 1942, the Tiffany Cross was deleted as an award in part because it resembled the German Iron Cross and because it was unregulated and not well received by Navy personnel. Almost two hundred awards have been given for gallantry, intrepidity or significant contributions to the United States during times of peace. Nevertheless, these peacetime awards held to the principle of rewarding significant actions by military members above and beyond the call of duty. Subsequently, in 1963 Congress declared that the Navy Medal of Honor could only be awarded for combat actions.

CELEBRITY COMES TO THE MEDAL

It is interesting to compare many of the citations for the Medal of Honor prior to World War I and those thereafter. Obviously, each act of heroism is unique and should be appropriately recognized. However, prior to 1916 many awards did not meet the criteria for singular and brave acts of gallantry, as evidenced by the purge of the Board of Generals. The status of the Medal changed with World War I, during which time the Medal of Honor achieved a high and noble place in the American psyche—representing all that was good in America. The gallantry of Sergeant Alvin York epitomized the unique heroism for which the Medal was intended. His award drew international recognition to the Medal of Honor and it clearly put Sergeant York under the scrutiny of an admiring, yet critical public eye. The Medal of Honor would never be the same.

During World War II, 433 Medals were awarded. Football star, First Lieutenant Maurice “Footsie” Britt, having already been awarded the military’s other top awards for bravery, was also awarded the Medal of Honor in Italy in 1943. Then in 1945, Audie Murphy became the most decorated soldier of the War. His fame continued long after the War as a well-known movie actor. The only Japanese-American to receive the Nation’s highest honor during World War II was Private First Class Sadao Munemori from the 442nd Infantry Regiment Combat Team, the “Go for Broke Boys.” Clearly, many Japanese-Americans could have qualified for the Medal, but the Japanese were not well regarded then. Congress recognized that the celebrity of the Medal of Honor created celebrity status for its recipients. Thus, in 1958 Congress chartered the Medal of Honor Society, renaming it the “Congressional Medal of Honor Society”—the most exclusive organization in America—to perpetuate the ideas embodied in the Medal, promoting patriotism and love of Country. The new Congressional Medal of Honor Society was

charged, among other things, with maintaining the memory and respect of the recipients and with the preservation and protection of the integrity of the Medal of Honor at all times. This organization provided psychological shelter and helped the recipients with all the new demands of instant stardom.

KOREAN AND VIETNAM WARS BRING QUIET HONOR

The United States Air Force was created in 1947 from the Army Air Corps. By 1950, four Air Force officers had received Medals of Honor posthumously for their actions over Korea. The Air Force received Congressional authority to design its own Medal of Honor on August 10, 1956. The Air Force design was similar to the Army Medal, but slightly larger. By 1967, twelve Air Force servicemen had received the Air Force Medal of Honor, including Airman 1st Class John Levitow, the only enlisted airman to receive the award.

In 1963, Congress firmly established criteria and guidelines for the award of the Medals of Honor—Navy, Army and Air Force. The award would be limited to actions against an enemy of the United States while engaged in military operations or while serving with friendly forces engaged in conflict with an enemy in which the U.S. was not a belligerent party. Congress in the next year authorized a \$100 a month pension for Medal recipients over the age of fifty.

The American effort in Vietnam ended in ambiguity and division. The cold war was still warm and America was determined to stop communism. Its effects still infect today's military strategy, in spite of recent combat successes. Starting slowly, America became increasingly entangled in the nine year Vietnam War, which was costly in lives and resources. Front lines rarely existed; the battlefield was pockmarked with outposts and free-fire zones; here today gone tomorrow. There were no great armies or movements of divisions, just the day-to-day effort to stay alive. The fight was up close. Deeds of gallantry and intrepidity were often a result of personal sacrifice for the sake of fellow service men. Many acts of valor recognized in Vietnam reflected this sense of brotherhood. The Medal of Honor was awarded to 238 recipients arising out of combat in the Vietnam War.

CATCHING UP, LATE RECOGNITION

Generally, the originating request for an award is made by the military commander or other uniformed personnel. Those on the scene are considered to be in the best position to observe individual actions and to make the recommendation for an award. However, in a number of instances, members of Congress or others have urged the President to consider individuals for the Medal of Honor based on special circumstances, e.g., lost documents recently recovered, a presumption of racism, missing eyewitnesses located, declassification of documents, etc. Many requests for an upgrade or an award of the Medal of Honor are processed through the Board of Correction of Military Records based on extenuating circumstances and passed on to the appropriate military branch then to Congress. Many such situations involved meritorious cases, which for technical or

statutory prohibitions; the Medal of Honor most likely would have been awarded. President Jimmy Carter approved an upgrade to the Medal of Honor from the Distinguished Service Cross for Staff Sergeant Roy Benavidez in December 1980, when a missing eyewitness was located and confirmed Staff Sergeant Benavidez's brave acts of heroism in Vietnam in 1968. President Ronald Reagan presented the Medal posthumously to the family of Marine COL Donald Cook for his bravery during captivity as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. COL Cook's heroism was not noted until after repatriation of other POWs.

In a number of cases, Congress has passed special legislation awarding the Medal of Honor. With urgings of distant family members, the Medal of Honor was reinstated for the Civil War doctor, Mary Walker. Subsequently, in 1989 the Army restored the Medals for five civilian Indian scouts, including the award to Buffalo Bill Cody, all of which had been purged in 1917 by the Board of Generals.

Apparently, due to the prejudices of the times, no Medals of Honor had been awarded to African-Americans in World War I. This was not due to a lack of courage on their part as many examples attest. In 1991, President George H.W. Bush initiated a review of the records and corrected this obvious oversight at least in small measure by the posthumous award of the Medal of Honor to the family of Freddie Stowers of South Carolina. Other awards recognizing previous acts of valor were given to families of long departed heroes such as Lieutenant Colonel (later President) Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt. A similar review of African-Americans serving in World War II resulted in the award of the Medal of Honor by President William Clinton to 2nd Lieutenant Vernon Baker, author of *Lasting Valor*, a biography of his experiences in a segregated Army during the War. During President Clinton's term over thirty Medals of Honor were presented belatedly to veterans of World War II, many posthumously and many to Asian-Americans. More recently, President George W. Bush has presented several Medals of Honor to veterans of prior wars.

IN SEARCH OF NEW HEROES

Since the Vietnam War, two Medals of Honor were awarded for bravery in a rescue mission in Mogadishu, Somalia. The movie *Blackhawk Down* depicts the actions of the two Special Forces recipients. No awards were given for combat operations in Grenada, Panama, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo or the Gulf War. However, two awards were given for heroic activities in Afghanistan and four awards stemming from Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq. There may be other awards under consideration. But, this cannot be publicly confirmed because all documents submitted supporting the award are classified to prevent speculation and lobbying until after the presentation.

Those who have received the Medal of Honor are just ordinary people, yet by their extraordinary acts of heroism, they become larger than life. Their brave actions are awe-inspiring. We know that our freedom is not free; it comes with a huge price. The true heroes of our Nation are those who have put aside thought of self and paid that price with gallantry and self-sacrifice. The recipients of the Medal of Honor of which only 91

survive today, will say that they are merely caretakers of the Medal for their comrades left on the battlefield. These heroes constitute a unique brotherhood, created in the line of fire, displaying conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty. All are heroes, not only those who have received the Medal of Honor, but also all the men and women who have served and who are serving today with the same spirit of commitment to the call of Duty, Honor and Country.



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