

STAMP SCOOP



MEDAL OF HONOR

President Lincoln established the **Medal of Honor** for sailors and Marines in 1861, and for soldiers in 1862, for those who “shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action and other soldier-like qualities during this insurrection.”

To date, 3,458 soldiers and seamen have received the Medal of Honor, and almost half of them were presented for heroics during the Civil War. The youngest recipient is Willie Johnston, an 11 year-old drummer boy. During the chaos of the Seven Days Battle in 1862, officers’ orders often went unheard so each order was assigned a series of drumbeats. During a retreat from Confederate forces, as soldiers discarded their gear to expedite their escape, Willie held onto his drum throughout the march. He was rewarded for his bravery with one of the earliest Medals of Honor in 1863.

Only one woman, Mary Edwards Walker, has received the Medal of Honor. Walker was a surgeon with Union forces during the Civil War and was known to cross enemy lines to treat civilians. Only one US president is a Medal of Honor recipient. President Theodore Roosevelt was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery during the Spanish American War in 1898, by President Clinton in 2001.

The Medal of Honor is the nation’s highest military award, and is not dispensed freely nor taken lightly – so much so that it is against the law to wear another’s Medal.

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