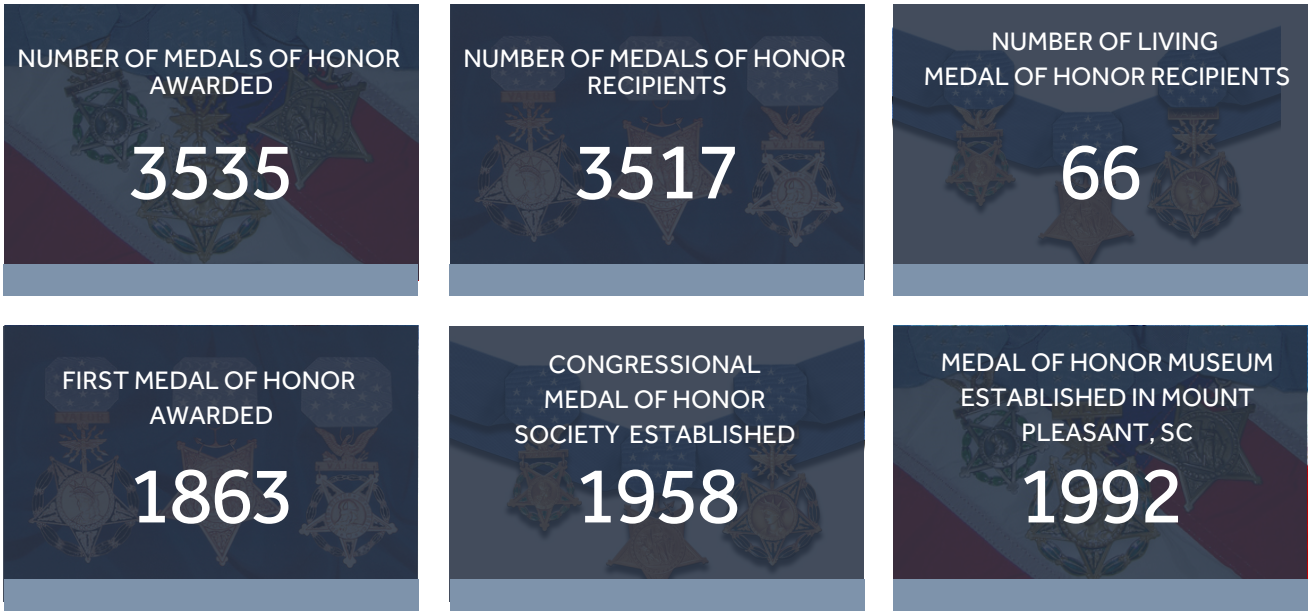
About the Medal of Honor

The Medal of Honor is the highest award presented to American military members who have distinguished themselves by acts of valor in combat.

Criteria to award the Medal has changed since it was created in 1861 and first awarded during the Civil War. Today, a valorous act must happen during conflict and distinguish a service member "conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."

All recommendations for the Medal are investigated and must be approved by the full chain-of-command up to the U.S. President as the Commander-in-Chief. Recommendations to award the Medal of Honor must be made within three years of the valorous act and the Medal must be presented within five years. Any submission made outside this timeline must receive a waiver from Congress to proceed.

There are three designs of the Medal of Honor, one each for the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Marine Corps and Coast Guard receive the Navy design. A U.S. Space Force Guardian would receive the Air Force design.



For media inquiries, contact mohcomms@cmohs.org

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society was chartered in 1958 by Congress to promote a bond between Recipients of the Medal of Honor, provide appropriate aid to those who are awarded the Medal along with their widows and children, to help protect and preserve the dignity, honor and name of the Medal, to inspire and stimulate youth to become good citizens, and to foster and promote patriotism. The Society's role has never included nominating, selecting, or awarding the Medal of Honor.

Today, the Society continues to carry out these missions through programs that are dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Medal of Honor and its Recipients, inspiring and educating Americans and promoting the values associated with the Medal: courage, commitment, integrity, sacrifice, citizenship and patriotism. They do this through the Society's proprietary programs:

- Recipients' Medal of Honor Museum
- Archives and collections
- Medal of Honor Character Development Program
- Citizen Honors Awards for Valor and Service

The Society also continues to provide bonding opportunities for Recipients through communications to members, annual conventions and other events. The Society supports them by making travel arrangements and advocating for their healthcare needs.

The membership of the Society and its board of directors is composed solely of Medal of Honor Recipients. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that does not receive funding from any government agencies. Instead, relies on private donations to operate.

The Society maintains an office and the Recipients' Medal of Honor Museum at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, on board the USS Yorktown. As part of Public Law 106-83, the Medal of the Honor Memorial Act, the Museum was designated as one of three national Medal of Honor sites.

The Medal of Honor Foundation

The Medal of Honor Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 1999 to support and advance the mission of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. The Foundation's board of directors is composed of both Medal of Honor Recipients and non-Recipients.

The Society and Foundation rely solely on private philanthropy – gifts from individuals, corporations, and foundations – and receive no government funding. The Foundation is a 4-Star Rated Charity as rated by Charity Navigator.

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society is the only organization chartered by Congress to support Recipients. Although the Medal of Honor traces its origins back to 1861, it wasn't until 1958 that Congress and President Eisenhower chartered a specific organization to address the work and well-being of Recipients.

Today the Society creates a bond between Recipients while keeping their memories alive, protecting the legacy of the Medal, and promoting the values and ideals upon which our country was founded. It remains the only group chartered by Congress to take on such great responsibilities.

Through the Society, Recipients remain as deeply committed to serving our country in peace as they did in war.

MEDAL OF HONOR
FOUNDATION