U.S. Military Awards & Decorations

How to Request & Replace Military Medals

www.LegalHelpforVeterans.com
About the Firm

Legal Help for Veterans, PLLC is a law firm dedicated to assisting our Nation’s veterans receive the veterans disability compensation to which they are entitled based on their service to the country.

The law firm has been assisting veterans since 1998. Our legal staff has decades of experience in dealing with medical disability matters and employs a network of medical specialists, many former military physicians, who can insure your claim has the best likelihood of success. Our staff includes former officers and enlisted personnel, health care professionals, and dedicated individuals.

We have a national practice representing veterans from across the country. This representation occurs at the United States Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims, the Board of Veterans Appeals, and regional offices throughout the country.

Over the years, Legal Help for Veterans, PLLC has become a trusted name in the legal community for providing legal services to veterans. Our lawyers are regularly asked by law schools, bar associations, and Veterans’ service organizations to lecture and train others to practice in this area.

Brigadier General Carol Ann Fausone

Brigadier General Carol Ann Fausone (Ret.) served for 34 years with the U.S. Air Force and Michigan National Guard. As a nurse, her duty assignments took her around the country, and the world, assisting commanders with troop readiness.

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Defining a Military Decoration:

A Military Decoration is an award, usually a medal of some sort, given to an individual as a distinctively designed mark of honor denoting heroism, or meritorious or outstanding service or achievement.

Awards and decorations of the United States Military recognize service and personal accomplishments while a member of the United States Armed Forces. Together with military badges, such awards are a means to outwardly display the highlights of a service member’s career.

Today military decorations include:

- Orders of Chivalry
- Bravery awards, in the form of a cross, star or medal on a ribbon
- Distinguished service awards, in the form of a cross, star or medal on a ribbon
- Campaign medals worn on a ribbon
- Service medals worn on a ribbon
- Awards for entire units
The general order of priority:

While each service has its own order of precedence, the following general rules apply to all services:

• U.S. military personal decorations
• U.S. military unit awards
• U.S. non-military personal decorations (after unit awards in order of receipt; if from the same agency, the applicable agency precedence listing should be consulted)
• U.S. non-military unit awards
• U.S. military campaign awards
• U.S. military service and training awards
• U.S. Merchant Marine awards and non-military service awards
• Foreign military personal decorations
• Foreign military unit awards
• Non-U.S. service awards (e.g., United Nations, NATO)
• Foreign military service awards
• Marksmanship awards (Navy and Coast Guard)
• State awards of the National Guard (Army & Air Force)
• Cold War Recognition certificate

*Note: Precedence of particular awards will vary slightly among the different branches of service.
Awarded for “Gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty”
- Medal of Honor

Service Cross medals. Awarded for “Extraordinary heroism”
- Distinguished Service Cross (Army)
- Navy Cross
- Air Force Cross
- Coast Guard Cross

**Distinguished Service medals Defense**
- Defense Distinguished Service Medal
- Homeland Security Distinguished Service Medal
- Distinguished Service Medal (Army)
- Navy Distinguished Service Medal
- Air Force Distinguished Service Medal
- Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal
- Silver Star Awarded for “Gallantry in action”
- Defense Superior Service Medal
- Legion of Merit
- Distinguished Flying Cross

**Medals for non-combat heroism**
- Soldier’s Medal
- Navy and Marine Corps Medal

**Meritorious service medals**
- Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Air Medal
- Aerial Achievement Medal

**Commendation medals**
- Joint Service Commendation Medal
- Army Commendation Medal
- Navy & Marine Corps Commendation Medal
- Air Force Commendation Medal
- Coast Guard Commendation Medal

**Achievement medals**
- Joint Service Achievement Medal
- Army Achievement Medal
- Navy & Marine Corps Achievement Medal
- Air Force Achievement Medal
- Coast Guard Achievement Medal
- Commandant’s Letter of Commendation
- Navy & Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon
- Coast Guard Combat Action Ribbon
- Air Force Combat Action Medal
Unit Awards

Presidential Unit Citations
- Army & Air Force Presidential Unit Citation
- Navy & Marine Corps Presidential Unit Citation
- Coast Guard Presidential Unit Citation
- Joint Meritorious Unit Award
- Army Valorous Unit Award
- Navy Unit Commendation
- Air Force Gallant Unit Citation
- Coast Guard Unit Commendation

Meritorious Unit Commendations
- Army Meritorious Unit Commendation
- Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation
- Air Force Meritorious Unit Award
- Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation
- Army Superior Unit Award
- Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
- Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation

Good Conduct Medals
- Army Good Conduct Medal
- Navy Good Conduct Medal
- Air Force Good Conduct Medal
- Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal
- Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal

Reserve decorations
- Armed Forces Reserve Medal
- Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal
- Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal
- Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal
- Selected Marine Corps Reserve Medal
- Coast Guard Reserve Good Conduct Medal

