

1. **The earliest actions for which the Medal was awarded took place before the Civil War** had even begun (Feb. 13-14, 1861). [Bernard J.D. Irwin](#) was an Assistant Surgeon in the Army when he voluntarily went to the rescue of 2d Lt. George N. Bascom who was trapped with 60 members of the 7th Infantry. Irwin and 14 men began the 100-mile trek to Bascom's forces riding mules. After fighting and capturing Apaches along the way, as well as recovering stolen horses and cattle, Irwin reached Bascom's forces and helped break the siege. The Medal of Honor was [awarded to Irwin on Jan. 24, 1894](#) – more than 30 years after he performed his heroic deed.
2. **The Medal of Honor recommendation process can take in excess of 18 months** with intense scrutiny every step of the way because of the need for accuracy. The following organizations and individuals play key roles in the Army Medal of Honor recommendation process: the Soldier's Chain of Command, a Member of Congress, [Department of the Army Personnel Command](#), [Manpower and Reserve Affairs](#), [Chief of Staff of the Army](#), [Secretary of the Army](#), [Secretary of Defense](#) and the [President](#). To see a visual depiction of the process, visit <http://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/steps.html>
3. **Medal of Honor recipients have uniform privileges**, which allow them to wear their uniforms at [any time or place they choose](#), unlike other military personnel or retirees.
4. **Although not required by law or military regulation, service members are encouraged to salute Medal of Honor recipients** as a gesture of [respect and courtesy](#) regardless of rank or status and, if the recipients are wearing the medal, whether or not they are in uniform. This is the only instance where a Soldier will receive a salute from members of a higher rank.
5. **The Medal of Honor was the U.S. military's *only* citation** during the Civil War. More than 1,500 were handed out during the conflict — nearly half of all ever awarded. By way of comparison, a total of 124 were bestowed during World War One, while 464 were offered during the Second World War. Korea and Vietnam vets were awarded 136 and 247 Medals of Honor respectively. The balance were distributed for outstanding conduct during various American military operations throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.
6. **More than 900 Medals of Honor have been revoked** – 864 of these were taken back from members of the 27th Maine regiment. In June of 1863, more than 300 volunteers to the unit were eligible for discharge following the expiration of their enlistment periods. Following entreaties from officers to remain in uniform, the soldiers agreed to stay to defend Washington during the Battle of Gettysburg in exchange for the coveted decoration. After the crisis, unit commanders were unsure exactly which men they promised the medals to so they simply awarded the commendation to the whole company. Another 29 medals were later taken back from the ceremonial guards from President Lincoln's funeral.