List of Hispanic Medal of Honor recipients

Reverse of the Medal of Honor awarded to Seaman John Ortega

The Medal of Honor was created during the American Civil War and is the highest military decoration presented by the United States government to a member of its armed forces. The recipient must have distinguished themselves at the risk of their own life above and beyond the call of duty in action against an enemy of the United States. Due to the nature of this medal, it is commonly presented posthumously.[1]

Forty-three men of Hispanic heritage have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Of the forty-three Medals of Honor presented to Hispanics, two were presented to members of the United States Navy, thirteen to members of the United States Marine Corps and twenty-eight to members of the United States Army. Twenty-five Medals of Honor were presented posthumously.[2]

The first recipient was Corporal Joseph H. De Castro of the Union Army for his actions at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on July 3, 1863, during the American Civil War and the most recent recipient was Captain Humbert Roque Versace who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on July 8, 2002, by President George W. Bush. Corporal De Castro was a member of the Massachusetts Infantry, a militia that was not part of the "regular" army; however, Private David Bennes Barkley was a member of the regular army during World War I and has been recognized as the Army's first Hispanic Medal of Honor recipient.[3] In 1864, Seaman John Ortega became the first Hispanic member of the U.S. Navy to receive the Medal of Honor and in 1900, Private France Silva became the first person of Hispanic descent in the U.S. Marine Corps to receive the medal.[4]

Ten recipients were born outside the United States mainland, one each in Chile and Spain, four in Mexico and four in Puerto Rico. Seaman Philip Bazaar from Chile received the medal in January 1865 and Seaman John Ortega from Spain in December 1865. The first native Mexican recipient was Staff Sergeant Marcario Garcia and the first Puerto Rican was PFC Fernando Luis Garcia.[5] 1st Lt. Rudolph B. Davila, of Hispanic-Filipino descent, was the only person of Filipino ancestry to receive the medal for his actions in the war in Europe during World War II.[6] Private Joe P. Martinez was the first Hispanic-American recipient to be awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for combat heroism on American soil during the same conflict.[7] 1st Lt. Baldomero Lopez, is the only Hispanic graduate of the United States Naval Academy recipient of the Medal of Honor.[8] Captain Humbert Roque Versace was the first recipient of the Medal of Honor to be given to an Army POW for his actions during captivity in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.[9]

Terminology

Hispanic is an ethnic term employed to categorize any citizen or resident of the United States, of any racial background, of any country, and of any religion, who has at least one ancestor from the people of Spain or is of non-Hispanic origin, but has an ancestor from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central or South America, or other Hispanic origin. The three largest Hispanic groups in the United States are the Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans.[10]

American Civil War

Three Hispanic Americans earned the Medal of Honor during the American Civil War, two were sailors of the Union Navy and one was a soldier of the 19th Massachusetts Infantry.

This with the * indicates that the Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously

Image	Name	Rank	Branch	Unit	Place of action	Date of action	Notes/Reference
—	Philip Bazaar	Ordinary Seaman	Navy	Massachusetts, USS *Santiago de Cuba*	Assault on Fort Fisher	January 15, 1865	"As one of a boat crew detailed to one of the generals on shore, O.S. Bazaar bravely entered the fort in the assault and accompanied his party in carrying dispatches at the height of the battle. He was 1 of 6 men who entered the fort in the assault from the fleet"[11]
—	Joseph H. De Castro	Corporal	Army	Company I, 19th Massachusetts Infantry	Gettysburg, Pennsylvania	July 3, 1863	Attacked a confederate flag bearer from the 19th Virginia Infantry regiment and captured their flag.[11]
—	John Ortega	Seaman	Navy	USS *Saratoga*	USS *Saratoga*	December 1864	Was a member of a landing party who made several raids in August and September 1864 which resulted in the capture of many confederate prisoners and the taking or destruction of substantial quantities of ordnance, ammunition, and supplies. A number of buildings, bridges, and salt works were also destroyed during the expedition[12]

Boxer rebellion

During the Boxer rebellion only one Hispanic American received the Medal of Honor and that was France Silva who earned it for "distinguishing himself for meritorious conduct".

