

Combat Infantry Badge



The army announced the Combat Infantry Badge “for exemplary conduct against the enemy or satisfactory duty against enemy in a major action” in War Department Circular 269, October 27, 1943. At that time it was the higher of two combat awards, the other being the

expert infantry badge. War Department Circular 408, October 1944 changed the army’s concept of two levels of infantry badges (Expert and Combat) by making the Combat Infantry Badge the only one for combat in an infantryman. The October 1944 order change changed criteria to satisfactory performance against enemy as part of an infantry unit, and restricted the award to colonels and below. WD Circular 105, March 1944, established the badge retroactively to 6 December 1941, while WD Circular 151, May 1945, allowed for posthumous award. Circular 408, 1944, specifically prohibited medical officers and chaplains from wearing this badge.

Changes 6, AR 600-35, August 1945, established miniature badges (the size of rectangle for the miniature badges was 3/8 by 1-3/4 inches) for wear on shirts when used as an outer garment.



The Korean War started in June 1950. Eight months later, in February 1951, the Army Chief of Staff approved an additional Combat Infantry Badge for each separate war. AR 600-70, September 1951, announced to the army the 2d, 3d, and 4th awards of the Combat Infantry Badge. The basic badge added a star in the wreath opening for each additional award. The army introduced subdued badges during the Vietnam War. Below left is a third award metal subdued Combat Infantry badge and right is a third award miniature badge.



Changes 7, October 1964, to AR 672-5-1, established the 5th through the 8th awards. The fifth award was the same as the first award except that the metal was gold rather than silver. The next three awards added gold stars above the gold and blue badge. A cloth example for field clothing is at the left.

Shortly after establishing the 5th through 8th awards the army changed its philosophy. For actions in the Dominican Republic and for Vietnam, soldiers would receive only one CIB. Later survivors of the Bay of Pigs who enlisted in the US Army received letters for their personnel files noting they were eligible for the CIB. The policy expanded so that regardless of the number of wars. As a result in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, a soldier could receive only one CIB. MILPER message 98-095 established El Salvador duty from as period for eligibility for CIB. The message summarized that any of the following will result in only one CIB:

- Vietnam subsequent to 1 March 1961
- Laos 19 April 1961 – 6 October 1962
- Dominican Republic, 28 April 1965 – 1 September 1966
- Korea on the DMZ, 4 January 1969 – 31 March 1994
- El Salvador, 1 January 1978 – 1 February 1992
- Grenada, 23 October – 21 November 1983
- Panama, 20 December 1989 – 31 January 1990
- Persian Gulf War, 17 January 1991 – 11 April 1991
- Somalia, 5 June 1993- 31 March 1994

The Secretary of the Army established a new “period of eligibility” for CIB effective 18 September 2001. This is in Department of the Army, Army Regulation 600-8-22, 11 December 2006, para 8-6. Thus an infantry veteran of 20th Century wars such as Somalia or the first Persian Gulf War could receive a second CIB for the Iraq or the Afghanistan War.

Headquarters Department of the Army letter 600-05-1, stated that effective 18 September 2001 Special Forces medics may receive the CIB rather than the combat medical badge.