



Military Awards for Valor - Top 3 U.S. Department of Defense

DESCRIPTION OF MEDALS

MEDAL OF HONOR



The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty:

- 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.

There are three distinct versions (one for the Army, one for the Air Force, and one for the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard).

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS



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; 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 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).

NAVY CROSS



The Navy Cross is the second highest military decoration that may be awarded to a member of the United States Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, (and to members of the Coast Guard when operating under the authority of the Department of the Navy). 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; 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 Navy 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 Navy Cross is equivalent to the Distinguished Service Cross (Army) and the Air Force Cross (Air Force).

AIR FORCE CROSS



The Air Force Cross is the second highest military decoration that may be awarded to a member of the United States Air Force. 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; 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 Air Force 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 Air Force Cross is equivalent to the Distinguished Service Cross (Army) and the Navy Cross (Navy and Marine Corps, and Coast Guard when operating under the authority of the Department of the Navy).

SILVER STAR



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).