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Image	Name	Rank	Branch	Unit	Place of action	Date of action	Notes/Reference
—	France Silva	Private	Marine Corps	USS *Newark*	Peking, China	June 28, 1900–August 17, 1900	For distinguishing himself by meritorlous conduct[13]

World War I

Image	Name	Rank	Branch	Unit	Place of action	Date of action	Notes/Reference
	David B. Barkley*	Private	Army	Company A, 356th Infantry, 89th Division	Near Pouilly, France	November 9, 1918	Volunteered to swim a river to gather information on an enemy force. When he was swimming back across the river he got cramps and drown.[14]

World War II

This with the * indicates that the Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously

Image	Name	Branch	Rank	Unit	Place of action	Date of action	Notes/Reference
	Lucian Adams	Staff Sergeant	Army	30th Infantry, 3d Infantry Division	St. Die, France	October 1944	"[P]ersonally killed 9 Germans, eliminated 3 enemy machineguns, vanquished a specialized force which was armed with automatic weapons and grenade launchers, cleared the woods of hostile elements, and reopened the severed supply lines to the assault companies of his battalion."[15]
	Rudolph B. Davila	Staff Sergeant	Army	Company H, 7th Infantry	Artena, Italy	May 28, 1944	Risked his life to defeat an attacking force of enemy soldiers.[15]
	Marcario Garcia	Staff Sergeant	Army	Company B, 22d Infantry, 4th Infantry Division	Near Grosshau, Germany	November 27, 1944	"While an acting squad leader, he single-handedly assaulted two enemy machine gun emplacements"[16]
	Harold Gonsalves*	Private First Class	Marine Corps	4th Battalion, 15th Marines 6th Marine Division	Ryūkyū Chain, Okinawa	April 15, 1945	Sacrificed his life to smother a grenade with his body[16]
	David M. Gonzales*	Private First Class	Army	Company A, 127th Infantry, 32 Infantry Division	Villa Verde Trail, Luzon, Philippine Islands	April 25, 1945	Was killed in action in the Philippines while digging out fellow soldiers who had been buried in a bomb explosion[16]
	Silvestre S. Herrera	Private First Class	Army	Company E, 142d Infantry, 36th Infantry Division	Near Mertzwiller, France	March 15, 1945	Injured in action while charging an enemy stronghold resulting in the capture of eight enemy soldiers[16]
	Jose M. Lopez	Sergeant	Army	2d Infantry Division	Near Krinkelt, Belgium	December 17, 1944	Single-handedly repulsed a German infantry attack, killing at least 100 enemy troops[16]
	Joe P. Martinez*	Private	Army	Company K, 32d Infantry, 7th Infantry Division	Attu, Aleutians	May 26, 1943	Killed in action while participating in the defeat of enemy forces in a snow covered mountain.[17]
	Manuel Perez Jr.*	Private First Class	Army	Company A 511th Parachute Infantry, 11th Airborne Division	Fort William McKinley, Luzon, Philippine Islands	February 13, 1945	Killed 18 enemy soldiers and that they were in so his company could advance[17]
	Cleto L. Rodriguez	Private	Army	Company B, 148th Infantry, 37th Division	Paco Railroad Station, Manila, Philippine Islands	February 9, 1945	With another soldier, who was killed in the action, killed more than 82 Japanese, completely disorganized their defense, and allowed for the enemy to be defeatede[17]
	Alejandro R. Ruiz	Private First Class	Army	165th Infantry, 27th Infantry Division	Okinawa	April 28, 1945	Risked his life to eliminate an enemy pillbox and kill the 12 enemy soldiers who were occupying it[17]
	Jose F. Valdez*	Private First Class	Army	Company B, 7th Infantry, 3d Infantry Division	Rosenkrantz, France	January 25, 1945	[18]

	Ysmael R. Villegas*	Staff Sergeant	Army	Company F, 127th Infantry, 32d Infantry Division	Villa Verde Trail, Luzon, Philippine Islands	March 20, 1945	[18]

Korean War

This with the * indicates that the Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously

