



**UNITED STATES BORDER PATROL
MEDALS AND RIBBONS PROGRAM**



**DEVELOPED BY
HEADQUARTERS BORDER PATROL
AND THE
UNITED STATES ARMY
INSTITUTE OF HERALDRY**

United States Border Patrol Medals and Ribbons Program

Border Patrol employees are eligible for awards under three honorary awards programs, the Department of Justice (DOJ) program and two Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) programs. In the INS, most employees are eligible under the program described in section 1.3.202 of the new *Administrative Manual*. Employees in the Border Patrol bargaining unit are eligible under the program outlined in section 2244 of the old *Administrative Manual*. Typically, recognition under these programs consists of letters, certificates, plaques, and statues.

The Border Patrol Medals and Ribbons Program is designed to supplement the aforementioned programs by providing Border Patrol Agents and Border Patrol Aircraft Pilots with appropriate uniform devices to identify award recipients.

The Institute of Heraldry (TIOH) produced the designs on the basis of concept designs prepared by Headquarters Border Patrol. The medals and ribbons follow a suggested order of precedence that recognizes heroism and bloodshed as being more significant than varying degrees of administrative or operational excellence and service that are not characterized by heroism or bloodshed. For that reason, the suggested order of precedence is different from the orders of precedence listed in DOJ and INS policy documents.

The colors used in the ribbon drapes symbolize the characteristics of service for which the awards are given and, in some cases, are colors associated with the DOJ, the INS, or the Border Patrol because of their use in official uniforms, seals, or flags. There is no special significance attached to the ribbons' striping patterns except for the need to make them unique to the Border Patrol.

The symbolism attached to the colors used in the ribbon designs is as follows:

Gold

(Yellow) - Honor and achievement

Green - Life, growth, renewal, and continuity

Green is associated with the Border Patrol because of its distinctive green uniform. The use of green in all the non-DOJ ribbons makes a clear association to the Border Patrol.

White - Integrity and purity of purpose

Red - Zeal, sacrifice, courage, bloodshed, and the willingness to shed blood in the line of duty

Purple - Mourning and bloodshed

Blue - Honor, valor, devotion to duty, and the pursuit of excellence
Ultramarine blue, the base color of the DOJ flag, is used in each of the DOJ ribbons.

Silver

Gray - Honor and achievement

*Red, White
and Blue* - The national colors
Patriotism, freedom, democracy, and the rule of law

There are four medals and one ribbon that are not included in the aforementioned honorary awards programs – the U.S. Border Patrol Purple Cross Wound Medal, the U.S. Border Patrol Lifesaving Medal (design in progress), the U.S. Border Patrol Long Service Medal, the U.S. Border Patrol Chief's Commendation Medal, and the U.S. Border Patrol 50th Anniversary Ribbon.

The Purple Cross Wound Medal would identify agents who have been wounded in the line of duty. The eligibility criteria are being developed.

The Lifesaving Medal would identify agents who have been involved in lifesaving operations. The eligibility criteria have not been determined.

The Long Service Medal would identify agents who have served an aggregate of 20 (or more) years in Border Patrol Agent and/or Aircraft Pilot positions. It bridges the gap between the 5-year service awards that recognize total government service and the service stars worn on the Eisenhower jacket that recognize total INS service.

The Chief's Commendation Medal would identify agents recognized by the Chief, U.S. Border Patrol, for performing commendable acts. The eligibility criteria have not been determined.

The 50th Anniversary Ribbon would identify Border Patrol Agents and pilots who were serving on and immediately before May 28, 1974.

I. Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Heroism



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Miniature



Reverse

Criteria: All Department of Justice employees are eligible for nomination. A nominee must have demonstrated extraordinary courage in the course of carrying out the duties of his or her position and have displayed valor in a highly dangerous, life-threatening situation involving efforts to save another person's life or the protection of property.

Ribbon: Scarlet, white, ultramarine blue, and golden light

Medallion: Gold with blue enamel or epoxy

II. Commissioner's Newton-Azrak Award



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Reverse



Miniature



Lapel Device

AM §1.3.202 Criteria: To be eligible for consideration, the employee's contribution, service, or accomplishment must reflect:

1. Exercise of unusual courage or bravery in the line of duty; and/or
2. A heroic or humane act during times of extreme stress or in an emergency.

