



Lifesaving and Meritorious Action Awards

F A C T S H E E T

Lifesaving Awards

The Boy Scouts of America launched its medals recognition program in 1911 to recognize Scouts and commissioned leaders who had saved a life. The first Honor Medal recipient was Charles Scruggs of Cuero, Texas, who received a bronze medal in 1911.

From 1911 to 1923, 23 Gold Medals, 140 Silver Medals, and 431 Bronze Medals were awarded. In 1923, the awards were redesigned and renamed.

Honor Medal With Crossed Palms



The Honor Medal With Crossed Palms may be awarded in exceptional cases to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated unusual heroism and extraordinary skill or resourcefulness in saving or attempting to save a life at extreme risk to self.

- Awarded in 2012: 14
- Cumulative awards since 1924: 277

Honor Medal



The Honor Medal may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated unusual heroism and skill in saving or attempting to save a life at considerable risk to self.

- Awarded in 2012: 52
- Cumulative awards since 1923: 2,354

Heroism Award (Discontinued on December 31, 2012)



The Heroism Award, formerly the Certificate of Heroism, may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated heroism and skill in saving or attempting to save a life at minimum risk to self. The action taken need not involve attempts of rescue or risk to self, but must put into practice Scouting skills and/or ideals.

- Awarded in 2012: 155
- Cumulative awards since 1923: 6,077



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Meritorious Action Awards

Medal of Merit



The Medal of Merit may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has performed some outstanding act of service of a rare or exceptional character that reflects an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others.

- Awarded in 2012: 126
- Cumulative awards since 1945 : 6,229

National Certificate of Merit

The National Certificate of Merit may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has performed a significant act of service that is deserving of special national recognition.

- Awarded in 2012: 53
- Cumulative awards since 1989: 1,698

Conservation Award

William T. Hornaday Award



This award program was created to recognize those who have made significant contributions to conservation. Formerly the Wildlife Protection Medal, it was begun in 1914 by Dr. William T. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park and founder of the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. After his death in 1937, the award was renamed in Dr. Hornaday's honor and became a Boy Scouts of America award.

- Awarded in 2012: 216
- Cumulative medals, awards, and badges since 1914: 4,433