Image	Name	Rank	Branch	Unit	Place of action	Date of action	Notes/Reference
	Fernando Luis García*	Private First Class	Marine Corps	Company I 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines 1st Marine Division	Korea	September 5, 1952	[19]
	Edward Gomez*	Private First Class	Marine Corps	Company E 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines 1st Marine Division	Kajon-ni, Korea	September 14, 1951	[19]
	Ambrosio Guillen*	Staff Sergeant	Marine Corps	Company F 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines 1st Marine Division	Songuch-on, Korea	July 25, 1953	[19]
	Rodolfo P. Hernandez	Corporal	Army	Company G, 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team	Near Wontong-ni, Korea	May 31, 1951	[19]
	Baldomero Lopez*	First Lieutenant	Marine Corps	Company A 1st Battalion, 5th Marines 1st Marine Division	Inchon Landing, Korea	September 15, 1950	[19]
	Benito Martinez*	Corporal	Army	Company A, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division	Satacri, Korea	September 6, 1952	[19]
	Eugene Arnold Obregon*	Private First Class	Marine Corps	Company G 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines 1st Marine Division	Battle of Seoul	September 26, 1950	[19]
	Joseph C. Rodriguez	Private First Class	Army	Company F, 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division	Near Munye-ri, Korea	May 21, 1951	[19]

Vietnam War

This with the * indicates that the Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously

Image	Name	Rank	Branch	Unit	Place of action	Date of action	Notes/Reference
	John P. Baca	Specialist Four	Army	Company D, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division	Phuoc Long Province	February 10, 1970	[20]
	Roy P. Benavidez	Master Sergeant	Army	Detachment B-56, 5th Special Forces	Loc Ninh, Vietnam	May 2, 1968	[20]
	Emilio A. De La Garza*	Lance Corporal	Marine Corps	Company E 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines	Da Nang	April 11, 1970	[20]
	Ralph E. Dias*	Private First Class	Marine Corps	1st Battalion, 7th Marines	Quang Nam Province	November 12, 1969	[20]
	Daniel Fernandez*	Specialist Four	Army	Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (Mechanized) 25th Infantry Division	Hau Nghia Province	February 18, 1966	[20]
	Alfredo Cantu Gonzalez*	Sergeant	Marine Corps	Company A 1st Battalion, 1st Marines	Hue City	February 4, 1968	[20]
	Jose Francisco Jimenez*	Lance Corporal	Marine Corps	Company K 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines 1st Marine Division	Quang Nam Province	August 28, 1969	[20]
	Miguel Keith*	Lance Corporal	Marine Corps	III Marine Amphibious Force	Quang Ngai Province	May 8, 1970	[20]
	Carlos Lozada*	Private First Class	Army	Company A, 2nd Battalion, 502d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade	Dak To	November 20, 1967	[20]
	Alfred V. Rascon	Specialist Four	Army	Reconnaissance Platoon, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry,173d Airborne Brigade	Republic of Vietnam	March 16, 1966	[21]
	Louis R. Rocco	Sergeant First Class	Army	Advisory Team 162, United States Military Assistance Command	Northeast of Katum, Republic of Vietnam	May 24, 1970	[21]
	Euripides Rubio*	Captain	Army	Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division	Tay Ninh Province	November 8, 1966	[21]
	Hector Santiago-Colon*	Specialist Four	Army	Company B, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (airmobile)	Quang Tri Province	June 28, 1968	[21]
	Elmelindo Rodrigues Smith*	Sergeant First Class	Army	Company C, 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division	Republic of Vietnam	February 16, 1967	[21]

	Jay R. Vargas	Captain	Marine Corps	Company G 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade	Dai Do	April 30, 1968–May 2, 1968	[21]
	Humbert Roque Versace*	Captain	Army	Detachment A-23, 5th Special Forces Group	An Xuyen Province	October 29, 1963–September 26, 1965	[21]
—	Maximo Yabes*	First Sergeant	Army	Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division	Near Phu Hoa Dong	February 26, 1967	[21]

War in Afghanistan

Image	Name	Rank	Branch	Unit	Place of action	Date of action	Notes/Reference
	Leroy Petry	Sergeant First Class	Army	75th Ranger Regiment	Afghanistan	May 26, 2008	An enemy threw a grenade at their position which landed 10 meters from them; it detonated, knocked them to the ground, wounded Higgins, and Robinson was further wounded.[22] [23] Shortly thereafter the three were joined by SSG James Roberts and SPC Christopher Gathercole. Another grenade was thrown by an enemy which landed a few feet from Higgins and Robinson. Petry, knowing the risk to his life, moved toward the grenade, picked it up, and attempted to throw it in the direction of the enemy.[22] [24] [23] [25]

By military branch

Awards by branch of service

Military branch	Posthumously	In person	Number of awards
Army	14	15	29
Marines	11	2	13
Navy	0	2	2
Total	**25**	**19**	**44**

Note: The information in "Awards by branch of service Table" is based on the sourced information on the "List of Recipients Table".

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