

Medals and Ribbons

A Unique Chest of Stories

Batcatters, have you ever wondered if you received all the medals and ribbons you earned or just want to replace your medals and ribbons for a legacy to your children or spouse? Here's how:

First check your DD Form 214 and look in the "Service Data" section then under "Decorations, medals, badges, etc." Listed there are those awards that at your time of discharge the Air Force knew about. But that may not be the whole story. In my recent "legacy building" effort the Air Force discovered that I had earned more medals and devices than were listed on my DD Form 214. Here's the path I took to that discovery.

By web searching this site (below) which I found by Googling "us military medals us government" I found the link to the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri where you (or kin) can send in your request in the "US Air Force" section via web, fax or mail to get the medals and ribbons, etc. noted on your DD Form 214. (If using mail **Do Not** send in your original DD Form 214). These medals and ribbons are free of cost for you and for your kin (if you are deceased).

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals.html#air-force>

However, many of us probably did not receive, or importantly, did not have noted in our official records additional medal(s), devices, or other relevant data. To make a request for discovery see the address listed in that same "Air Force" section in the website above (It's the 550 "C" Street address at Randolph AFB) and send a letter of request including DD Form 149 (available on the site) and any documentation you have that might help in that search. If they cannot determine from available documentation and dates what you think you have coming they will forward it on to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records.

Larry Westin has provided some of the following information from a donor to the website:

If you were assigned to the 553 Recon Wing during the times noted you are entitled to the awards listed.

Unit Awards

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device. (Ribbon only)
01 April 1967 to 31 May 1968 and 1 July 1968 to 15 April 1969
Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm (Medal and Ribbon)
01 April 1967 to 15 December 1970

Individual Awards

For service during 553 Recon Wing operations you also are awarded the Vietnam Service Medal with a bronze service star for each three months of service...most Batcats are entitled to four (4) BSS., and,

a Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Batcaters with thirty (30) missions are awarded the Air Medal. Each thirty (30) additional missions are awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster.

Other medals and ribbons accordingly.

If the Air Force has medals and/or ribbons in stock you or your kin (if you are deceased) may receive them without cost. However you must purchase your own medals awarded by foreign governments (RV Gallantry Cross with Palm + Ribbon and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal + Ribbon). There are a number of commercial sites selling military medals (Google "us military medals.").

You may not have spoken much about the war yet your children's memories of you are comprised from stories about you. Your medals, ribbons and other devices are visual reminders of just who you were and are and the stories they tell are of your gallantry, your honor, your sacrifice. Share this with them so they can feel the pride of their lineage and remember you for the country you helped preserve.