AM §2244 Criteria: Accomplishments which may merit this award include:

1. Exercise of unusual courage or competence in the line of duty;
2. Outstanding accomplishments in special law enforcement programs;
3. Outstanding performance, leadership, or innovation in Federal law enforcement;
4. Exceptionally effective work with other law enforcement agencies or community segments which enhances the Service's image and makes its efforts more effective and more easily accomplished.

Ribbon: Green, gold, bluebird (Medal of Honor blue)

Medallion: Gold

III. U.S. Border Patrol Purple Cross Wound Medal



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Reverse



Miniature

Criteria: The Purple Cross will be presented to any current Border Patrol Agent or Border Patrol Aircraft Pilot wounded in the line of duty pursuant to the following criteria before, on, or after the date of this memorandum [June 12, 2001]. The medal may be awarded posthumously.

- The wound for which the medal is presented must have been the direct result of a hostile act or an armed conflict.
- The agent or pilot must have been on duty and must have been acting within the scope of his or her official duties.
- The incident must have the essential elements of the crime of assault on a federal officer, regardless of whether or not the case is prosecutable.
- The wounds must be serious,¹ requiring treatment by a competent medical authority (certifying documents must accompany the nomination).
- Wounds suffered in the line of duty under circumstances other than a hostile act or armed conflict shall not qualify for presentation of the Medal, e.g.,

¹ "Serious is defined as bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death or that causes serious, permanent disfigurement or loss or protracted impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ. Superficial abrasions, skin discolorations, sprains, and other minor injuries will be disqualified for consideration.

injuries suffered during a traffic accident, injuries suffered while falling while engaged in a foot pursuit, injuries suffered while assisting motorists, etc.

[Purple Cross Medal, HQBOR 10/13-P dated June 12, 2001.]

Ribbon: Marine Corps scarlet, Air Force yellow, green, white, Purple Heart purple

Medallion: Gold with Purple Heart purple and white epoxy

IV. Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Service



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Miniature



Reverse

Criteria: Achievements or contributions must show at least one of the following:

1. The performance of a special service in the public interest which is over and above normal requirements and of an outstanding and distinctive character in terms of improved operations, public understanding of the Department's mission, or accomplishments of one of the major goals of the Department.
2. Exceptionally outstanding contribution to the Department of Justice and/or exceptionally outstanding leadership in the administration of major programs which resulted in highly successful accomplishments to meet unique or emergency situations.
3. Extraordinary courage and voluntary risk of life in performing an act resulting in direct benefits to the Department or the nation.

Ribbon: White, ultramarine blue, and golden light

Medallion: Gold with blue enamel or epoxy

V. Commissioner's Award for Exceptional Service



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Reverse



Miniature

AM §1.3.202 Criteria: A nominee's achievements must reflect at least one of the following:

1. The performance of a special service in the public interest which is over and above normal requirements and of an outstanding and distinctive character in terms of improved operations, public understanding of the Service's mission, or accomplishments of one of the major goals of the service; or
2. Exceptionally outstanding contribution to the Service and/or exceptionally outstanding leadership in the administration of major programs which resulted in highly successful accomplishments to meet unique or emergency situations.

Ribbon: White, myrtle green, yellow, and ultramarine blue

Medallion: Gold with green enamel or epoxy

Note: Members of the Border Patrol bargaining unit are not eligible for this award.

VI. Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Reverse



Miniature

Criteria: Superior performance of normal duties will not, in itself, justify this award. To be eligible for consideration, the employee's achievement or service must show at least one of the following:

1. The accomplishment of assigned duties in such an outstanding manner as to be clearly noteworthy among all those who have performed similar duties, or performance of assigned tasks in such an exemplary manner as to set a record of achievement that will inspire others to improve the quality and/or quantity of their work.
2. The exercise of unusual courage or competence in an emergency while on official duty.
3. The rendering of professional service of a unique or distinctive character worthy of significant honorary recognition.
4. Distinguished conduct in the performance of duties over a period of years in a position of responsibility that involves exercise of authority and judgment in matters of marked significance.

