

Armed Forces
**DECORATIONS
AND AWARDS**



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COVER

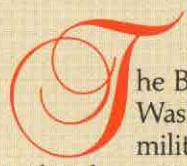
The Medal of Honor, top right, is the highest decoration awarded to active duty service members. The four World War II service ribbons below, in order of precedence, left to right are: the American Campaign Medal; the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; the Asiatic Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

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INTRODUCTION

he Badge of Military Merit, established by Gen. George Washington on Aug. 7, 1782, was the first authorized U.S. military decoration. A piece of cloth in the form of a heart, this decoration was intended to recognize servicemen who displayed unusual gallantry or extraordinary fidelity. Only three are known to have been awarded, and the award fell into disuse after the Revolutionary War. Gen. Douglas MacArthur revived it as the Purple Heart in 1932.

The Medal of Honor was the next decoration to be specifically designed and authorized for U.S. service members. It was established on Dec. 21, 1861, by President Abraham Lincoln for enlisted men of the Navy and Marine Corps. Its use was later expanded to include enlisted men and officers of all services.

Since that time, many decorations have evolved. Changes in eligibility criteria have been made over the years, and, in some cases, decorations have fallen into disuse. However, the basic hierarchy remains unchanged. The Medal of Honor remains the highest military decoration that this nation can bestow upon a service member, and lesser degrees of recognition are acknowledged by other decorations in descending order.

This booklet provides illustrations and brief descriptions of the decorations and awards that may be earned by members of the armed forces. Also included are descriptions of top civilian awards issued by DoD and the services as well as charts on the order of precedence for wearing individual decorations and awards. For complete information and official instructions about how decorations and awards are issued and worn, consult your service's regulations.

MEDALS



MEDAL OF HONOR With Service Ribbon (Army)

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty, in action involving actual conflict with an opposing armed force.



MEDAL OF HONOR With Service Ribbon (Navy-Marine Corps-Coast Guard)

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty, in action involving actual conflict with an opposing armed force.

