



Combat Infantryman Badge

*Paragraph 2-6, Army Regulation 600-8-22 (Military Awards)
25 February 1995*

a. History.

(1) The Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) was established by the War Department on 27 October 1943. Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, then the Army Ground Forces commanding general, was instrumental in its creation. He originally recommended that it be called the "fighter badge." The CIB was designed to enhance morale and the prestige of the "Queen of Battle." Then Secretary of War Henry Stinson said, "It is high time we recognize in a personal way the skill and heroism of the American infantry."

(2) Originally, the Regimental Commander was the lowest level at which the CIB could be approved and its award was retroactive to 7 December 1941. There was a separate provision for badge holders to receive a \$10 per month pay stipend, which was rescinded in 1948. Several factors led to the creation of the CIB, some of the most prominent factors are as follows:

(a) The need for large numbers of well-trained infantry to bring about a successful conclusion to the war and the already critical shortage of infantrymen.

(b) Of all soldiers, it was recognized that the infantryman continuously operated under the worst conditions and performed a mission which was not assigned to any other soldier or unit.

(c) The infantry, a small portion of the total Armed Forces, was suffering the most casualties while receiving the least public recognition.

(d) General Marshall's well known affinity for the ground forces soldier and, in particular, the infantryman. All these factors led to the establishment of the CIB, an award which would provide special recognition of the unique role of the Army infantryman, the only soldier whose daily mission is to close with and destroy the enemy and to seize and hold terrain. The badge was intended as an inducement for individuals

to join the infantry while serving as a morale booster for infantrymen serving in every theater.

(3) In developing the CIB, the War Department did not dismiss out of hand or ignore the contributions of other branches. Their vital contributions to the overall war effort were certainly noted, but it was decided that other awards and decorations were sufficient to recognize their contributions. From the beginning, Army leaders have taken care to retain the badge for the unique purpose for which it was established and to prevent the adoption of any other badge which would lower its prestige. At the close of World War II, our largest war in which the armor and artillery played key roles in the ground campaigns, a review was conducted of the CIB criteria with consideration being given to creating either additional badges or authorizing the badge to cavalry and armor units. The review noted that any change in policy would detract from the prestige of the badge.

b. Intent.

(1) There are basically three requirements for award of the CIB. The soldier must be an infantryman satisfactorily performing infantry duties, must be assigned to an infantry unit during such time as the unit is engaged in active ground combat, and must actively participate in such ground combat. Campaign or battle credit alone is not sufficient for award of the CIB.

(2) The definition or requirement to be "engaged in active ground combat" has generated much dialogue over the years as to the original intent of the CIB.

(a) The 1943 War Department Circular required infantrymen to demonstrate "satisfactory performance of duty in action against the enemy." The operative words "in action" connoted actual combat.

(b) A War Department determination in October 1944 specified that "action against the enemy" for purposes of award of the CIB was to be interpreted as "ground combat against enemy ground forces."

(c) In 1948, the regulation governing badges stipulated that "battle participation credit is not sufficient; the unit must have been in contact with the enemy." This clearly indicated that an exchange of hostile fire or equivalent personal exposure was the intent of the Army leadership.

(d) In 1963 and 1965 HQDA messages to the senior Army commander in the Southeast Asia theater of operations authorized award of the CIB to otherwise qualified personnel "provided they are personally present and under fire." U.S. Army Vietnam regulations went so far as to require documentation of the type and intensity of enemy fire encountered by the soldier. The intended requirement to be "personally present and under fire" has not changed.

c. Specific eligibility requirements

(1) A soldier must be an Army infantry or special forces Officer (SSI 11 or 18) in the grade of colonel or below, or an Army enlisted soldier or warrant officer with an infantry or special forces MOS, who subsequent to 6 December 1941 has satisfactorily performed duty while assigned or attached as a member of an infantry, ranger or special forces unit of brigade, regimental, or smaller size during any period such unit was engaged in active ground combat. Eligibility for special forces personnel (less the special forces medical sergeant) accrues from 20 December 1989. Retroactive awards for special forces personnel are not authorized.

(2) A recipient must be personally present and under hostile fire while serving in an assigned infantry or special forces primary duty, in a unit actively engaged in ground combat with the enemy. The unit in question can be of any size smaller than brigade. For example, personnel possessing an infantry MOS in a rifle squad of a cavalry platoon in a cavalry troop would be eligible for award of the CIB. Battle or campaign participation credit alone is not sufficient; the unit must have been in active ground combat with the enemy during the period.

(3) Personnel with other than an infantry or special forces MOS are not eligible, regardless of the circumstances. The infantry or special forces SSI or MOS does not necessarily have to be the soldier's primary specialty, as long as the soldier has been properly trained in infantry or special forces tactics, possesses the appropriate skill code, and is serving in that specialty when engaged in active ground combat as described above. Commanders are not authorized to make any exceptions to this policy.

(4) Awards will not be made to general officers nor to members of headquarters companies of units larger in size than brigade.

d. Subsequent awards.

(1) To date, a separate award of the CIB has been authorized for qualified soldiers in any of three conflicts: World War II (7 December 1941 to 3 September 1945), the Korean Conflict (27 June 1950 to 27 July 1953), and the Vietnam Conflict. Service in the Republic of Vietnam conflict (after 1 March 1961) combined with qualifying service in Laos (19 April 1961 to 6 October 1962), the Dominican Republic (28 April 1965 to 1 September 1966), Korea on the DMZ (after 4 January 1969), Grenada (23 October to 21 November 1983) Panama (20 December 1989 to 31 January 1990), and the Persian Gulf War (17 January to 11 April 1991) is recognized by one award only regardless of whether a soldier has served one or multiple tours in any or all of these areas. If a soldier has been awarded the CIB for service in any of the Vietnam era areas, that soldier is not eligible to earn the Combat Medical Badge.