Ribbon: Golden light, ultramarine blue, and white

Medallion: Gold with blue enamel or epoxy

VII. Commissioner's Distinguished Career Service Award



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Reverse



Miniature

AM §1.3.202 Criteria: Service employees who have had distinguished careers with INS are eligible to receive this award at the time of their departure from the Service. Nominations should reflect the projected date of their departure. The following may merit this award:

1. Consistent excellence and efficiency during his or her Service career; or
2. Exceptional contributions to the employee's field during his or her tenure.

AM §2244 Criteria: INS employees who have had at least 15 years of service with the INS are eligible to receive this award at the time of their retirement or resignation. Nominations should reflect the projected date of final separation. The following may merit this award:

1. Consistent excellence and efficiency during his or her career;
2. Exceptional contributions to the employee's field during his or her tenure.

Ribbon: Navy #1, scarlet, white, and green

Medallion: Gold with green enamel or epoxy

VIII. Attorney General's Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Miniature



Reverse

Criteria: All law enforcement officers employed by the Department of Justice are eligible. A nominee must have demonstrated unusual courage or outstanding accomplishments in the field of law enforcement.

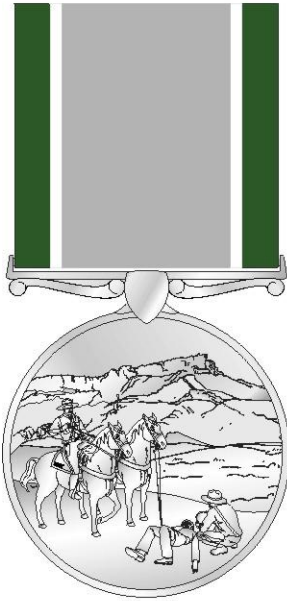
Ribbon: Ultramarine blue, Marine Corps scarlet, and white

Medallion: Gold

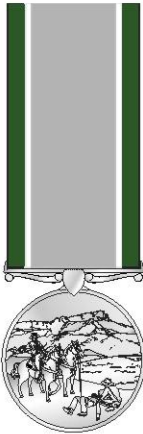
IX. U.S. Border Patrol Lifesaving Medal



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Miniature



Reverse

Status of design: Pending

Design concept: Two mounted Immigration Patrol Inspectors aiding an alien overcome by the heat of the desert near the Mexican border. The design is symbolic of the Border Patrol's lifesaving role that spans the seven-plus decades of its history.

Criteria: To be established.

Ribbon: Green, white, and silver gray

Medallion: Silver

X. Commissioner's Meritorious Service Award/ Commissioner's Meritorious Achievement Award



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Miniature



Reverse

AM §1.3.202 Criteria for the Meritorious Service Award:

Outstanding performance of normal duties will not, by itself, justify nomination for this award. The employee's achievement or service must reflect at least one of the following:

1. The accomplishment of assigned duties in such an outstanding manner as to be clearly noteworthy among all those who have performed similar duties, or performance of assigned tasks in such an exemplary manner as to set a record of achievement that will inspire others to improve the quality and/or quantity of their work; or
2. The rendering of professional service of a unique or distinctive character worthy of significant honorary recognition.

AM §2244 Criteria for the Meritorious Achievement Award: The following are examples of the types of acts, accomplishments, or services which may be recognized by this award:

1. Detection of significant violations under unusual circumstances;
2. Heroic and humane acts performed by employees during times of extreme stress or in emergency situations;
3. Exceptional skill or ability in the performance of duties;

4. Demonstration of remarkable initiative or creative ability which improves Service programs.

Ribbon: Light green, green, white, and flag blue

Medallion: Silver

XI. U.S. Border Patrol Long Service Award



Ribbon Bar

Criteria: Service totaling 20 years in a Border Patrol agent and/or pilot positions (awarded without a ribbon drape attachment) with ribbon drape attachments authorized for 25-, 30-, and 35 years of service in qualifying positions.

