Awards and Decorations of the Central Intelligence Agency

CIA medals are 3 inches in diameter. Early medals were made by the Medallic Art Company, were marked bronze or silver and were serial numbered at 12 o’clock. Nearly all shared a common reverse that includes a space for engraving a name and a date before final finishing. The medals are normally awarded in a case with the medals ribbon inside the lid. Many, especially are also found in Lucite.

CIA medals are often referred to as "jock strap medals" since they are often awarded secretly (due to the classification level of the respective operation) and cannot be displayed, or on occasion, even acknowledged publicly.

Distinguished Intelligence Cross (Valor Award)

The Distinguished Intelligence Cross is the highest award by the Central Intelligence Agency. It is awarded for "a voluntary act or acts of extraordinary heroism involving the acceptance of existing dangers with conspicuous fortitude and exemplary courage." This award is the CIA’s equivalent to the Medal of Honor and like the Medal of Honor is often awarded posthumously.[1][2] Only a few dozen individuals have been awarded this medal in the history of the CIA, making it one of the rarest awards for valor in the United States. The CIA has two awards for Valor; the other is the Intelligence Star, which is analogous to the U.S military's Silver Star.
Judge John “Jack” Downey, left, and his fellow captive, Richard Fecteau received the highest honor for valor (Dist. Intel. Cross) from the Central Intelligence Agency in 2013.

Distinguished Intelligence Medal
The Distinguished Intelligence Medal is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for performance of outstanding services or for achievement of a distinctly exceptional nature in a duty or responsibility.[1] [2] It is normally only given to High ranking members of the agency after a long and Distinguished Career. [3]

Intelligence Star (Valor Award)

The Intelligence Star is an award given by the Central Intelligence Agency for a "voluntary act or acts of courage performed under hazardous conditions or for outstanding achievements or services rendered with distinction under conditions of grave risk." [1] The award citation is from the Director of Central Intelligence and specifically cites actions of "extraordinary heroism". This is the second highest award for valor in the Central Intelligence Agency, after the Distinguished Intelligence Cross. It is analogous to the Silver Star, the U.S. military award for extraordinary heroism.[1][2]
Presentation of Intelligence Star to Kenneth S Collins [4]

Intelligence Medal of Merit
The Intelligence Medal of Merit is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for performance of especially meritorious service or for achievement conspicuously above normal duties.\[1\][2] The name engraved reverse is typical of all of the CIA Awarded medals

Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal

For service reflecting a pattern of increasing levels of responsibility or increasing strategic impact and with distinctly exceptional achievements.
The Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for an individual’s cumulative record of service reflecting a pattern of increasing levels of responsibility or increasingly strategic impact and with distinctly exceptional achievements that constitute a major contribution to the mission of the Agency. \[1\][2]

Career Intelligence Medal
The Career Intelligence Medal is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for a cumulative record of service which reflects exceptional achievements that substantially contributed to the mission of the Agency.
The Career Commendation Medal is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for exemplary service significantly above normal duties that had an important contribution to the Agency’s mission. [1][2]

Intelligence Commendation Medal
The Intelligence Commendation Medal is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for the performance of especially commendable service or for an act or achievement significantly above normal duties which results in an important contribution to the mission of the Agency. [1][2]

Exceptional Service Medal

The Exceptional Service Medallion (formally known as the Exceptional Service Emblem) is a civilian decoration of the United States government. It is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency in recognition of "an employee's injury or death resulting from service in a hazardous area." [1][2]
The Stars on the Wall

The CIA Memorial Wall is one of the first things visitors see when entering the Original Headquarters Building lobby. The wall – located on the lobby’s north wall – stands as a silent memorial to those CIA employees “who gave their lives in the service of their country.” Currently, there are 87 stars carved into the marble of the CIA Memorial Wall.

The "Book of Honor" lists the names of 54 employees who died while serving their country. The names of the remaining 33 employees must remain secret, even in death; each of these officers is remembered in the book by a star.

Hostile Action Service Medal (No Ribbon)

The Hostile Action Service Medal is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for direct exposure to a specific life-threatening incident in the foreign field or in the U.S. where the employee was in close proximity to death or injury, but survived and sustained no injuries. The incident must have occurred during work-related activities or events, which were targeted by armed forces or persons unfriendly to the U.S. Government. [1][2]
The Agency Seal Medal (formerly Medallion) is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency to non-Agency personnel, including U.S. Government employees and private citizens, who have made significant contributions to the Agency’s intelligence efforts. [1]
CIA Director Michael V. Hayden presents the Agency Seal Medal to Sen. Pat Roberts at a ceremony on Friday, March 16, 2007, at CIA Headquarters.

**Gold Retirement Medallion (No Ribbon)**

The Gold Retirement Medallion is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for a career of 35 years or more with the Agency. [1][2]

**Silver Retirement Medallion (No Ribbon)**
The Silver Retirement Medallion is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for a career of 25, but less than 35, years or more with the Agency. [1]

Bronze Retirement Medallion (No Ribbon)
The Bronze Retirement Medallion is awarded by the Central Intelligence Agency for a career of at least 15, but less than 25, years with the Agency. [1]

References


3. Photos of medals, awardees and documents found on the internet including some offered on Ebay. Descriptions and ribbons from Winkapedia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Intelligence_Medal