(2) Second and third awards of the CIB are indicated by superimposing 1 and 2 stars respectively, centered at the top of the badge between the points of the oak wreath.

e. Special provisions - Republic of Vietnam

(1) Any officer whose basic branch is other than infantry who, under appropriate orders, has commanded a line infantry (other than a headquarters unit) unit of brigade, regimental, or smaller size for at least 30 consecutive days is deemed to have been detailed in infantry and is eligible for award of the CIB notwithstanding absence of a written directive detailing that soldier in the infantry, provided all other requirements for the award have been met. Orders directing the officer to assume command will be confirmed in writing at the earliest practicable date.

(2) In addition, any officer, warrant officer, or enlisted man whose branch is other than infantry, who under appropriate orders was assigned to advise a unit listed in (4) and (5) below or was assigned as a member of a White Star Mobile Training Team or a member of MAAG-Laos as indicated in f (1) and (2) below will be eligible for award of the CIB provided all other requirements have been met.

(3) After 1 December 1967 for service in the Republic of Vietnam, noncommissioned officers serving as Command Sergeants Major of infantry battalions and brigades for periods of at least 30 consecutive days in a combat zone are eligible for award of the CIB provided all other requirements have been met.

(4) Subsequent to 1 March 1961, a soldier must have been-

(a) Assigned as advisor to an infantry unit, ranger unit, infantry type unit of the civil guard of regimental or smaller size, and/or infantry-type unit of the self defense corps unit of regimental or smaller size of the Vietnamese government during any period such unit was engaged in actual ground combat.

(b) Assigned as advisor of an irregular force comparable to the above infantry units under similar conditions.

(c) Personally present and under fire while serving in an assigned primary duty as a member of a tactical advisory team while the unit participated in ground combat

(5) Subsequent to 24 May 1965, to qualify for the CIB, personnel serving in U.S. units must meet the requirements of c (1) above. Individuals who performed liaison duties with the Royal Thai Army or the Army of the Republic of Korea

combat units in Vietnam are eligible for award of the badge provided they meet all other requirements.

f. Laos - From 19 April 1961 to 6 October 1962 a soldier must have been- '

(1) Assigned as member of a White Star Mobile Training Team while the team was attached to or working with a unit of regimental (groupment mobile) or smaller size of Forces Armee du Royaume (FAR), or with irregular type forces of regimental or smaller size.

(2) A member of MAAG-Laos assigned as an advisor to a region or zone of FAR, or while serving with irregular type forces of regimental or smaller size.

(3) Personally under hostile fire while assigned as specified in (1) or (2) above.

g. Dominican Republic - From 28 April 1965 to 21 September 1966, the soldier must have met the criteria prescribed in b and c above.

h. Korea - Subsequent to 4 January 1969, a soldier must have-

(1) Served in the hostile fire area at least 60 days and been authorized hostile fire pay.

(2) Been assigned to an infantry unit of company or smaller size and must be an infantry officer in the grade of captain or lower. Warrant officers and enlisted men must possess an infantry MOS. In the case of an officer whose basic branch is other than infantry who, under appropriate orders, has commanded an infantry company or smaller size infantry unit for at least 30 days, the award may be made provided all the following requirements are met .

(3) Been engaged with the enemy in the hostile fire area or in active ground combat involving an exchange of small arms fire at least 5 times.

(4) Been recommended personally by each commander in the chain of command and approved at division level. If killed or wounded as a direct result of overt enemy action, he must be recommended personally by each commander in the chain of command and approved at division level. In the case of infantrymen killed by enemy action, the requirement for at least 5 engagements ((3) above) and the requirement for the incident to have taken place in the hostile fire area, including the 60-day requirement ((1) above), will be waived. In the case of individuals wounded, even though outside the hostile fire area, the 5 engagements requirement and the 60 day requirement may be waived when it can be clearly established that the wound was a direct result of overt hostile action.

(5) Been eligible for award of the CIB after 4 January 1969, for service in the Republic of Vietnam, as noncommissioned officers serving as Command

Sergeants Major of infantry battalions and brigades for periods of at least 30 consecutive days in a combat zone.

i. Grenada (Operation URGENT FURY) - From 22 October 1983 to 21 November 1983, the soldier must have met the criteria prescribed in b and c above.

j. Panama (Operation JUST CAUSE) - From 20 December 1989 to 31 January 1990, the soldier must have met the criteria prescribed in b and c above. Special forces personnel (less the special forces medical sergeant) are eligible for the CIB effective 20 December 1989. Retroactive awards are not authorized.

k. Persian Gulf War (Operation DESERT STORM) - From 17 January 1991 to 11 April 1991, the soldier must have met the criteria prescribed in b and c above. Retroactive awards are not authorized.

l. Who may award.

(1) Current awards. Current awards of the CIB may be awarded by the Commanding General, Eighth U.S. Army, any commander delegated authority by the Secretary of the Army during war time, and the Commanding General, PERSCOM.

(2) Retroactive awards. Retroactive awards of the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Combat Medical Badge may be made to fully qualified individuals. Such awards will not be made except where evidence of injustice is presented. Active duty soldiers will forward their applications through command channels to Commander PERSCOM, ATTN: TAPC-PDA, Alexandria, VA 22332-0471. Reserve Component soldiers, retirees, and veterans should address their application to Commander, ARPERCEN, ATTN; DARP-PAS-EAW, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63132-5200.

Send comments about this page to the [Webmaster](#).

[[ADVA Awards Index](#) | [ADVA Home Page](#)]