Ribbon: White, ultramarine blue, and green

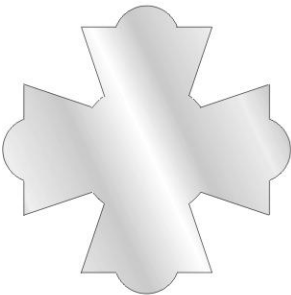
Medallion: Silver



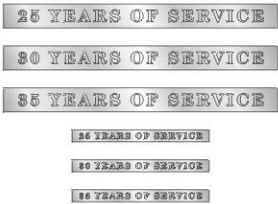
Obverse



Miniature



Reverse



Ribbon Drape Attachments

XII. Commissioner's Special Commendation Award



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Miniature



Reverse

AM §2244 Criteria: Any employee who has at least three years of service with the INS may be considered for this award. The following are examples of the types of achievements which may merit consideration for recognition:

1. Exceptional work in the development and/or execution of an administrative or operational program;
2. Establishment of an extraordinary record of achievement by an individual in his/her work production or in the production of work by a unit for which an individual has responsibility;
3. Demonstrated outstanding leadership in the administration of major programs;
4. A single act of major significance to the INS.

Ribbon: Myrtle green, white, and cobalt blue

Medallion: Bronze

XIII. U.S. Border Patrol Chief's Commendation Medal



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Miniature



Reverse

Criteria: All Border Patrol Agents and Border Patrol Aircraft Pilots, are eligible for this recognition. To be eligible, the nominee's service, contributions, or achievements must be characterized by superior performance of duty worthy of special recognition by the Chief, U.S. Border Patrol, because of its significant positive impact on the Border Patrol. Units or groups of agents are also eligible for this recognition. The Chief, U.S. Border Patrol, presents this medal.

Ribbon: Asymmetric stripes of green, Old Glory red, white, and flag blue

Medallion: Bronze and silver

XIV. Commissioner's Excellence in Group Achievement Award



Ribbon Bar



Obverse



Miniature



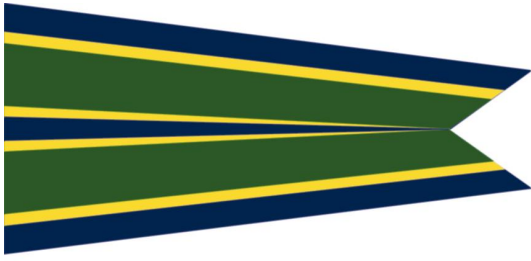
Reverse

AM §2244 Criteria: The following types of accomplishments will be considered:

1. Increase in, or maintenance of, high production without an increase in personnel;
2. Decrease in backlogs without additional staff or overtime;
3. Successful accomplishment of new goals or programs despite problems or setbacks;
4. Improvement in morale;
5. Improvements in operations or procedures which result in substantial benefits, increased production, or decreased backlogs.

Ribbon: Flag blue, Air Force yellow, and green

Medallion: Bronze



Pennant

A pennant and/or a flag streamer may also be authorized for units receiving this award.



Flag Streamer

XV. Commissioner's Border Patrol Academy Honor Graduate Ribbon



Ribbon Bar



Ribbon Bar Attachments

Criteria: U.S. Border Patrol Academy Honor Graduates finishing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place academically, and those graduating 1st in driver training, physical training, and firearms training (including trainees who fire a perfect qualifying score of 360) would be eligible for the ribbon bar. 3/16-inch gold, silver, and bronze stars attached to the ribbon bars would identify the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place academic honor graduates.

Ribbon: White, green, Air Force yellow, and maroon

XVI. U.S. Border Patrol 50th Anniversary Ribbon



Ribbon Bar with Attachment

Criteria: Border Patrol Agents and pilots who were employed as Border Patrol agents or pilots on and immediately prior to May 28, 1974, would be authorized to wear this ribbon bar.

Ribbon: Light green blended to green, scarlet, white, and flag blue

Attachment: Gold

XVII. U.S. Border Patrol 75th Anniversary Medal



Ribbon Bar

Criteria: Border Patrol Agents and pilots who were employed as Border Patrol Agents or pilots on and immediately prior to May 28, 1999, are authorized to wear this decoration.

Ribbon: Purple, white, jungle green, Air Force yellow, ultramarine blue, and scarlet

Medallion: Rose gold



Obverse



Miniature



Reverse



Shirt/Lapel
Device