

# **Military Medals & Their Meanings**

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# Medal of Honor

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Army

Navy

Air Force

The most prestigious U.S. military medal is the Medal of Honor. It has been issued over 3,000 times -- as of 2010 -- since its introduction in 1861. The medal is presented to a soldier who risks his life "above and beyond the call of duty" while defending the country during combat. It is presented by the president.

To learn more, visit:

[www.cmohs.org/recipient-archive.php](http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-archive.php)

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal\\_of\\_Honor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_of_Honor)

# Distinguished Service Cross

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Army



Navy



Air Force

The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is the second highest military decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Army (and previously, the United States Army Air Forces).

It is awarded for extraordinary heroism:

- While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States
- While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force
- 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.

Actions that merit the Distinguished Service Cross must be of such a high degree that they are above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but do not merit award of the Medal of Honor.

The Distinguished Service Cross is equivalent to the Navy Cross (Navy and Marine Corps, and Coast Guard when operating under the authority of the Department of the Navy) and the Air Force Cross (Air Force).

To learn more visit:

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished\\_Service\\_Cross\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Service_Cross_(United_States))

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navy\\_Cross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navy_Cross)

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air\\_Force\\_Cross\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Cross_(United_States))

# Distinguished Service Medal

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The Distinguished Service Medal is awarded to soldiers who perform an exceptionally meritorious service while working on a highly important task. The requirements are tough, so most of the recipients are general officers. The medal is occasionally given to those outside the military if presidential approval is granted.

To learn more visit:

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished\\_Service\\_Medal\\_\(U.S.\\_Army\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Service_Medal_(U.S._Army))

# Silver Star and Bronze Star

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Silver Star Medal



Bronze Star Medal

Military personnel can earn several kinds of "star medals" for acts of bravery.

The Silver Star is the third-highest military combat decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Armed Forces. It is awarded for gallantry in action:

- While engaged in 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.

Actions that merit the Silver Star must be of such a high degree that they are above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but do not merit award of the Medal of Honor or a Service Cross (Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross, or the Air Force Cross).

The Bronze Star is awarded heroic achievement, heroic service, meritorious achievement, or meritorious service in a combat zone.

To learn more visit:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silver\\_Star](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silver_Star)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze\\_Star\\_Medal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze_Star_Medal)

# Purple Heart

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The Purple Heart was originally instituted in 1782 as a medal of honor. It is now given to soldiers who receive significant injuries or die in the line of duty while serving their country.

To learn more visit:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple\\_Heart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_Heart)