Efficiency Awards
- Navy “E” Ribbon
- Air Force Organizational Excellence Award
- Coast Guard “E” Ribbon

Service Awards

- Prisoner of War Medal
- Combat Readiness Medal
- Outstanding Airman of the Year Ribbon
- Air Force Recognition Ribbon

Expeditionary medals
- Navy Expeditionary Medal
- Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign &amp; Service Medals</th>
<th>Service &amp; Training Awards</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Army of Occupation Medal</td>
<td>• Army Sea Duty Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Navy Occupation Service Medal</td>
<td>• Army Overseas Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• National Defense Service Medal</td>
<td>• Army Reserve Overseas Training Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Antarctica Service Medal</td>
<td>• Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coast Guard Arctic Service Medal</td>
<td>• Air Force Overseas Short Tour Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal</td>
<td>• Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Vietnam Service Medal</td>
<td>• Navy Arctic Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Southwest Asia Service Medal</td>
<td>• Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Kosovo Campaign Medal</td>
<td>• Naval Reserve Sea Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Afghanistan Campaign Medal</td>
<td>• Army Sea Duty Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Iraq Campaign Medal</td>
<td>• Army Overseas Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal</td>
<td>• Army Reserve Overseas Training Ribbon</td>
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<td>• Global War on Terrorism Service Medal</td>
<td>• Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon</td>
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<td>• Korea Defense Service Medal</td>
<td>• Air Force Overseas Short Tour Service Ribbon</td>
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<td>• Armed Forces Service Medal</td>
<td>• Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Humanitarian Service Medal</td>
<td>• Navy Arctic Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal</td>
<td>• Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Air and Space Campaign Medal</td>
<td>• Naval Reserve Sea Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Air Force Overseas Long Tour Service Ribbon</td>
<td>• Air Force Overseas Long Tour Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon</td>
<td>• Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Navy &amp; Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon</td>
<td>• Navy &amp; Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon</td>
<td>• Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Air Force Longevity Service Award</td>
<td>• Air Force Longevity Service Award</td>
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Recruiting service ribbons
• Navy Recruiting Service Ribbon
• Air Force Recruiter Ribbon
• Army Sea Duty Ribbon
• Army Overseas Service Ribbon
• Army Reserve Overseas Training Ribbon
• Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon
• Air Force Overseas Short Tour Service Ribbon
• Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon
• Navy Arctic Service Ribbon
• Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon
• Naval Reserve Sea Service Ribbon
• Army Sea Duty Ribbon
• Army Overseas Service Ribbon
• Army Reserve Overseas Training Ribbon
• Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon
• Air Force Overseas Short Tour Service Ribbon
• Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon
• Navy Recruiting Service Ribbon
• Air Force Recruiter Ribbon
• Marine Corps Recruiting Ribbon
• Coast Guard Recruiting Service Ribbon

Training service ribbons
• Air Force Military Training Instructor Ribbon
• Navy Recruit Training Service Ribbon
• Marine Corps Drill Instructor Ribbon

Guard ribbons
• Navy Ceremonial Guard Ribbon
• Marine Corps Security Guard Ribbon

Professional Development Ribbons
• Army NCO Professional Development Ribbon
• Air Force NCO PME Graduate Ribbon
• Air Force Honor Graduate Ribbon
• Coast Guard Honor Graduate Ribbon
• Army Service Ribbon
• Air Force Training Ribbon
**Marksmanship Awards**

- Air Force Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon

**Rifle**
- Coast Guard Distinguished Marksman Award (Rifle Marksmanship Ribbon with Distinguished Marksman Device)
- Coast Guard Silver Rifle Excellence-in-Competition Award (Rifle Marksmanship Ribbon with Silver Rifle EIC Device)
- Coast Guard Bronze Rifle Excellence-in-Competition Award (Rifle Marksmanship Ribbon with Bronze Rifle EIC Device)
- Navy Expert Rifleman Medal
- Coast Guard Expert Rifleman Medal
- Navy Rifle Marksmanship Ribbon with Sharpshooter Device

**Pistol**
- Coast Guard Distinguished Pistol Shot Award
- Coast Guard Silver Pistol Excellence-in-Competition Award
- Coast Guard Bronze Pistol Excellence-in-Competition Award
- Navy Expert Pistol Shot Medal
- Coast Guard Expert Pistol Shot Medal
- Navy Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon with Sharpshooter Device
- Coast Guard Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon with Sharpshooter Device
- Navy Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon
- Coast Guard Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon
How the request process works:

Who is the request issued to?

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) does not issue service medals; that is a function of each military service department. Requests for the issuance or replacement of military service medals, decorations and awards should be directed to the specific branch of the military in which the veteran served.

The NPRC will verify the awards to which a veteran is entitled and forward the request along with the records verification to the appropriate service department for issuance of the medals.

How does the type of record (archival or non-archival) affect NOK requests for medals?

The Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) is used to verify awards to which a veteran may be entitled. OMPFs are accessioned into the National Archives, and become archival, 62 years after the service member’s separation from the military. This is a rolling date; hence, the current year, 2013, minus 62 years is 1951. Records with a discharge date of 1951 or prior are archival and are open to the public. Records with a discharge date of 1951 or after are non-archival and are maintained under the Federal Records Center program. Non-archival records are subject to access restrictions. As such, the veteran’s date of separation (separation is defined as discharge, retirement or death in service) will affect how the request is processed.
Is there a cost associated with requesting replacement medals?

Each military service will provide replacement medal requests for the veteran at no cost. This includes family members with the signed authorization of the veteran.

Who do I contact for requesting replacement medals?

Requests for replacement medals should be submitted on Standard Form 180, “Request Pertaining To Military Records,” which may be obtained at VA offices or the Internet at: www.va.gov/vaforms/.

What do I need to include in my request?

When requesting medals, type or clearly print the following:

• Veteran’s full name,
• the Veteran’s branch of service,
• the service number or Social Security number,
• and provide the Veteran’s exact or approximate dates of military service.
• The request must contain the signature of the Veteran or next of kin if the Veteran is deceased.
• If available, include a copy of the discharge or separation document, WDAGO Form 53-55 or DD Form 214.

Where do I find more information on requesting replacement medals?

Forms, addresses, and other information on requesting medals can be found on the Military Personnel Records section of NPRC’s Website at: www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/index.html.

For questions, call Military Personnel Records at: (314) 801-0800 OR e-mail questions to: MPR.center@nara.gov.
### Army

| Where to write for medals | National Personnel Records Center  
|                          | 1 Archives Drive  
|                          | St. Louis, MO 63138 or  
|                          | REQUEST MEDALS ONLINE! |
| Where medals are mailed from | U.S. Army TACOM  
|                            | Clothing and Heraldry (PSID)  
|                            | P.O. Box 57997  
|                            | Philadelphia, PA 19111-7997 |
| Where to write in case of a problem or an appeal | U.S. Army Human Resources Command  
|                                                        | Soldier Program and Services Division -  
|                                                        | Awards and Decorations Branch  
|                                                        | ATTN: AHRC-PDP-A  
|                                                        | 1600 Spearhead Division Avenue, Dept 480  
|                                                        | Fort Knox, KY 40122-5408 |

### Marine Corps

| Where to write for medals, and where medals are mailed from | Navy Personnel Command  
|                                                             | Liaison Office Room 350  
|                                                             | 1 Archives Drive  
|                                                             | St. Louis, MO 63138 |
| Where to write in case of a problem or an appeal | Commandant of the Marine Corps  
|                                                    | Military Awards Branch (MMMA)  
|                                                    | 3280 Russell Road  
|                                                    | Quantico, VA 22134-5100 |
### Navy

Where to write for medals, and where medals are mailed from

Navy Personnel Command
Liaison Office Room 350
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

Where to write in case of a problem or an appeal

Chief of Naval Operations
(OPNAV 09B33)
Awards & Special Projects
Washington, DC 20350-2000

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### AIR FORCE (includes Army Air Corps & Army Air Forces)

Where to write for medals

National Personnel Records Center
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138 or REQUEST MEDALS ONLINE!

Where medals are mailed from, and where to write in case of a problem or an appeal

Active Duty Veterans:
Headquarters Air Force Personnel Center
AFPC/DPPPR
550 C Street West, Suite 12
Randolph AFB, TX
78150-4714

Reserve & Air Guard Veterans
Air Reserve Personnel Center
HQ ARPC/DPTARA
18420 E Silver Creek Ave Bldg 390 MS 68
Buckley AFB, CO 80011

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### Coast Guard

Where to write for medals, and where medals are mailed from

Navy Personnel Command
Liaison Office Room 350
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

Where to write in case of a problem or an appeal

Commandant U.S. Coast Guard
Medals and Awards Branch
(PMP-4)
Washington, DC 20593-0001
The medal requests process for Next-of-Kin:

Who is the Next-of-Kin (NOK)?

- For the Army, the NOK is defined as: the surviving spouse, eldest child, father or mother, eldest sibling or eldest grandchild

- For the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps & Coast Guard, the NOK is defined as: the un-remarried widow or widower, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister.

NOK Note: The process (and cost) for replacement medals requests differs among the service branches and is dependent upon who is requesting the medal, particularly if the request involves an archival record.

Next-of-Kin Medal Requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veteran’s Separation Date</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, &amp; Coast Guard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the veteran separated from military service before 1952</td>
<td>Requests are accepted at NO COST.</td>
<td>These Services do not accept NOK archival requests. The NOK may purchase a copy of the veteran’s OMPF to determine the awards due and obtain the medals from a commercial source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the veteran separated from military service after 1951</td>
<td>Requests are accepted at NO COST.</td>
<td>Requests are accepted at NO COST.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>